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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

Wednesday

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The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Orders of the Day**

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

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

Order 3, third reading of Bill 4.

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Labrador West that Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Status Of Women Advisory Council Act be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Status Of Women Advisory Council Act. (Bill 4)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Status Of Women Advisory Council Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 4)

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, the budget motion.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this House today to speak once again to the budget. I'm the most recent, I guess, individual to have left the private world and come into public life. I still have a fair few activities which I conduct. One of them is a collection of compost from Tim Hortons. Every morning, I go around to the 19 Tim Hortons stores and collect their coffee grinds. That's provided a great venue for people to address issues with me. I think it used to take me about an hour and a half to pick up the coffee grinds and now it's taking almost three hours because, each store I go to, there is always someone who will get out of their car, or hold up the drive-through lineup and address some situations with me.

Of course, one of the biggest things that people are expressing, and one of the things that I've seen in my own private life, is it is more expensive and more difficult to live here and to make ends meet. That's going to defy everything that we need to do in this province, and that is attract young families, keep people living here even in their retirements, because a lot of the retirements and pensions that people are now drawing down on are funded by activities within this province.

As we all know, it is a huge deficit when it comes to the coverage of these pensions. We need to keep that money in here to keep our economy going. So we really have to look at, as a government, we have to find a way to make it more efficient for people to live here and spend the dollars within our own communities.

I know in 2015, as I said, I did run but was unsuccessful, so I returned to my private life. During that time, on our farm we host weddings and weddings are a prime indicator of the economy. We had 23 weddings booked that

summer and, of the 23, we had nine cancel because they were unsure of the economy or unsure of their positions. That was really sad.

In 2017, this past summer, we had a record amount of weddings booked at our farm. We had over 41 weddings booked at our farm. As I do with all couples, I get to know them personally and the sad part about this booming business is over half of those couples were leaving the province. They wanted to get their families together and get married before they left.

That's a prime indicator of what we're facing, and I'm sure the government is aware of it. We've seen the survey come out, the money spent to attract people coming back to the province, but we have a real big issue with people leaving the province. Why are they leaving the province? Because they don't see the financial advantages anymore.

We have to look at reducing the personal income tax. We have to reduce the cost of living. It's something that we've brought up – my colleague from Conception Bay has brought up about the carbon tax. We, as consumers, won't be as fortunate as those in other jurisdictions because we rely on the importation of just about everything we use for our everyday lives, and food is one of them.

We're not going to see at the bottom of our grocery bill: carbon tax. The cost of carbon tax is going to be built into the delivery of our food. Yes, it is going to encourage a fund to counteract the environmental causes, which I'm very familiar with. At our farm, we see a huge difference in the weather patterns from year to year and I think exponentially, in the past 10 years, we've seen more extreme weather. Our weather has always been variable, but we've seen more extremes of those variations.

We need to present a case to the government that Newfoundland needs to be considered, specifically, and I guess more uniquely than the rest of Canada because we are on the end of the economic chain. As I said, we rely on everything for importation. There will be carbon tax assessed on all of those transport companies, the fuel they burn. That is going to play a big part in the cost of everyday living and that again is going to complicate the situation of trying to

keep young families here, trying to keep them investing in our province, trying to keep seniors in our province.

If seniors have the means and ability to leave and go to another economic jurisdiction within Canada, the country or the continent, they're going to do that, and that's something that we, as a population, can't afford to do. We need to keep everybody here, keep that money that we've invested in people's education and people's pensions. We need to keep that circulating within our economy.

The budget itself, I could not find any reference to a big environmental issue that's looming off our coast, and that is the ecocide disaster that's looming within our fishery. That specific reference is to the seal population off our coast. Within less than a week, the harp seal population could consume more fish than the total allowable catch to all harvesters within Newfoundland and Labrador.

Seals are very industrious. They will go from their preferred species of the menu to keep going down the line, down the line. They're not going to be restricted to cod or they're not going to be restricted to capelin or crab. They're going to eat whatever is in front of them.

A lot of arguments are that it's a biological cycle. Well, kind of like the rabbit and the fox. When we see a spike in rabbit populations, then the fox come up at the same time to bring that population down. Now that only happens in the course of maybe two or three years, but an explosion of the harp seal population will decimate all species in our fishery and it will be decades if not centuries before it recovers. Yes, eventually the harp seal population will crash but that's only after it decimates all of our food resource found within the fishery.

As the population in our world explodes to double what it is of today, I have a big concern. Because not only will this harp seal herd decimate a large portion of the protein which we derive from the ocean but this harp seal population can be harvested for some of the needs of the people throughout the world.

We see it in other jurisdictions within Canada and North America, when a feral or a wild

population gets out of control or starts to impact the environment negatively there is a harvest or a cull. You don't have to go too far. You can look out West, in the western states, in the mid states or in Canada when the mustang population explodes and causes damage to the environment or to itself, those animals are harvested or repurposed. That's just a part of our responsibility to the environment to manage it.

If you want to look across the world; in Africa, when we think of population management and I guess the environment, well you think of the noble elephant. Yes, the noble elephant needs to be protected and preserved but what damage and overpopulation of elephants does on an environment is extreme. It basically converts a savannah into a desert in a very short period of time. That's basically what's happening off our East Coast. We're having seals depopulate our ocean of the necessary elements to maintain a balanced ecosystem.

I would hope that everybody within this House, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, has had the opportunity to sample the cuisine that is derived from the seal or products from the seal. It's a very good and underutilized food source. It could be harvested not only for consumption in our industries like the fur industry, not for the pelt but for food for the animals that we do raise and sell on the world market but for human consumption. There's no reason why we couldn't be harvesting seals, using their biomass as protein to satisfy the world deficiency of protein.

It's only going to get worse. The Chinese population and Asian population is projected to almost triple within the next 25 years. That's going to be a huge deficiency in food quality for one, but in protein. Protein is one of the most expensive attributes to the food system that we rely on. Here we are with approximately six million seals and growing, and at the same time they're decimating our fishery stocks and very, very little control being put in place for that.

That's one thing that I think we should really look at. There should be a proactive approach in the budget to dealing with our issue with the seals but also marketing products. We don't need to combat the animal rights individuals.

We need to purport the value of the seal population as a food source for the world.

Again, I'm going to go back to agriculture for a moment. I'm a big supporter of any initiatives to expand the agriculture industry but the agriculture industry has to be expanded in such a manner that it will provide sustainable existence thereafter and is able to stand on its own two legs.

Back in pre-Confederation and post-Confederation, there was a huge amount of produce being produced on the West Coast. Yes, the best land is on the West Coast. Now I don't want to say that too loud because I'm very proud of a lot of farmland that's been developed in the East Coast. The reality is the population is on the East Coast and it makes most economical sense to produce food next to the populations. We need to have more of a focus on doing that.

We can't just expand the agriculture industry for the sake of wanting to expand the agriculture industry. We can't keep throwing money into an industry if it's not going to be able to support itself. In saying that, I would like to see more emphasis on diversifying and placing industries where they're most economically viable. Horticulture is one of those industries that need to be expanded on the East Coast.

I know of farms in the area that are actually going to reduce their production this year because of access to property. Reducing production means reducing buying inputs in the communities and the reduced need for staffing and employment. That's something we really have jump on and improve.

Another thing I'd like to comment on is the most recent changes within the level of compensation to the workplace health and safety commission. I'm a big proponent of added compensation and increased levels of support, but right now we're only able to afford that on the surplus that exists within workers' compensation, and that surplus has been generated by over contribution by employers.

Now, what's going to happen when that surplus is used up? Yes, we're at a time right now where we're decreasing the assessments in industry and employers, but pretty soon that surplus is going

to be gone. Is government willing or planning to make that additional contribution that's going to cover the increased cost of income replacement, or is that going to come back to the employers? That's a question that hasn't been asked and needs to be asked.

Employers are job creators, employers are spenders in the community. We need to create a more favourable environment to have more employers. We don't need more employees. In some respects we do. Yes, in some industries we do, but the base of an employee is employment.

It's government's responsibility to create conditions for growth in the private sector. This is where economic planning is indispensable. You can't just throw money out into the economy and hope it will grow. That's like me as a farmer throwing seeds onto the parking lot and expecting to reap a crop. We need a plan. Yes, *Growing Forward* initiatives are basically high-level theories but we need strategies when it comes to developing business and creating an environment for business. As of yet, we haven't seen that. We need to bring those *Growing Forward* plans to the ground and actually get industries growing.

The poverty rate in this province was once the envy of all Canada. We had the lowest poverty rate in Canada. We went from having over 20 per cent of our citizens in poverty in 2003 down to less than 12 per cent in 2015. Again, not all of this has been the government's fault, but it is the sitting government's responsibility to change that trend that has been occurring in the poverty rate growing. We've already documented an increase of 2.5 per cent and true numbers for this past fiscal year, we probably won't see until 2019.

Members of the House and Mr. Speaker, I see a big, big shift in the amount of poverty that's in our communities. It was only as recent as yesterday morning, I was out in a parking lot in one of the coffee shops and I saw a young family, a mother and two young children get out of a van and walk into the coffee shop with their toothbrushes and facecloths. It kind of didn't really click into my head what they people were doing. So I asked the maintenance: What's on the go here? He said: That's just one of the many families that are homeless and now living

out of their vehicles. They go into the coffee shops in the morning, they get their breakfast, they brush their teeth and wash their face and the mom or dad dresses them in the back of the van and puts them in school.

Yes, I know there are supports there for people like that but when you have a family who are in a mid- to upper-class neighbourhood and all of a sudden they have no home anymore, mom and dad have no job, that's a big shock to people's confidence, their outlook on themselves and they have no idea where to go to get help or how to get help.

Every day as an MHA I deal with constituency issues, people in need of housing, and people in the need of income support. A lot of these issues are people who are familiar with the system and they've been there for generations. But what disturbs me is I'm seeing families that are affected by the economy and all of a sudden they're thrown into the social system.

We went from, in 2005, people, generations of being on social assistance leaving that system and coming into our economy and contributing, as a workforce, to now we're having new families, new people entering in the social system. It costs \$1.25 billion of investment to reduce the poverty level in our economy prior to 2015. As everybody knows in this House, there's not a whole lot of money right now going around that we can invest, but we've got to continue that investment because we need to keep people out of that system. We need to keep people working. That's something that I don't see happening.

We all know that there are boundless opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador. But do you know what? They've always been here. The opportunities for business, the opportunities for resource development have always been here. But what we've seen in the past two years has been one missing element to capitalize on those opportunities, and that's optimism.

Optimism is necessary for any exploitation of opportunity. Optimism is necessary to get people when they're feeling down, get them back up on their feet and move forward. We need to continue to push that optimism. As I said before,

our province depends on resource revenues, but do you know what else? Our province depends on leadership within this House of Assembly to keep going, to keep their eyes ahead, to keep their eyes on the prize. And be it by purpose or be it by circumstance, that optimism has been stripped from our people. I see people every day walking around with their heads down like zombies, just hoping to wake up tomorrow and it be better.

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

**MR. LESTER:** Hoodwinked is not an excuse for anything. Hoodwinked is something we have to throw aside because we are all intelligent individuals. There is no way that we can say that we walked into this House and knew that we weren't in the position that we're in. We have to stop using that excuse, and we have to give our people optimism, give them a concrete plan. Not theory, not high level, it has to be down on their doors. That's something that I think is lacking in this budget. It's just a carbon copy, a few little tweaks, and it's something that needs to change.

We have to reinvest in our people and we have to make it more cost efficient to live here.

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

**MR. LESTER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to stand in the House this morning and speak to *Budget 2018*. Like most Members now, I guess I'll get a chance at least today and maybe a couple of more times to speak to the things that are in this year's budget.

But before I do, Mr. Speaker, last week I did not have the opportunity to stand and to recognize the many great volunteers in my district. Last week was National Volunteer Week and because of my responsibilities here in the House, I wasn't able to attend to any of the events that had happened in my district

I did attend one on Saturday evening at the Royal Canadian Legion in Clarendville. I certainly want to send my congratulations to everybody that was recognized at the Royal Canadian Legion: Volunteer of the Year Curtis Skiffington, but also all the other members, comrades of the Royal Canadian Legion that were recognized for their long-time service and their dedication to the community.

National Volunteer Week's theme was: Celebration the Value of Volunteering – building confidence, competence, connections and community. I think that's really what goes on in the great Terra Nova District that I represent.

Last week, there were events that happened in Glovertown. There were events that happened in my hometown of Port Blandford, as there were events that happened in the Southwest Arm area. I wasn't able to attend any of those wonderful celebrations, but I just want to echo the sentiments that were given to those volunteers at those events and send my heartfelt thank you to all those volunteers for everything they do to make our communities great places to live, to work and to raise our families.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get into the budget a little bit and just talk about some of the things that are in this year's budget. I may reflect a little bit about some of the other initiatives that have happened in the Terra Nova District in the last year that are continuing forward into this year.

The first thing I'd like to talk about is around the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. Of course, that report came due – and I see Members opposite giving me a thumbs-up, so that's wonderful. I think they recognize there are some great things that have come in that report that came out last summer.

There were 82 recommendations in that report. Some of them are very dear to things that I've certainly worked very hard for prior to coming into this House, in my previous capacity, working in the community and working in the public service. The recommendations focus on nine areas. They focus on inclusive education. They focus on student mental health and wellness, mathematics and reading, indigenous

education, multicultural education and the early years.

People will have seen that I have stood in this House many times and I've talked about my long experience working with children with disabilities and also working in a family resource centre or being on a board of directors for a family resource centre. So seeing that theme come forward in the set of recommendations is extremely important.

Career and co-op education, Mr. Speaker, is number eight, and professional development. People would also realize, or remember that I sat on a school board. I was a member of a school board. I was trustee and a chair of the former Vista School Board. In that capacity, I was always keenly interested in providing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.

So to see that all these themes have come forward in a set of recommendations I think is a great report. I'm really encouraged now this year, and through this budget, that we are seeing phase one of the recommendations will be implemented, and to see that some-40 schools will be a part of the first round of schools that will get some additional resources to help them deal with many of the challenges that are going on in our schools.

Many people would remember that last year we were dealing with a tremendous amount of concern at Riverside Elementary in Clarendville. It was because of overcapacity issues, it was around lunch hour space, it was around children having enough room to be supervised and also to be in class sizes that they were able to – to be in a conducive learning environment. It's great to see now that through phase one we'll see some extra resources that will go into schools that will help address some of those issues.

I'm confident that as we move forward with the Premier's task force and these recommendations that our schools and this whole issue of what was perceived to be the right approach to inclusive education, that we will make some steps now. We've listened to parents. We've listened to teachers. We've listened to the school community and now we're going to take steps to

put in better approaches, better strategies so that students have better learning outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to talk about mental health and addictions. I've stood in this House and talked about mental health issues in my district, and I've talked about my dear friend, Victoria Best. Just this past week, there was another story about Victoria that came out. As we know, Victoria was a New England Patriots fan. There were some of her friends and supporters who had written the New England Patriots and talked about who Victoria was and what a great fan she was.

The story this week talked about how they finally heard back from the New England Patriots and they sent up some memorabilia. Victoria, in her house, had a sports room. She had it decorated in honour of the New England Patriots.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we see that organization sent along some memorabilia. They understood what a tireless advocate she was for mental health. It's unfortunate that she's no longer with us. I talk to her family all the time. I talked to her dad yesterday actually, and we were chatting about mental health and addictions and the need to do something in Clarendville. We need to do something to help our young people.

I just reflect back; one of the recommendations or the theme of the recommendations was student mental health and wellness. I think that's so critically important in this province and in my district.

In *Budget 2018*, we'll see there's more than \$10 million, Mr. Speaker, that's being invested to support the delivery of home and community care and enhancements of primary health care services. I've been working with a group in Clarendville who are putting together a community-based outreach program.

If you look at the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, in that report one of the things it talks about is we have to have better connections at the grassroots. It has to be grassroots driven. Yes, we have professionals. We have institutions that can help. We're paving the way to build a new Waterford Hospital but we also need to bring the community into the

solutions that we identify to help people who are struggling with mental health and addictions.

So to see there is a group that's come together in Clarendville that are looking to provide additional support to those in need, whether it's our young people, whether it's adults or seniors who are just struggling with their own mental wellness – and I'm hoping, I've talked to the Minister of Health and Community Services, as well as the Eastern Health authority about: How do we find a way to make the work that this community group is doing, that they propose to do, how do we make that a reality? We're doing some stuff now as a government down on the Burin Peninsula and I'd like to see that replicated in my district, in the Clarendville area.

Mr. Speaker, as I move on talking about some of the things that are in the budget, I wanted to talk about – we are keenly interested in building safe and sustainable communities. It's certainly a priority for us. We'll see an investment of over \$75 million to provide local services and support to local communities.

I'll reference specifically what we're doing around Municipal Capital Works; \$10.6 million, and that announcement was made just previous to the budget. I actually had some folks come in from my district because contained in the \$10.6 million under Municipal Capital Works was money to help build a new fire hall on Random Island. It's near the community of Elliott's Cove. There are about six communities that are part of a local service district.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, when I first was approached by the deputy fire chief. He came into my constituency office in Clarendville. He said: you know I'd really like for you to come down to our fire department. We have an aging truck, firefighting equipment. We have an old building that was an old school, and we have mould in the building. It's inadequate. We can't continue to be operating out of that building.

So I went there, and eventually I had the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment come and meet with them as well. I was pleased to see that this year we were able to identify money to help them construct a new fire hall.

Last year, we were able to identify money to provide a new fire truck for them. That's so keenly important when we think about our volunteers, our firefighters, our first responders who are the ones who answer that call to keep our communities safe. Providing that necessary infrastructure to them so that they can do their jobs, I think is critically important for us, no matter what side of the House we're on. I was glad to see that we're making that investment this year.

Mr. Speaker, under the Municipal Capital Works program waste water and drinking water – good drinking water is also critically important to our communities when we think about that infrastructure. I can recall and met with the town council in Traytown, they didn't have their own source of water. They were relying on private wells but they wanted to be more sustainable as a community.

So over the last two years, Mr. Speaker, we provided funds to help them identify a stable, sustainable water source. This year, we're also providing some additional monies that will help them conduct well drilling and water testing so that, hopefully, they will have a system that provides good, clean drinking water for their community and for the residents that are there.

Mr. Speaker, as well, in terms of – fire halls in my district seem to be one of the main themes these days. I know there's a request now with the Town of Clarendville who are looking to construct a new fire hall. My hometown of Port Blandford is looking to construct a new fire hall and so is the Town of Glovertown, looking to construct a new fire hall. So we were able this year to provide some funds of the Town of Glovertown to help with the design of a new fire hall. Myself and the minister have been out and met with them as well to see the facility they have and to understand their needs. This year, they will start a process to look at some pre-design work for a new fire hall in that community.

Mr. Speaker, when we think about protecting our firefighters, in this budget \$1.8 million is being allocated to fire protection vehicles and firefighting equipment. Over the last two years, this budget has been relatively stable in terms of supporting firefighting equipment in



communities and fire protection vehicles. I just want to reference some of the communities that have benefited from these funds over the last two years, including this year.

On Monday evening I was in Charlottetown and I was there to announce that we're providing some money to the fire department to replace a pump on their fire truck. When I asked the members of the volunteer fire department, I said: Tell me exactly what it is that you're going to use this money for. So they opened up a back door and showed me an old pump and they said: We're replacing this thing here because it's not reliable anymore. It's good to see the monies that are coming forward, on behalf of the people of this province, that we're putting it into real equipment to help people do their jobs.

We provided firefighting equipment to Glovertown and to the Southwest Arm fire department in Hodges Cove. We're also providing money to Random Island East fire department. So bringing forward dollars to help those fire departments do the work that they need to do is extremely important in my mind.

I just wanted to reference, there was a comment made by my colleague across the House about what's happening with seniors and we need to support seniors. I just want to reference, Mr. Speaker, the things we are doing is not – as my learned colleague would say – that we are driving seniors out of the province. I mean, to the contrary.

One of the things that we introduced in 2016 was enhanced supports to seniors. This year, again, we're providing \$56 million in the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit. That was, as I say, introduced in 2016 and it benefits – now, you should pay attend for a second – 47,000 seniors and their families. When the Member opposite gets up and says that we're doing things that is going to likely drive seniors out of this province, I think that's incorrect. We are doing things actually to help seniors. We're also providing \$65 million in the Income Supplement that provides benefit to approximately 155,000 individuals and their families.

Mr. Speaker, first, when we introduced this in 2016, I was going out and meeting with 50-plus

clubs and seniors' groups in my district and many didn't understand, because these cheques are coming on a quarterly basis. People couldn't understand why they were getting this extra money. They were used to getting the one lump sum. I'd say to them: Did you get a cheque now in October, and was it more than what you thought? Yeah, but I didn't know where that came from, was an answer that I was getting.

So then in January, they received another one and they were phoning and saying I didn't get that lump sum that \$900-and-something, \$968 – I don't know if someone can correct me on the amount. But I didn't get that. Well, actually you're getting more than that because it's over \$1,300 now that you're getting.

When you explain that to people they say: Oh, okay, that's great. We thought the federal government was providing that to us. I said: No, that's what we are doing as a government here in this province. We recognize that things are tough and we're trying to bring in measures that's going to support people. So contrary to what the Member opposite said, I just want to put it out there, Mr. Speaker, and be on record that it's completely false.

That's one of the things that we've had to deal with in this House. Consistently, I hear from Members opposite about this doom and gloom. You know, we were dealt a very, very dirty card. When I'm out in my district and I'm talking to people, they consistently tell me that they know how we got in this place. They also recognize that as a government we are trying. We are trying to right the ship so that the path forward, *The Way Forward* – and I know the Member opposite gets up and says we don't have a plan. I mean, I hear that from Members opposite all the time: We don't have a plan.

Yesterday we launched phase three of *The Way Forward*, with some 30 more additional actions that are pervasive across a number of industries. The Member opposite talked about – and I think we kind of agree in one sense that whatever investments we make in this province, we need to focus on areas that can be successful. Now, I'm paraphrasing him, but I think that's what he was saying. You should invest on the Avalon. I think he talked about horticultural investments.

Actually in terms of our regional innovation systems, which people will find in *The Way Forward*, that is exactly what we're doing. On the West Coast, we're focusing on forestry. In Central, we're focusing on agriculture and we're focusing on the aerospace industry. On the East Coast, we are focusing on technology. So we're building on the strengths that exist in this province based on the regions.

So I think when the Member stands up and he talks about let's build on the strengths, we do agree on that – absolutely. Now, I think he was trying to put a dig forward that we're not doing what we should be doing, but again, I would say to the Member opposite that we are exactly doing what we should be doing to build on the strengths and to build an economy that is sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I talk about that from a great deal of experience. My experience is in community economic development.

I see my time is winding down, Mr. Speaker, so I will continue on from this point forward, I will continue on when I get to speak again to the *Budget 2018*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to rise this morning and speak to *Budget 2018*. People have three opportunities to speak to the actual budget, so it's certainly an opportunity to speak to the details of the particular budget. And as well, for Members to speak to issues related to their district that are related to the budget or not, or just of importance to their district and an opportunity to speak to those people in their district and issues important to the people in the province.

As part of this process – and the people out there know, we go through Estimates where each department comes in and lays out the budgetary requirements for the next fiscal year. Obviously,

that's related to the policy direction the current government will take, and those line items in the actual Estimates would flow into those policy directions or strategic directions the government is taking on an annual basis or flows into that four-year term and four-year mandate, which they were elected to follow.

So the Estimates certainly are for Opposition and for Members on the other side of the House to ask questions to the ministers and to their officials in regard to progress made on announced strategic directions or policy directives and the money that's been allocated for those, what's been spent in the last fiscal year based on the Estimates and what the actuals were. Those were identified. You can ask questions on those. Then looking forward, the Estimates for the next fiscal year and questions on allocations of funding and where it has been spent.

It also enters into the whole forecast piece in regard to looking beyond that fiscal year you're talking about but looking at the forecast which is laid out by the current administration. This administration has talked about a seven year forecast. They talked about getting back to surplus; talks about the year '22-'23 in regard to having a small surplus and getting back there.

Now in a general sense, since this budget has come in and even prior to it, and I've spoken to it before, there have been some questions in regard to the validity of that plan. We saw the AG mention it in 2017 in the forecast, in regard to expenditure reductions, the amount that's been forecasted in regard to the ability to raise the revenues that were in that forecast. I think it's about \$1.2 billion up to '22-'23. Is it conceivable that will be done?

As well, looking at inflation and various increases in program delivery and program resources that are available; when you look at things like increases in expenditures. We've seen a small increase this year in programs, about 2.1 per cent. We'll see small decreases, supposedly, in the next few years in regard to expenditures. About 1.2 per cent in 2020, about 1.1 per cent in 2021, half a percent in '21-'22 and just a third of a percent in '22-'23.

The Auditor General in 2017, based on those projections, questioned whether it was even obtainable. Based on the fluctuations you may have seen in a general sense in regard to inflationary costs to things like labour, to program delivery. Even in that period of time there are often ups and downs in the economy. You could see a small recession which slows the economic activity and which doesn't allow you to meet your targets related to revenue projections.

In *Budget 2016*, we saw there were over 300 taxes and fees. Some of them already existed, some were increased, some are added. We had to look at things like the levy that was brought in. Most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had to pay it initially. Then there were some small changes made to it, but it's still there. That affects these indicators in regard to meeting those targets.

It's a balancing act in regard to the trickle-down effect. You need to tax at a level or threshold that allows revenue to be raised to meet the needs but not to disincentive people not to have money in their pockets or not be able to spend. That's certainly the balancing act.

The documents of this current budget; if you look at *The Economy 2018*, which was part of the budgetary documents, that looks at the economic indicators and what the projections are for future years, which ties into the plan, the forecast. I know the hon. Member before me mentioned having a plan, talked about *The Way Forward*, Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3, that's all great stuff. Well, that plan has to tie in to the economics and to the reality of the day.

I know my colleague for Mount Pearl North was talking about families and talking about the effect on families, whether it's seniors or youth. That's really what we're talking about here. We're talking about young families being able to stay here, make a living and provide what's needed for their family; activities, all of those types of things for young kids.

We have the infrastructure and they want to stay here and build and grow. They pay taxes over a longer period of time. They contribute to the economy. They're volunteers. They do the things they need to do in all kinds of our

communities to make sure it's a place that people want to live and stay. So that's extremely important in regard to creating that environment.

Fundamentally, government doesn't actually employ – shouldn't be the agency to employ everybody, shouldn't be the agency to create all these jobs. The government of the day and any day is to provide that environment where there wants to be investment; it's good investments for entrepreneurs and people to grow business. It's competitive in regard to taxation, whether personal taxation for individuals or corporate taxation in regard to investment. So it's competitive and that's what we need to create that environment and to get to what's being proposed here in '22-'23 in regard to getting back to surplus.

I mentioned when I started about Estimates and the process we go through. Yesterday, we had Natural Resources Estimates with the Minister of Natural Resources. She had her staff in. I have to admit, we had a very good, free-flowing discussion back and forth for three hours. We had a lot of questions and I acknowledge the minister and her staff and the good job they did. We certainly didn't agree with everything but we had a great discussion and exchange of information.

As I said, the budget is the figures in regard to line items and different divisions within the department, but then flows out of that is the direction you're taking to meet strategic directions or policy initiatives that have already been laid out by government.

The minister was very open in terms of having that discussion about how the budget relates to those, some of the issues going on in the province with regard to natural resources and economic development. We were able to ask questions back and forth with regard to where we're to and what's transpiring in our province, because all of that flows into driving the economy.

Natural Resources, as we know, we're very big in the commodity market, not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but across Canada. It bodes well for our future, whether that's in the mining sector, whether it's the oil and gas. Obviously, our fishery is huge in regard to what

we're able to achieve and continue; while we're having some challenges now in quota cuts. As well, you look at our forestry industry, again, some challenges.

When you look at some of the initiatives that are going on in the US in regard to NAFTA and some of the tariffs that have been put on paper that is being shipped out, certainly related to the operations in Corner Brook, it is extremely concerning; yet, those are all issues that are important to us in growing our economy and doing the things we need to do.

When we had discussions in Natural Resources in the Estimates, we talked about a number of items. In particular, we talked about Voisey's Bay and Vale related to the underground mine in regard to the development agreement, where that's to; not a lot of details in regard to the current government holding Vale accountable and moving that forward. We certainly hope that it will.

To go underground to build that mine, in the past couple of years we've been asking some questions here in the House in regard to the actual agreement. The minister had indicated, probably a year-and-a-half ago there were issues with engineering procurement. They had to get that done. There was a business analysis supposed to be completed in the fall of 2017. We're told it was completed. We're not sure what the results of that was, and now we're into 2018. Again, we don't know in terms of the direction being taken there.

When we look at iron ore, the prices and the commodity prices, when it hit a rough skid a few years back – obviously, iron ore is used for steel. Most industrialized countries, places like China, Brazil, India, a lot of building goes on and they need that iron ore in terms of steel manufacturing a building.

The commodity we have is driven by the activities around the world. We have seen in the last year or two, those iron ore prices start to recover and start to move up. We also heard the minister talk yesterday in Estimates about other iron ore deposits in Labrador and the possibility for development and investors out looking for that to develop those sites.

It would leave one to believe that Vale and the Voisey's Bay underground site, as well, could continue to grow, and that's important. So we're left to see what's going on with the underground mine at Voisey's Bay, getting it up and operational, and making sure that we get this moving, because there is tremendous opportunity certainly for Labrador, but as well overall for the provincial economy.

As I said, in Estimates we have some discussion on that. I certainly look forward to the minister in the very near future and this government giving us some good news in regard to moving forward with Voisey's Bay.

The other issue with Voisey's Bay is the cobalt, a derivative, my understanding, of the processing of iron ore and from that, the price around the world, my understanding, the commodity itself and the availability of it is somewhat limited and this is seen as a huge opportunity as a parallel – what will we say – an advantage of Voisey's Bay underground mining. So we hope that as well will stir the opportunity to continue to get this project moving and get the benefits for all concerned.

So that was a good discussion we had in that particular area. We also had some discussion on White Rose extension, the Argentia project and that moving forward. I know we had some discussions when that was originally announced, and some of the things that in the negotiation the government gave up in regard to the graving dock, which was originally in the initial agreement, MOU, that was signed, which would allow ongoing work on rigs and facilities like that that would be a permanent structure that would allow that activity to go on. So instead of sending rigs to Scotland or Ireland or sending to the US, we would have a facility here to actually do that on an ongoing basis. But that was negotiated out by the partners.

As well we talked about, at the time there was a \$60 million fund announced that was part of the negotiations that we were – we believe it was \$60 million that we negotiated that would be used by the province to drive innovation and other activities in the oil and gas, and so it is. But I know when the announcement was made, we asked questions here again related to that, and that's a \$60 million fund that over 10 years

– I think there's \$6 million that's put aside that is going to be used for innovation and different activities in the oil and gas sector. But in questioning the minister, there's no parameter set up yet in regard to the application process for that, who would oversee it and those types of things. The minister indicated that's been worked out and been done today.

One interesting part about the \$60 million is that while it's not part of the capital cost for the partners within the project, it can be and will be recovered by the partners through the royalty regime, which is interesting because that means that \$60 million, really, the partners get it back. They're not, in themselves, giving up \$60 million as part of the agreement. What happens is through the royalties – their capital cost can be recovered through development agreements but this is outside of the capital cost, the construction, but it would be part of a \$60 million fund that they can pull it back through the royalty regime that's in place, which is interesting because in fact they're not really giving up the \$60 million, they're recovering it at some point down the road.

We also talked about geological surveying related to the mining sector and the activities that are going on there. On a positive note, there are good things happening in the mining sector in the province – in the Baie Verte region out there regarding gold development deposits. As well in Labrador, there was a discussion about the Labrador Trough and some of the things we've heard lately in the past couple of weeks in regard to meetings with the current Premier and the premier of Quebec and the developing of the Labrador Trough.

There's some work going on in regard to I think the northern region of that trough and looking at partnerships or what could be achieved together collectively. One of the questions that I asked the minister – we compete with Quebec and it's good to have relations and to be able to support when it's beneficial to all concerned. One of the questions I did ask is there was a reference to sharing of data. Because we're adjacent to Quebec, Labrador obviously, and we compete for that investment and when you look at investments around the world in the mining sector it is limited so how do we be competitive

and make sure that oftentimes we compete with Quebec for that investment.

I asked about that data, the data sharing, how much data we would share, what type of data we would share, that type of thing. I think the response was they're working through that and they would be cognizant of the fact that it is competitive in nature in terms of competing mines and our deposits both on the Newfoundland side of that trough and Quebec side. From our point of view, we need to be cognizant of that in terms of moving forward with that.

But certainly, as I said, there are positive signs in the mining industry in terms of our reserves of what we have. Commodity markets around the world are starting to move in some of those commodities and it's certainly positive for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Many of it, we talked here in the House a lot about carbon tax, what's coming. At the beginning, our understanding now is 2019 and what that means for our industries but as well trickle right down to families, what cost it is going to be to the average family. I know my colleague the Environment critic has asked several times here in the House just a simple question: To the average family in Newfoundland and Labrador, who has two kids, who's doing all those activities that young families do, what will be the average cost to that family based on this tax? Because in this current budget of 2018, we hear there is no new taxes, status quo, those types of things.

In actual fact, that's not correct. What we have is a carbon tax coming that no one seems to know what it's going to cost, how it going to trickle down and what it's going to mean to the pocketbook of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. So we look for more information and we continue to ask. The federal government mandated this by 2019. I think the first is \$10 a ton in regard to greenhouse gas emissions and it goes to \$50 a ton over the next few years.

Now, originally, it was supposed to be a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador program for carbon tax. We had started here in this Legislature and passed legislation actually dealing with five on-land industrial users and

monitoring their greenhouse gas emissions over two years. We were going to deal with them in some way of trying to work with them, whether it's a technology fund to try and reduce their emissions; but then, shortly after that, the federal government announced they were moving forward with a mandated carbon tax but one knows how much – well, they know how much it's going to be, but don't know how much it's going to cost industry or cost the average person in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We had a good discussion on that and where it would go. There are still not a lot of details from this administration. There are some jurisdictions in Canada that have protested significantly to the federal government in regard to this carbon tax and what it's going to mean for their industries and what it's going to mean for their families. There has been no protest here by this current administration in regard to dealing with the federal government and the carbon tax but that's coming and it's going to play a significant role in our economy and what costs are going to be paid.

Other issues we talked about, as I said, was the mining sector, oil and gas. *Advance 2030*, the minister spoke of that of their indication to develop the oil and gas sector. There was an interesting – in regard to Nalcor in seismic work. We heard on budget day that the government had put \$20 million – or we learned after the budget that an OC has been approved to put \$20 million back into Nalcor of seismic work.

The story is that government asked ABCs to look at their cost. Nalcor looked at theirs and said we're going to take \$20 million out of the seismic program, which seems totally out of touch with the *Advance 2030* that was announced by the current administration. It's seems like they're offside with the CEO and board of directors with Nalcor.

Then they had to put the \$20 million back. So based on that, I assume there was no cuts to Nalcor because the \$20 million had to be put back. The message to us was that \$20 million is going to be recovered through possible increases in oil revenues that are expected over the next year. That would offset it, but still it's peculiar that you announced it in *Advance 2030* for oil and gas development and the entity that exists to

promote that contradicts it with some of the cuts they made.

Those are some of the significant things we talked about. It was a good discussion and I look forward to speaking to the budget again in the next opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

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

It's a pleasure to rise in my place today and speak to *Budget 2018* and certainly to represent the fine District of Baie Verte - Green Bay. A district, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite proud of, my hometown being Springdale, representing over 40 communities all throughout the Baie Verte Peninsula and Green Bay.

It's a district, Mr. Speaker, where we're very blessed with natural resources. When you look at – we're heavily involved in the forestry industry, the mining industry, the fishery, tourism, aquaculture. We have a little bit of everything going on in our district.

I had the opportunity to sit with one of the mining executives a little while ago, and he said to me that if he was to get involved in politics tomorrow there's not a better district that he'd like to represent than the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into my comments with regard to the budget, I wanted to take the opportunity to recognize a couple of families, I guess, in memory, and that's the Jim family out of Baie Verte. Mrs. Jim, known as Wong Kim Sue Jim, whose family are: Betty, Quong, King, Jeanie, Pat, Willie and Patsy.

Mrs. Jim was a pillar in the community of Baie Verte. Mrs. Jim passed away a couple of weeks ago. I remember going to Baie Verte playing high school sports as a young boy and we would always make sure we got ourselves down to Jim's store and Jim's restaurant for a feed of – her French fries, dressing and gravy was her

speciality. Obviously, Mrs. Jim will be sadly missed. I certainly want to pay my respects to that family.

Earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, we heard of the passing of Mrs. Pearl Bailey. Anybody who knows the mining industry throughout the Baie Verte Peninsula would be certainly well aware of her family's legacy and business, Guy J. Bailey Limited. Certainly, I wanted to pay my respects as well to Judy, Donna, Ivan, Scott and Kent, good friends of mine. Mrs. Pearl Bailey, again, as I spoke about Mrs. Jim, are both pillars in the community of Baie Verte and will be sadly missed.

I never got an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, last week to rise in my place to recognize Volunteer Week, as most of my colleagues did and obviously showed their respect for volunteers in their own communities. I did want to show my respect for the volunteers in the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay.

While I don't necessarily want to single out one particular group, I feel that I need to recognize our volunteer fire departments. I know my colleague from Terra Nova did so today as well, recognized the fire departments.

I have 24 fire departments in my district. Of those 24 fire departments, I think we have 397 volunteer firefighters, both men and women. My hat is off to these organizations, Mr. Speaker. They do a great duty to our communities. They keep us safe and, obviously, as I said to some of the communities, the fact that we do have volunteer fire departments is one of the reasons we are – as communities and as residents of our communities, and homeowners – able to purchase homeowners insurance, the fact that we are being protected by a volunteer fire department.

I wanted to recognize two new fire departments within my district. They were older departments that came together to sort of form a regional concept. That was in St. Patrick's, Little Bay and Beachside, just starting a new fire department, Mr. Speaker, along with Jackson's Cove, Harry's Harbour and Silverdale. They're taking, I guess, a piece out of our provincial plan, or our government's plan to see regionalization being a big part of our going forward program.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, on Saturday night to join the fire department of St. Patrick's, Little Bay and Beachside down in Beachside at the Pentecostal Church in Beachside for a community singalong. At that particular event we raised over \$2,200 for the volunteer fire department, just with a simple singalong. It shows the appreciation, I think, of what communities feel about their fire departments. Like I said, I couldn't be more pleased to see that.

With regard to the 2018 budget, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance alluded in his remarks, it's a stay-the-course budget and certainly hoping to lead us to surplus, as my colleague had mentioned earlier, in 2022-23.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance, past and present, both ministers have done admirable work on behalf of our government. I certainly want to take my hat off to their department as well. It's not easy. I spent 28 years running a family business and I know all about budgets. I know about budgets in good times, as well as I know about budgets in bad times. I've had my years of that as well. Again, zero-based budgeting is something that's not new to me. It's the way I worked when I was in my own business.

As my colleague from Ferryland had just mentioned in his remarks, Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity over the last couple of years to chair the Resources Committee. He just spoke about the fact that we had met with the Department of Natural Resources yesterday morning. I have to say my hat is off to the minister as well and to her department, her parliamentary secretary, my good friend from Labrador West, they did a fabulous job in answering the questions yesterday morning.

If I can say, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the budget, I think the process of Estimates is an education in itself. While it's hard after a full day here at work in the House of Assembly, the good work that we do here, sometimes it's tiring to be able to sit down and spend another three hours going through the Estimates procedures, but I really enjoy it. I really find it educational. I enjoy listening to the back and forth between the Opposition and a committee who's representing

government at that particular time, and certainly our ministers.

I've had the opportunity so far to sit through Fisheries and Land Resources; Natural Resources; Advanced Education, Skills and Labour – which was last night, with the minister – and tomorrow night, we will be sitting with the minister and his department from Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing his remarks and those remarks as well.

Going back again to the budget, Mr. Speaker, it's amazing; I have spent a lot of time listening to the people in my district talking about where we are as a government with regard to our financial position. I think most people realize it hasn't been an easy time running government when you consider the position that we are in.

Going down through the budget document when you look at the infrastructure that government is responsible for: 9,763 kilometres of roads; 1,317 bridges and culverts; 260 K-12 educational facilities; 20 public post-secondary institutions; 189 health care facilities; 13 ferry services. All this for 525,000 residents.

It just amazes me, and I've actually quoted this to some of the people who came up and sort of wanted to challenge me on where we are as a government and the budgets that we've come down with. But when I sit down and explain to them the infrastructure that we're responsible for as a government, I think they get a true picture of the big story. Doing it all when we are posting record deficits – even though, again, I want to go back and say that our minister has said that we're hopefully going to be back to surplus in 2022. I certainly look forward to that day.

As I mentioned 97,063 kilometres of roads, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk about *Budget 2018* with regard to the roadwork and \$77 million was allotted for the provincial road systems. I'm so happy to announce that \$5.9 million has been allocated to my District of Baie Verte - Green Bay this year. There's lots of anticipation of some new roadwork happening in my district.

Mr. Speaker, we get an opportunity as a Member, I guess when the department goes out to try and prioritize the district, we get an

opportunity to lay down our priorities as well. While our priorities are important, we always don't get our priorities the way that we hope that we would. We take the priorities of the superintendents of Transportation and Works in our area, along with the regional office, and I guess that all goes to the minister and his department and that's where the decisions are made. I respect the decisions, Mr. Speaker, but my number one priority in my district this year was the La Scie highway. That's Route 414.

I can't begin to tell you how happy I am to report that we're going to be doing eight kilometres. We're budgeting eight kilometres to that road this year. These past couple of weeks especially, Mr. Speaker, my email, my texting, Facebook has been inundated with complaints from the people of the Baie Verte Peninsula, and especially people who use the La Scie road, again highway 414, on a daily basis.

That tender was actually let on March 29. I thank the minister and his department for recognizing the work that needs to be done on that particular road. When that road was built, it wasn't designed probably to take the amount of traffic that it handles today. Again, I talked earlier about the good things that are happening in my district, and one of them is the fact that we have two operating mines, that being Anaconda and Rambler, employing some 350 people from around the district. From the entrance to Rambler to Snooks Arm Road, which is where the mill is located, we have 84 single trips, 42 round trips of heavy haulers hauling ore back and forth from the mine to the mill every day.

In a good year, we have at least probably \$400 million worth of seafood. La Scie is known as probably one of the largest off-loading ports in Newfoundland. So in a good year, we have hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of seafood that come up over the La Scie road as well. Not to mention, Mr. Speaker, I talked about the forestry in our industry. We have contractors who are working down in that area as well that continue to use the road. So we're hauling pulpwood back and forth to the mill in Corner Brook. Then, it's your everyday traffic.

Right now, I think the traffic counts – while I listened to the Member for Conception Bay South last week talking about traffic counts on



his road and they are a lot more than what's on my road, Mr. Speaker, but I would suggest that when you look at the heavy haulers, the fish trucks, the wood trucks and you take the amount of wear and tear that's on that road with these heavy haulers, it's no comparison. Again, while we have all this traffic, we're happy to have it as well. We just need the infrastructure to be rebuilt to be able to handle such traffic.

Other things that we look at, other factors I guess when we determine roadwork with the minister and his department, we look at safety, we look at the economics of the area and we look at volume of traffic. Again, that road would handle all three of those factors.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I wonder sometimes about some of the roads –

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

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

**MR. WARR:** – that are less used and some of those determining factors don't play a part. I look at two or three roads in my area. The one leading to Seal Cove hasn't been touched in a number of years. I know those people deserve to drive over good roads as well.

Our previous administration, a few years back, decided to do that Fleur de Lys road, highway 410 leading into Fleur de Lys, which would be maybe 20-and-change kilometres; repaved that road and forgot to do the Coachman's Cove road. Coachman's Cove is 2.2 kilometres off the Fleur de Lys road. I have no idea why they decided to do the Fleur de Lys road and forget about the Coachman's Cove road. They had the equipment. They had the engineers down there. I don't know why we would waste that type of money to go back and do it when we could have done it in the beginning.

While I'm on that, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Shoe Cove road as well. In 2015, there was 10 kilometres of roadwork done on the section from Harbour Round to La Scie. They decided to do one kilometre of the road going into Shoe Cove. Mr. Speaker, there's only 1.9 kilometres leading from La Scie road to Shoe Cove. Why they would choose to do one

kilometre instead of doing 1.9, I've yet to understand that as well.

Mr. Speaker, we did kick up a little bit of noise and got on the open-line shows and the radio stations and made our points. Certainly, the government of the day decided to go down and do that complete road which was the right decision. I'm certainly glad they did.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about – I just have a minute left – health care in our area and the effects the 2018 budget had on health care in my district because there's a lot of optimism in the community of Springdale, and in particular Green Bay as a whole. I want to thank the Minister of Health and Community Services. I want to thank the Minister of Public Works as well.

We had a cottage hospital that was built in 1952, 66 years old, Mr. Speaker. I think that was the last hospital built actually by the Government of Newfoundland. There was \$6.2 million allotted for the new Green Bay Health Care Centre in *Budget 2018*, and I couldn't be more proud as an MHA when the minister advised me of this spending.

Mr. Speaker, my time is winding down. I'll take the opportunity to continue with my remarks on my next opportunity, and as always, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Once again, it's a privilege to rise in this hon. House as we debate *Budget 2018*. Mr. Speaker, this is the second of three speeches that we all have the opportunity to participate in because there are three phases to the budget and the motions that have been brought forward.

*Budget 2018* while not as harmful perhaps as previous budgets with all of the increases in taxes, it certainly wasn't helpful. It didn't do anything to advance our province and its

economy. It was really more of a stay-the-course budget that really didn't do anything to foster confidence in the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue to invest in businesses here and homes. There are still a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, who are contemplating leaving this province.

As I often say when I get up in the Budget Speech, 2019 is around the corner. So I encourage everyone to try and hang in there, better times are on the horizon. It is we the people who will choose who our leaders will be, and in 2019 we have an opportunity to once again express our voices as voters in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will have the opportunity to vote for the people or persons that we feel are going to best represent our values, our beliefs and the type of economy we would like to see in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I will say, I do feel many of the voters – in fact, I know from discussions with many of them that a lot of voters in 2015 were disappointed. Everyone is going to be taking a much closer look I think in 2019 at what the real policies are and who they think they can trust to deliver on the policies that are outlined.

This is the third budget now of the Ball government. In 2015, I remember as we were heading into the election, it got to be a pretty animated place here in this House of Assembly leading into the election. I'm sure you will experience that again next year. It's a different kind of frenzy that takes over the place.

In those days I believe the Premier, who was then the Leader of the Opposition, talked about Newfoundland and Labrador being the last, the least and the lowest. In 2015, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't the case. In fact, we were still revered across this great country of ours as being people who were on the ball, on the move, and Newfoundland and Labrador was still an up and coming province that was admired and respected by many others across the country for having rode through the recession as successfully as we did. We had some strong procedures in place with respect to attrition and P3s that we were looking at as methods of reducing spending of the provincial coffers. Oh boy, were we ever attacked for that.

Well, attrition was called job losses, and P3s were called job losses. But, lo and behold, two years and so many months into the Liberals' mandate, they're touting the merits of attrition and they're touting the merits of P3s. That's because these are good policies. These are policies that we identified as Progressive Conservatives as mechanisms for reducing spending and they can work. It's really interesting to see how that has changed in the last two years, but the reality is they were good policies. So good, in fact, that the Liberals themselves are contemplating bringing them in.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the budget documents, they're alarming. You look at the one titled *The Economy*, and on page 11 of that document we see that in terms of real GDP and employment growth, Newfoundland and Labrador – tied with New Brunswick, mind you – is the lowest in all of Canada. We have the lowest rate of GDP and we have the lowest rate of employment in all of Canada. Two short years of Liberal leadership, and this is where we are in terms of economic performance.

We hear politicians get up and say this is great and this is wonderful, but when you look at the facts and you look at the figures – which all of us as residents of this province are capable of doing – the numbers tell a very different story about where we are as a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador under the current Liberal government, Mr. Speaker. It's not a good change, it's really not a good change that we're seeing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Page 13 of that very same document has a list of provincial economic indicators, Mr. Speaker. If you look at those, you will see that household income for the next five years is projected to decrease. Each and every one of us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will have less household income two years down the road than what we have today.

Today, we have less income than what we had two years ago, Mr. Speaker, because of the additional taxes which, when you add up 300 fees increases, bringing back the HST on insurance, raising the HST 2 per cent – which was identified by the Liberals as a job killer and implemented by them shortly after they got elected.

Trust is going to be a very big issue I think in the next election, because people trusted that there would not be an increase to the HST and that was part of their reason for voting the way they did. Lo and behold, within a year that came crashing. They did not only have to pay higher HST, but they're out of pocket with all the additional fees, on average, by about \$1,500 to \$3,000 per person, Mr. Speaker.

In some households where you have multiple members of a family owning vehicles, their disposal income has probably dropped by \$10,000 per household. Mr. Speaker, \$10,000 is a lot of new clothes that people can buy, it's a lot of nights out at a restaurant that people can have and it's a lot of tickets to the Arts and Culture attractions that we have in our beautiful province. It's a lot of vehicles that are not being bought. It's a lot of kitchens that are not being renovated. It's a lot of new flooring that's not going in people's houses.

People don't have the money to spend. We see, Mr. Speaker, as we look at what's happening on the federal level, that by 2019, as a result of all the federal tax changes under a Liberal leadership, we're going to be hit with an additional \$2,200 per household in federal taxes.

Mr. Speaker, you take a chunk of about \$10,000 to \$12,000 out of the households of Newfoundlanders and it's no wonder why we're in the state we're in, and it's no wonder why we see things like retail sales forecast to drop significantly over the next five years. We're also seeing the unemployment rate continue to rise, and no plan on the horizon as to how we're going to support the entrepreneurs who create the jobs to drive the economy.

Investors, both within the Province of Newfoundland, investors from the country or global investors, before they drop their money in any economy, in any province, in any country, they have to have a confidence level that their investment is going to be protected and what they're investing in today, the parameters around that investment remain solid and don't change over the next five to 10 years. If they can't trust that if they invest today, the rules are going to change next year, they may be much more leery to come to our jurisdiction versus another where

they feel they can have trust and confidence in the deals they are trying to make, Mr. Speaker.

It's a very, very grave concern for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am happy, I will say, to notice the change in their messaging and their tone and to hear them talk about the good things that are happening and the good potential we do have in Newfoundland and Labrador. There's a song Simani wrote. It talks about the strength of Newfoundlanders and how we're gleamed by the lightning and strong from the storms. It's absolutely true because we are strong and resilient. We wouldn't be here today, in fact, if we were weren't so strong and resilient.

I read a book one time about the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. There was a point in our history when they used to come over in the fishing boats that England started to get worried about how many people were leaving England and coming to the Island of Newfoundland but not returning. So they actually started to pay the captains of the boats \$25 a head for every fishermen they brought back to England in the fall. So there was a very concerted effort to try and prevent colonization of our fine province. We withstood that and we did populate this wonderful province. We have produced some incredible citizens that have gone all around the world to offer their skills, their talents, their strengths and their intellect.

We have a proud history, Mr. Speaker, and we have a strong, bright future ahead of us, I do truly believe. I look forward to seeing the emergence of our potential once again in years to come and moving past this era of doom and gloom that we find ourselves in.

One of the things that I do want to talk about, and I truly hope that the executive council opposite gives some serious consideration to, is the fact that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador simply cannot afford another tax. To say well, we raised your taxes on gas already so instead of dropping it, we'll convert that now to the carbon tax, that's not okay. People are hanging on because they're waiting for the rest of that tax increase on the gas to drop. They do not want to see it converted to a carbon tax.

The other issue I think we have as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is the amount of output of emissions that we have as a province. With our investment in clean, green energy, Mr. Speaker, with our potential to truly be the energy warehouse that can attract the mines to Labrador because we have the power – instead of shipping it through Quebec to Ontario, the power is right here in our province. Because we're creating those kinds of opportunities, Mr. Speaker. We're becoming an even cleaner and greener province. So why should we who are not the major emitters of the carbon tax be the first to the table paying a carbon tax?

Mr. Speaker, we still don't even know where this carbon tax money is going to be spent. There's no clear direction on that, so I think that Newfoundland and Labrador should stand with the other provinces in this country who have the courage to push back to Ottawa and say now is not the time for this carbon tax. With the economy with the way that it is in this province and in many other provinces in the country, maybe Ottawa needs to stand back and rethink where it wants to go with this carbon tax and look at delaying. I think they should look at eliminating it myself, but certainly a delay to help our economies which are struggling through some rough times, Mr. Speaker.

If our government doesn't fight for us as a province, if our provincial leadership doesn't fight for that then we certainly can't expect any change at the national level. Even to see an effort to try and get some reprieve for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would be great, but instead what we see is a government that's rushing to be the first one out of the gate and first ones to impose this tax.

If Ottawa is saying well, you know, if you don't something, we're going to make something up and you'll have to impose our solution, well, let's see what their solution is. Maybe it's not going to be as bad as the increase in taxes that our government is looking at converting, who knows; but certainly to just sit back and say okay, Ottawa, we'll do as you say, Ottawa, no matter how much it damages us, Ottawa, I think that's wrong. We need a government that is willing to stand up to Ottawa and to fight for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

When this third budget came down on March 27, this year's big story that was in the government messaging is that it's steady as she goes. No big layoffs and a very, very, very minute bit of tax relief, which we are going to start seeing in January of next year.

So the Liberal message was basically relax, everything is in good hands. We have to ask the question, Mr. Speaker, it's our responsibility as the Opposition and it's our responsibility as each and every citizen living here in Newfoundland and Labrador to question them. They're telling us to relax, everything is in good hands and we have to question: Is that really true? Was this the budget that our province needs, *The Way Forward*, or was it really a step backwards in the wrong direction?

Mr. Speaker, some people are going to say wait a minute, you're a PC, how can we trust a PC to have a fair, unbiased assessment of a Liberal budget. They're your political opponents. That's what some people will say. I hear it from Members opposite – fair statement, but it is our job in Opposition to hold the government to account, and we are doing that.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** We like our job.

**MS. PERRY:** We like our job, indeed we do. We really like our job, Mr. Speaker.

We're only seven in our crew and three to make up 10 in Opposition, and I think we're doing an absolutely good job in terms of holding government accountable for the decisions that they make, and raising the questions that the people of our province want raised. We're going to continue to do that on their behalf and we're going to continue to get stronger in that regard.

It's our job to raise the concerns honestly, with integrity and based on solid evidence. That's the only way that we're going to earn the trust of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I guess this side of the House is truly an alternative for the province to get back on track. We really think that when 2019 comes, the people of this province are going to have the opportunity to make a decision for better leadership.

I am running of time here this morning, so I'm going to take my seat shortly. Again, where this

is a budget speech and we do have the opportunity during a budget speech to speak about any issue whatsoever, there are no limitations and no restrictions on relevance, Mr. Speaker, I do want to end today by talking about the PC Leadership Convention and to throw a bouquet out to two fine gentlemen who have had the courage to put themselves forward.

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

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

**MS. PERRY:** To put themselves forward to lead, as options for leadership for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Each and every person –

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

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

**MS. PERRY:** – who put themselves forward for politics, I think – and I was a regular citizen like everybody else, Mr. Speaker, and I had my opinions of politicians. And now that I'm here in this hon. House, my eyes are much wider open than they used to be, and I have a much greater understanding.

People who are willing to make the sacrifices to really try and improve the greater good for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador should all be commended. I truly believe that and I truly believe that we have two phenomenal individuals who have put themselves forward to lead the Progressive Conservatives and present us as a viable option –

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

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

**MS. PERRY:** – in 2029 election, so hats off to all of them, hats off to every politician for trying. We have to continue to try, Mr. Speaker, to make this a better place. We owe it to our children, we owe it to our grandchildren, we owe it to all the fine men and women, the seniors, everybody in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to truly try and make this place a better place and, in fact, the best place that it can possibly be.

Mr. Speaker, we do have the resources. We're nowhere near bankruptcy –

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

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

**MS. PERRY:** If you look at our balance sheet and you weigh our assets against our liabilities, we're nowhere near bankruptcy. Such fear mongering, I'm glad they finally stopped it. This province has potential. We're well on our way, 2019 is around the corner, budget 2020 can be much better than what we're seeing produced.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 of non-confidence, the budget amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is defeated.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Division has been called.

Whips and House Leaders, please call in your Members.

### Division

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion of non-confidence, the budget amendment?

All those in favour, please stand.

**CLERK:** Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Brazil, Ms. Perry, Mr. Petten, Mr. Lester, Ms. Rogers, Ms. Michael, Mr. Lane.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against the motion, please rise.

**CLERK:** Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Mitchelmore, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bernard Davis, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Bragg, Ms. Haley, Mr. Derek Bennett, Ms. Cathy Bennett, Mr. Finn, Mr. Reid, Ms. Parsley, Mr. King, Mr. Dean, Ms. Pam Parsons and Mr. Holloway.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: eight; and the nays: 25.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

The budget motion is defeated.

We will now return to the main debate on the main budget.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

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

It's a pleasure to get up once again and speak on the budget. It's always good to stand in your place in this House and speak about the various aspects of the budget. I guess various aspects of everything that's affecting each one of us in our daily lives, which pretty well starts in this House and spreads out.

I'm not going to be belabour it, but I have to go back to one issue. I spoke about it in my other two times up and I just wanted to quickly point it out again. I've asked numerous times in the House for the roads – I go back to the roads. I know Members opposite they'll – I made the comment to take politics out of paving and I've yet to see that happen. I'm waiting – hopefully, I will see that eventually but right now, to date, I haven't.

I want to be on record one more time. I know I'll have other times, probably, but this is my third speaking on this budget, I have to say I think it's incumbent upon the government and Minister of Transportation and Works to provide that comprehensive list to the people of the province because it's only right. It's something that they

promised that they'd provide comprehensive scores of all roads in the province, where you landed; people would know when the road is going to be paved.

It's something that was promised. It's something I'll keep asking for and I'm being on record here again today of asking for it once more. I look forward to, possibly, one of these days, or one of these days soon, that information will be provided. We'll keep asking, Mr. Speaker. It's our job to do that and I'm looking forward to finally hearing something on it.

The next issue I'd like to discuss is something that I've asked a lot of questions in this House about and that's carbon pricing. We ask questions. I understand there's a plan in the works that the minister refers to, and that's fine. It's supposedly this federal tax and that's fine, but I've said before and I'll say it again, we're elected in this province to represent the people of this province. I feel strongly, and our caucus and our party feel strongly, that another tax is the last thing the people in this province need.

In saying that, and I've spoken a lot, there have been a lot of conversations about it and I've spoken out a lot on it. I think the bigger piece that not a lot of people are talking about, is the dynamics that are happening across the country with carbon pricing. You have Ontario, which we all know the power Ontario has in the federal government – it's huge. You have a person right now, the Leader of the Official Opposition up there, Mr. Ford, who's very outspoken on the carbon pricing. He's going against it.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out the dynamics of what's happening there. He's going to garner support within most of Ontario, people who live in Ontario, because they don't want extra costs. They don't want extra prices put on them. Right now, he's well out in front, and the way things look anything is possible. If he is successful in June, that's going to throw a big wrench into the Prime Minister and the federal government's plan for carbon pricing.

I think you can go ahead, and the Prime Minister can forge ahead and Minister McKenna, they can go ahead with the carbon tax plan, but not having Ontario on your side, well caution to the wind. It's something that I think is going to

cause them to have to reconsider their full plan, because I think it's a non-starter. If you haven't got the bread and butter of being elected Prime Minister of this country, if you don't have Ontario you don't get elected, and we've seen that over and over again. They carry an awful lot of weight in the federal Legislature.

When we talk about carbon pricing, we can play on it all we want, and we can go back and forth. That's part of what we do here in this House, go back and forth on lots of issues. I really feel this strongly, I think a lot of people are not really registering fully – I think it's getting out there, because the more we talk about it I think is better, it's a good conversation – how it affects them. There's still, and there has always been that perceived notion.

When you talk about emissions, you talk about carbon pricing, you see these big polluters but you don't see the family at the supermarket buying groceries off the shelf paying more. You look at the stacks, you look at – around here we look at Come By Chance, we look at Holyrood. We don't look at the day-to-day stuff.

Like, we don't look at the person who's going to the funeral home paying for a cremation. There's an actual fee built into that based on carbon pricing. That's not fear mongering, that's true. That has actually happened.

I've said it before, I think I said it in this House, it happened in Alberta. The cremation at funeral parlours were actually putting a line item there on the bill when people had cremations done. It caused a huge uproar, and it's no longer there. It's still there, but it's not there in a line item. People found it very insulting, and there was a big outcry over it.

Again, I've spoken to people in Alberta who've told me some stories. They are presently under carbon pricing, and it is mixed reviews. I think out there as well, with the political climate out there, it looks very much like the Conservative Party, whatever they have themselves called now in Alberta under Jason Kenney. They look like they may very well take over in the next general election out there. Another person who's against the carbon pricing.

You can park Newfoundland and Labrador where we are with our seven seats and our influence federally and nationally on the scene. You can't deny the power of these big provinces and the weight they carry around the federal table. They're not in favour of this. Saskatchewan is another one to throw in there. They're already out there against it.

Carbon pricing is far from a done deal if you ask me, Mr. Speaker. I think there are a lot more shoes to fall on this issue but it's the issue of how it affects the day-to-day lives of every person in this province. That's never been relayed. It's just like a bogeyman, the word carbon pricing is there but no one really grasps on to what carbon pricing really means.

It sounds great. We're reducing emissions. We're protecting the environment. No one on this side is against that. No one on this side is against climate change and doing stuff to improve it. We just don't feel a tax is the answer. Punishing people because there are emissions or they're being considered polluters. I've heard people say the polluter pays. A lot of polluters in this province, if you want to call every man, woman and child in this province, can't afford to pay. They're at the max of paying now.

There are ways we can deal with carbon emissions. There are lots of things we can do. Do we have to tax people more? I don't think so.

I use this example. If you have a furnace in your home, you burn furnace fuel. So you're burning fossil fuel, your chimney is creating emissions. The polluter pays. Is that going to stop me? Is that going to make me go into a \$20,000 investment to get rid of that and probably bring in another heating source in my home because you're going to charge me an extra three or four cents on my furnace oil as a punitive measure to carbon pricing? No, because the upfront cost to replace that is just too much, and most families won't. They'll suck it up.

You had this gas tax that was brought in in the 2016 budget. People complained about it. It hurt people and it hurt the economy. People still never got electric cars. They still never carpooled. That's not the way our population is designed and the dynamics of the way our

communities are. They still drove. They paid the extra cost and it affected other things, other purchasing power.

Carbon tax will have the same effect on people, Mr. Speaker. It's not going to change their behaviour. That's not the answer, but it will hurt the economy and it will hurt individuals. All the while, where does this money go? You hear of these new innovative, creative ways that you can bring it into innovation to help reduce emissions. Provinces will get this money back.

That all sounds fine in theory, Mr. Speaker, but I personally think, at the end of the day, that may be all right for a short period of time. I think at the end of the day, you're going to see it going into general revenues. It will be just like any other tax. They have the GST. As people will remember, that came in. A tax is a tax.

They say the first tax came in to pay for the war a long time ago. We know how long ago the war was and we know how long taxes have been around. That was a temporary measure to pay for the war and we're still paying it.

I feel the reasoning given for a tax – I'm not talking about emissions and I'm not talking about climate change. The reason given – this doesn't answer the question. Taxing is not the answer to this, Mr. Speaker. I think there is lots of research, there are a lot more things we could do to deal with this issue. Taxing is not the answer.

We feel strongly about it and I think that a lot of people – the more you speak about this, I find, the more that it's brought out in the public domain, the more people start paying attention to it.

I'll go back again. I love talking to the common people because I feel that's where we all need to be. As recently as last week, people are starting to ask questions about carbon pricing. What does it mean? I heard you speak about this, or I read this or I read that. What does it mean?

I'm not for one second saying: That crowd, the government over there, they're doing wrong. I'm not saying anyone is doing wrong. I don't think this is the right answer.

I understand carbon pricing. I understand petroleum emissions. I understand our climate change. I understand all of that, and I'm in support of most of it. I just don't feel this is the answer to our problems. When you talk to most people, they get it. They agree, too. Most people cannot afford more taxes. That's what it comes done to. It's another tax. Any way you cut it, it's another tax.

You take the four cents, as the minister referenced the other day, taking the four cents off gas. That's good, but there's still going to be another cost come in. Whatever way that's manoeuvred into our system, that's still going to be another cost, Mr. Speaker, and people have to absorb it. Right now, I feel that people are pretty much at their limit of taxation in this province. I don't know if many people in this House can disagree with that.

It was brought in in 2016 and we're in 2018 and it's still there. So we may very well go – maybe next year during the election you might see some adjustments made. I somehow doubt it, but you never know. That seems to happen in those years. I'm not sure people will pay much attention then, though, Mr. Speaker.

Another issue I'd like to mention is something we haven't talked about in a while now. It's kind of coming to the end of the school year but I think it's still a very valid argument and it's one that's going to resurface in September. Most people are winding down now, but it's the 1.6 kilometre policy. That issue, we brought it up here in the House through Question Period, through PMR and what have you. I met with a lot of parents in my district. They had their own organized protests. I met with school councils. I presented numerous petitions as my colleagues have done the same. This policy has been around forever. Our family models have changed; our communities have changed. No longer are we living in those little, sleepy communities where a scattered vehicle would pass by and children were used to walking long distances. Society was different then, Mr. Speaker.

I used to walk two or three miles to get to my school, elementary school, but that was accepted. There was no such thing as bus coming to pick us up. I don't think the bus could get in where I lived to actually turn around. It's



the way we all lived, but in today's day and age – I have children in my district who actually walk to and from school and they're walking on Route 60. That's a four-lane highway. It's up to 20,000 vehicles a day, as I've said in this House many times. It's not safe.

I have schools that are right on that road; they're on that four-lane highway. Under this policy, they have to walk to school. Again, the school district will say it's not a walk zone, but if you have no other choice it becomes a walk zone. You have a single mother who has no vehicle, living on her own with a small child at home, another child is in elementary, grade one – primary, I should say. These are the most vulnerable people.

I've argued to this for elementary students. You're looking at five- to 11-year-olds; they are your most vulnerable. When you get into the high school, junior high and high school, busing is never usually an issue there because it's a different culture. They get in high school, a lot of them drive, they get rides, they don't mind walking and they can walk the roads. They walked the roads when they were hanging out with their friends. It's a different society; not when you're looking at your most vulnerable. Your five- to 11-year-olds are the most vulnerable and that's who I've spoken out for, because one life is too many.

After all the debate that we go on about here in this House, it's unimaginable. I wouldn't want to think about that but the reality is there are some people who really struggle. They can't bring their child to school. They are home, they have a small child home, they have no way of getting – there's a real stress placed on them. People try to help them out and whatnot, but I've seen it first-hand and I know my colleagues have as well. This puts people in a real predicament. This really affects people.

The costs have always been thrown out. There's a cost. It's a lot of money, Millions of dollars for this and millions for that, but I don't think you can be accused of wasting money on our youth, on our children, for their safety. Safety has to be paramount. Policy cannot override safety, Mr. Speaker. I've said it here in this House many, many times and no one will be critical of any government that brings in a policy or makes

changes to an archaic policy that's going to protect our youth and our most innocent. It amazes me, to be honest. I've often thought government would be applauded for it. They would be absolutely applauded it. Sure, it's going to cost money but the money is found for lots of other things. I think money could be found for something like this. This is too important to place a dollar figure on, Mr. Speaker.

It's something that we will continue to lobby for in this House and even outside this House. It's too important an issue for us just to give up on. I know we're pushing the end of April and the school year is coming to an end, but rest assured come September when the new bus routes get out and new children start in school, I'll be dealing with a lot more parents again. It's a ritual every year.

I understand their points loud and clear. I will continue to advocate for them because it's something I strongly believe in. It's something that's very important to me, not just as an individual, as a parent, not only as a Member for the district but it's a huge issue. I think a lot of us face it around here. The Northeast Avalon is a growing area, the family models change and our roadwork and our population has changed.

Mr. Speaker, as my time is starting to wind down, I'd like to just make a couple of reference points. I don't actually talk about this topic that much and for no reason other than I try to zero in on some real stuff that really affects my district and my critic roles.

I listened intently and I hear a lot of commentary that comes across the way every time it comes up, the response, a lot of times, to questions I may ask or stuff I may say. I always hear Muskrat Falls, Muskrat Falls, Muskrat Falls. Muskrat Falls is here. It's soon going to be completed. It's going to be online next year.

The critics are out there, there are proponents and critics. That's all fine. The debate, sure, will be out on that and we have an inquiry coming, all that is going to happen and that will run its course. I can't help but think when I sit down and I start listening there's so much politics being played with such an important project, important issue to the people of this province.

The power rates are going to double; you heard that over and over again. Not so much lately but now people are starting to realize are they really going to double or is that the reason they're going to double. Then you're going to find a government that's going to come in when it comes online: Oh, we saved the day, the rates didn't double.

That stuff causes fear amongst people. I don't know, I personally think there are mitigating factors to preventing that from doubling. There are others built into this project that could – I don't think the rates will double. I personally don't think it. They shouldn't. All of the rhetoric sometimes moves away from the bigger picture.

I've said this many times and I'll be on record here again today, I know a lot of those people, the previous people that were involved in the inner workings of this project and had a lot of say in it. A lot of them are pretty credible people. They will say it and I believe every time they say it, I fully believe them, their decision was based on the best available information. Given that same information today, those same people would make the same decision. I think anyone in this chamber probably would agree and do the same thing, based on the information you have before you.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. Is it a bad project? I'm not sure; I'm still not convinced it is a bad project. I think that the media, the beaten up this has taken publicly it's amazing that some people still think that the project is a good project. It will make us 98 per cent green energy. It has created thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs. I mean, there are a lot of jobs being created; good-paying jobs that when this project is up and running next year, a lot of those jobs are not going to be there. There's going to be a void there in our economy and in our tax base.

It's not all bad, Mr. Speaker, and people can be critical and that's fine and that's what this is all about. That's why I bring up this Muskrat Falls debate because it's something that I don't talk a lot about, but I do feel that there's more politics being played with this and it's a real punchline than really the true project. I think this inquiry will shed better light on the project and on the decisions that were made and, hopefully, that

will elevate those, I guess a lot of falsehoods and misdemeanors that are out in the community, out in society now. People will understand this project. They'll get a clearer picture of how this came to be and what decisions were made.

Right now, there's a lot of rhetoric and, really, there's not a lot of substance to a lot of the commentary. I guess that's it, that's the world we live in and sometimes a lot of stuff happens through partisan politics sometimes and trying to get one up on people.

My final part there, Mr. Speaker, the economic indicators. So when the budget is released, every economic indicator is pointing down. A lot of that is a result of 2016. Those effects are really starting to come home. When we spoke about the 2016 budget in this House, I remember speaking about it – a lot of the effects in 2016, I said here myself, you wouldn't see them until 2017, maybe even 2018. Some were immediate; some were more long term.

You look at all of these economic indicators, whether it be your household incomes, your domestic product, your retail sales, they're all trending downward. It's in their own documents –

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

**MR. PETTEN:** It's in their own documents and I think that pretty well sums up the 2018 budget, I just think it's a variation of 2016.

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

Thank you.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

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

I always welcome an opportunity to address Members on both sides of this hon. House. It's been more than two years since I was elected to represent the wonderful people in the beautiful

District of Burin - Grand Bank. It's been an interesting two years, to say the least.

During those first two years serving as Government Whip, I learned very quickly most of the intricacies of how this hon. House works, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier, once again, for giving me that opportunity, as I do for the new role he has entrusted me. I knew before taking on the role as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health and Community Services that this was a large and complex department, but I didn't realize just how large and complex until I actually started in the role, Mr. Speaker.

I've been in that position now since last summer, since last August and with every day that passes, I have a deeper appreciation for the men and women who make our health care system work. I have a deep, deep appreciation and much respect for the Minister of Health and Community Services. Oftentimes, in fact, I refer to him as a walking library, a very knowledgeable individual.

If I've learned anything about this department, Mr. Speaker, over the last several months it's this: The Department of Health and Community Services is staffed with hard-working and dedicated individuals. The health boards, agencies and various interest groups throughout the province are equally staffed with hard-working and dedicated individuals, many of them volunteers, Mr. Speaker. The department and the boards and agencies with which it works and collaborates are interested, first and foremost, in the health and well-being of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It has been my pleasure to represent the minister at several health-related events, Mr. Speaker. Everywhere I have gone, I have been greeted openly and warmly, and have been struck by the high degree of professionalism in which the issues are handled. Mr. Speaker, I am also struck by the dedication of the many volunteers who are part of health boards or involved with the various advocacy groups. Their work truly makes a difference in the lives of practically every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, and I thank them for all that they do.

My new role has given me an opportunity to do more than represent the minister when he's not

available, Mr. Speaker. As is widely known, the Burin Peninsula has been facing a crisis that has brought much grief and despair to many families – many families in my district. With the alarming number of suicides over the past couple of years, it was critical that something be done. I was very pleased to be able to work with the stakeholders in looking for answers.

It was a good day on the Burin Peninsula when the Premier, along with the Minister of Health and Community Services as well as the CEO and officials with Eastern Health, travelled to the Burin Peninsula in January and announced the province will be implementing a new Roots of Hope program, becoming the first province in Canada, in the country, Mr. Speaker, to sign on this new national initiative.

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

**MS. HALEY:** I am confident the new program will offer those suffering with mental health issues hope and a pathway to a better future.

Of course, Health and Community Services is just one of the many departments, boards and agencies that are staffed by dedicated individuals. I think I've dealt with practically every department and many of the boards and agencies since being elected. Every time I have approached the department, I have received prompt and professional service. Of course, I could say the same thing about the ministers leading those departments. So it's nice to lead by example, Mr. Speaker. Ministers have busy lives and I am grateful for their willingness to listen to my concerns when they come up and get back to me in a timely manner.

It goes without saying that as the Member for the District of Burin - Grand Bank, issues related to the district will always be a priority for me. I believe all assembled would agree that we assumed government at a time of economic decline in this province. We have committed ourselves to the task for rebuilding our economy and I believe we are well on the road in doing that.

I can certainly speak for what is happening on the Burin Peninsula, after a period of economic woes, the area I share with the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue is finally seeing the

light at the end of the tunnel. There is a general feeling of positivity on the Burin Peninsula right now.

For some years now, Mr. Speaker, the residents of St. Lawrence and the surrounding towns have been waiting for the revival of the mining industry in the area. When I became elected, it was certainly a priority of mine. After months of negotiations and hard work, we were finally able to broker a deal that was not just good for Canada Fluorspar Inc., but a deal that took into account our fiscal situation and was ultimately good for the province as well.

I, along with the Premier, and several other Members of our caucus, recently visited the site and everyone was tremendously impressed by the magnitude of the operation there. I am happy to report the construction phase at the facility is complete and soon Fluorspar concentrate will once again be leaving for markets around the world. A shot in the arm for St. Lawrence, a shot in the arm for the Burin Peninsula and a shot in the arm for the whole province.

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

**MS. HALEY:** Mr. Speaker, since becoming elected, I have also concluded a new deal with Ocean Choice International that will see the company operate the plant in Fortune for four more years, with an agreement widely supported by the workers at the plant.

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

**MS. HALEY:** The Husky oil project that was announced last year will see work carried out at the Cow Head facility in Marystown.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** In Marystown.

**MS. HALEY:** In Marystown yes, while work continues on finding a new operator for the shipyard.

We have a trained and skilled workforce on the Burin Peninsula. Give it to us to build and we will build it, and build it as well as any workforce in any part of this world, Mr. Speaker.

Despite developments last summer, I am confident the Grieg sea farms project will soon become a reality – a project which has a potential to bring many jobs to Placentia Bay and the Burin Peninsula; a project that has the potential to impact people in every town in the area, Mr. Speaker.

There is no hiding the fact that we need to create jobs in this province, but we need to be mindful of environmental impacts as well. I am confident this is a project that can provide those much-needed jobs, Mr. Speaker, and do so in an environmentally responsible way.

We are also looking at an opportunity that is just now cropping up, Mr. Speaker. I use cropping up both figuratively and literally in referencing new entrants who are working hard on proposals to allow them to participate in the growing and marketing of cannabis for the recreation market.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that the former fish plant in Burin will soon be the site to which employees again head to earn an honest and good living for their families. I have been working along with the town and an eager entrepreneur to make this new project a reality. Hopefully, this new venture will become a reality in the very near future.

It's an exciting time for the Burin Peninsula, Mr. Speaker, with the initiatives I just outlined, but there are many other opportunities as well. It seems every region of Newfoundland and Labrador has something unique to offer, and the Burin Peninsula certainly has uniqueness in abundance and seldom does a tourist visit our area and leave disappointed.

I'm very pleased that the minister responsible for Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation has been able to visit us on several occasions now, Mr. Speaker. He's very aware of the tourism potential for the peninsula as a whole, and I believe I am correct in saying he is quite impressed with the work that has been done thus far.

There is no better example than the beautiful Town of Lourdes Cove, Mr. Speaker. In the summer of 2016, he visited Sandy Cove and we supported the efforts of the Town of Lourdes Cove to develop the area. Development in that

area is ongoing and I know I speak for the minister when I say the work that has been completed to this point is quite impressive.

We were told last summer there were tourists throughout North America at Sandy Cove and there was nothing but positive feedback.

As I did mention, our government did give some financial support for the Sandy Cove project, Mr. Speaker. Of course, there are those out there who would balk at such support, as looked at as being a waste of money. However, the reality is because of that increased tourism, an enterprising couple opened a combination convenience store, café and a bar, all under the one roof in Lord's Cove, Mr. Speaker, and have done extremely well since opening.

This has been more than a convenience for tourists, Mr. Speaker. Prior to this business taking root, the residents there had to travel to another town to even buy the most basic items. The Town of Lord's Cove didn't have a single convenience store, Mr. Speaker, not one single store. In addition to offering a convenience for locals, during the tourist season this enterprise also employs four or five people from the area who are now contributing to the economy of the province. In rural Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, every single job counts.

I will continue to support such developments, as will this government, because we recognize the need to diversify the economy. That will happen through large projects, medium-sized projects and through small ventures like the one I just referenced.

Sandy Cove is just one place for visitors to explore on the Burin Peninsula. Every nook and cranny has a hidden gem or two. If natural beauty is your thing, Fortune Bay East is sure to leave you in awe, as is Burin and the surrounding inlets and coves. A treasure trove of scenery for the budding photographer, Mr. Speaker.

If you are into history, we have lots of that to offer as well with the Heritage Run, Mr. Speaker. It's an area that was long desired as a base for fishing by several European nations, Portugal, France and England. Place names play homage to that rich French past, Mr. Speaker.

Some obvious, like Bay L'Argent, Port au Bras and Jacques Fontaine, some less obvious like Lawn and Lamaline. Then there's Fortune which takes its name from the Portuguese, but our history can be seen in more than road signs, Mr. Speaker.

Grand Bank is home to an array of sights which harken back to its seafaring past during the bygone days of schooners. There you'll find a seamen's museum laden with artifacts related to all aspects of working at sea. There's a stunning and moving memorial to lost sailors. Located on the grounds of the restored Harris House, you'll find a café that in itself is a mini museum, Mr. Speaker, and houses that are still topped with a widow's walk, a stark reminder of the dangers of the fishing industry.

For those who don't know, the widow's walk harkens back to the day of the schooner fishery, Mr. Speaker, when communication between vessels and shore were almost non-existent. The widow's walk was a small platform, accessible from the inside, but on the very roof of the house. With the husband at sea, and at a time approaching the anticipated return of the vessel on which he served, it was there that the woman would go in anticipation of seeing the vessel approach the harbour, and in dread of seeing the black flag that indicated the loss of life during the voyage.

Mr. Speaker, St. Lawrence offers a miners museum that pays tribute to the fluorspar miners of St. Lawrence, many of whom died due to accidents in the underground mines, or years later due to lung disease resulting from poor ventilation and airborne contaminants.

The museum also has an exhibit commemorating the USS *Truxtun* and USS *Pollux* disaster, Mr. Speaker. For those who are interested in the events that unfolded in the area on February 18, 1942, there is always someone on hand to narrate the tale of tragedy and heroism that is still commemorated every year in both St. Lawrence and Lawn. If you want a true feel for the area where that disaster occurred, you can now access the trail to Chambers Cove, where the USS *Truxtun* ran aground.

Well, a volunteer group, in fact, Mr. Speaker, in Lawn is busy raising funds for the construction

of a trail to Little Lawn Point, very near the sunken where the USS *Pollux* was lost. Of course, if you're a culture buff, you'll find your share of uniqueness in that field on the Burin Peninsula.

Some mistakenly think that all of the nuances of our culture are as a result of our proximity to the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The interaction between those French islands and the Burin Peninsula cannot be overstated. For the last two centuries we have been interacting with the people of the islands sharing ideas and customs.

During the summer you are almost as likely to see a vehicle with a St. Pierre and Miquelon licence plate on it as you would of our very own province. The ties have been strong for generations, with many families, including my own, Mr. Speaker, having relatives on the French islands. Many of the family names in places like Point May and Lamaline are also a reminder of this link. However, some of that for which we are known had little to do with St. Pierre and Miquelon, rather it was a result of our seafarers heading via trading schooners to the ports of the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea.

Soccer, or football as it's known by our other residents even today, was discovered during voyages that was brought to the Burin Peninsula, Mr. Speaker. Not so long ago, practically every town on the Burin Peninsula had both adult and minor soccer programs. There was almost a religious zeal with which it was played, and rivalries between towns could be fierce, Mr. Speaker. The arrival of new sports or technologies that offered other ways to be entertained have quietened many of the soccer pitches in the area, though there are still towns where it remains the sport of choice.

Several years ago, Mr. Speaker, as an economic development officer, I took on the task of compiling some of that history and culture and presenting it throughout the district on storyboards for residents, of course, and visitors alike to visit. That history was sometimes shrouded in pain and loss of life, such as the story of the tsunami that hit the bottom of the Peninsula in 1929. Twenty-eight lives were lost, Mr. Speaker. The most ever recorded in an

earthquake-related incident in Canada, with towns from Lamaline to Port au Bras suffering great hardship.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, a lot of history. A unique culture. Thanks to the efforts of authors such as Robert Parsons and Randall Pope, as well as the efforts of volunteers at the many museums and historical boards, a history and culture that is being preserved for those who want to reminisce, and for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, the Burin Peninsula is indeed unique, but it is not uniquely unique. Every Member of this House can attest to the uniqueness of the area he or she represents: The sand banks in Burgeo; the fjords of Gros Morne Park; the Torngat Mountains; Quidi Vidi and the Battery, right here in our capital city; and, of course, the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. There are too many to mention, Mr. Speaker. You can literally take a map of Newfoundland and Labrador, randomly point to any place, and you'll be pointing at a place with something unique to offer.

I have to acknowledge the terrific work being done by the tourism section in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation again, Mr. Speaker. Not long ago, in a gala in New York City, that great work was recognized when the department was awarded no less than eight Adrian Awards, including the Best in Show Award for its Off the Beaten Path marketing campaign. Those catchy ads, which have been rolled out over the last few years, are obviously being noticed, Mr. Speaker. We have a province worth seeing and the message is out there: Come visit us, you won't be disappointed.

If those ads aren't enough to shine a positive light on the province, anyone who saw the beaming and smiling face of Kaetlyn Osmond during the Winter Olympics, had to be impressed, Mr. Speaker. What a wonderful ambassador for this province. She returns with two medals, but even if she hadn't medalled we would have been proud of her. A talented skater for sure, but as nice as she is talented, as was evident during her visit back home here in Marystown.

One day, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue will rise, I'm sure, and mention her in a Member's statement again.

As important as it is to entice visitors to our province, I think it is equally important that we get to know our province better. I'd encourage anyone and everyone to spend at least part of their vacation each year exploring a part of Newfoundland and Labrador they haven't yet visited. I'm sure you will be as amazed as those who come from away.

The only way to really get to know a region is to visit and explore, Mr. Speaker. Every region offers things that help define it. An added bonus to an interprovincial vacation, you'd be contributing to your own economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to change the course now and touch on an area that is already starting to impact our province. We have just gone through a winter where, in most parts of the province, there has only been on occasion one or two in which we had to do any real snow shovelling. This is becoming the norm as our winters become milder and milder. Unless you're into winter activities or have a \$10,000 snowmobile parked in the shed, with never the chance to use it, you probably appreciate the reprieve from the white stuff.

Mr. Speaker, I have lots to say but I see my time is winding down. I want to say thank you so much for this opportunity today. I have touched on quite a few topics but they are topics I feel passionately about.

During the spring sitting of the House, I hope to speak more broadly on some of those topics or on other important issues that are raised.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, given the hour of the day, I believe the House should recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

**MR. SPEAKER:** A mover and a seconder.

**MS. COADY:** A mover and a seconder.

I move, seconded by the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, noting the hour, that we recess until the hour of 2 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour of the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

In accordance with Standing Order 9(1)(b), this House stands in recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Thank you.

### Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

On December 7, 2017, this House of Assembly unanimously passed a resolution requesting that the Speaker travel to Turkey as an emissary of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to advance discussions toward a shared goal of establishing a monument commemorating the experience of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at Gallipoli during the First World War.

I travelled to Turkey from January 21 to 26, 2018, and it was hosted by His Excellency Mr. İsmail Kahraman, Speaker of the of the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey and the Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Mr. Yaşar Tüzün. The program consisted of meetings and events to foster new relationships and to advance discussions with key decision makers to establish the monument.

I am pleased to report to the House of Assembly today that relations between our jurisdictions have progressed positively during my visit. I was honoured to receive a proposal from the Minister of Culture and Tourism for the Republic of Turkey, the Hon. Professor Numan Kurtulmuş, for the installation of a caribou monument, commemorating the Royal

Newfoundland Regiment, in Gallipoli National Park.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The proposed site is adjacent to Hill 10 Cemetery and it is of particularly emotional significance as it is the resting place of many Royal Newfoundland Regiment soldiers, including Private Hugh McWhirter, the first casualty at Gallipoli.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the warmth, respect and friendship extended to me during my visit to the Republic of Turkey. I would also like to thank the Turkish Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Selçuk Ünal; and the Canadian Ambassador to Turkey, His Excellency Ambassador Chris Cooter.

The mission to Turkey also discussed the objectives of a Turkish delegation visiting Newfoundland and Labrador. I am pleased to welcome to this House of Assembly the following members of that delegation who are guests in the Speaker's gallery today.

With us we have: Mr. Nihat Değirmenci, Director at the Directorate General of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey; Mr. Ayhan Yilmaz, he is a sculptor and lecturer at Hacettepe University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture. We also have Mr. Taylan Özgür Aydın from the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Ottawa; and a repeat visitor, Ms. Derya Serbetci, Director of Cultural and Tourism Affairs from the Turkish Consulate in Toronto.

Merhaba ve Hoşgeldiniz Newfoundland ve Labrador. Seni burada görmek güzel. Teşekkürler arkadaşlar.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Later in today's proceeding, I will be tabling a report with further details of my visit to Turkey.

Also in the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to recognize Mrs. Marina Smith of Bishop's Cove, who will be mentioned in a Member's statement this afternoon. Mrs. Smith is joined by her daughter Joan Dove, son-in-law Israel Dove,

grandsons Jeremy and Jordan, and friends Kimberley Powell and Rachele Pope.

Welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We also have with us the daughter of the Deputy Chair of Committees and the MHA for St. George's - Humber District, Ms. Katherine Reid. She's here today on a school project.

Welcome to you, Katherine.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Up at the public gallery, I would like to recognize Ms. Barbara Cadigan, her sons James and Daniel Cadigan, and her brother-in-law Mr. Gerry Cadigan, as well as their family members and friends. They are associated with a Member's statement here today.

Welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** And filling most of the front rows in the public gallery to my right, I also would like to welcome students from the Northern Lights Academy in Rigolet. They are accompanied by teachers Sherry Maher and Alexis Palliser. And students from the B.L. Morrison School in Postville. They are here with their teacher Howard Worthman. They will all be the subject of a Member's statement today.

Welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** One more.

Also, I'd like to welcome Mr. Cyril Hayden and Mr. Ken Hopkins, who are the Chair and the Executive Director of the School Lunch Program. Their organization will be the subject of a Member's statement today.

Welcome to you.

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



**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today, we will hear statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Cape St. Francis; Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; Conception Bay East - Bell Island; Conception Bay South; and Torngat Mountains.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

I rise today to honour the late Ronnie Cadigan – accomplished athlete, loving father, husband and a true gentleman. A native of Logy Bay, Ronnie was well known for his athletic talents, but also his tremendous dedication to his family and to his community.

For years, Ronnie organized successful hockey camps and offered his skills, and even his equipment, to the youth of the community. Ronnie had a firm belief that all children should have the opportunity to experience sports with their peers and that the lessons learned through sports would help guide them into adulthood.

Ronnie's determined and generous spirit was evident throughout his courageous battle with MSA – a rare neurological disease. To continue Ronnie's legacy of helping others, the Ron Cadigan Foundation was established to help children get involved in sports and to provide funding for MSA research.

The first annual Ronnie Cadigan Memorial Hockey Tournament was held last weekend at the Jack Byrne Arena. It was a great success, raised over \$10,000, and a fitting tribute to a special man who touched the lives of many. I know his friends, the community and particularly his wife Barb, sons James and Daniel are comforted with many proud and loving memories.

I ask all Members of this House, remember Ronnie Cadigan, and I encourage everyone to honour his spirit by showing kindness to others.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

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

Today, I would like to welcome and introduce my constituent Mrs. Marina Smith of Bishop's Cove. We recently celebrated National Volunteer Week. Well, Mrs. Smith is one outstanding volunteer. She was born in Upper Island Cove in 1938, and not long after, Marina started volunteering. She became a member of the local ACW where she still serves today. She is also an altar guide at her church.

In 1989, Marina went back to school, learning how to read and write, when she received her level 2. She then obtained a seat on the provincial literacy board and was later chosen to represent our province at a conference in Saskatoon.

Mrs. Smith enjoys public speaking and promoting literacy. She also has a flare for politics. In 1983, she was elected to the Bishop's Cove town council and served as mayor for four years, and she is still currently an active member.

Among all of this, Marina makes time for healthy living. She's an active participant at the Fun & Fitness Club in Harbour Grace, where she works up a sweat twice a week.

Mrs. Marina Smith is a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother and is an excellent example of a strong dedicated volunteer. And, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to call her a role model and a friend.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I stand today to recognize a local organization who as a registered charity for nearly 30 years, has as its mission statement the operation of a non-stigmatizing program that provides a hot, nutritious lunch for school children, regardless

of their family's financial situation. I speak of the school lunch program.

The program serves over 5,400 meals each day, almost a million meals a year in over 30 schools with a budget of nearly \$3 million from all sectors of our society: the business sector, government, trade unions, charitable groups and particularly the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The program employs 60 individuals who play a crucial role in the delivery of hot meals on a daily basis. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the valuable contributions that the volunteer board members play in not only maintaining this important program but their diligence to expand to other schools, as was the case at St. Augustine's Elementary on Bell Island only a month ago.

Tomorrow, the school lunch program will endeavour to expand the services to other schools by holding their first annual radiothon at the Avalon Mall and broadcasting live on Coast FM Radio and Rogers Television. The anticipated support from the residents, business and service organizations will go a long way to bring valuable services to as many schools as possible.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the school lunch program board and staff and wish them luck with their radiothon tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on April 18, my colleague, the MHA for Topsail - Paradise and I attended the Conception Bay South volunteer ceremony. During the event, Dr. Adrian Power was presented with the 2017 Citizen of the Year Award and Emma Jacobs was awarded the 2017 Youth Volunteer.

Dr. Adrian Power is the founder of the Coats for the Needy Program providing contributions to

those in need for over 15 years in partnership with the CBS Food Bank. He has continued his efforts to make curling available to local residents, as well he's a lead volunteer in his parish and this past year Dr. Power volunteered his time providing free dental services in Haiti. His self-funded efforts provided dental services to those in need making a positive impact on thousands of Haitian people. Dr. Power's volunteering efforts and humanitarian work has made a positive impact on not only his community but at an international level.

Emma Jacobs gives back to both her school and her community. Emma is a member of the Queen Elizabeth Student Council, CBS Leo Club and Students for Change group where she has arranged fundraisers for such groups as Beagle Paws, Ronald McDonald House and Mental Health initiatives. As a member of the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council, she helps teach English to break down language barriers faced by new immigrants.

Congratulations to Dr. Adrian Power and Emma Jacobs for their commitment and achievements. I ask all hon. Members to join with me in recognizing their contributions to our community and to the province.

Thank you.

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

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, I would like all Members to join me in welcoming students and teachers from my district to this hon. House today.

Students and teachers from Northern Lights Academy in Rigolet and B.L. Morrison School in Postville are in St. John's this week to attend a Let's Talk Science event at the Convention Centre. Let's Talk Science motivates and empowers youth to fulfill their potential and prepare for their future careers by supporting learning and skill development using science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

While they are here for the Let's Talk Science Challenge, in true Labrador fashion they are also taking advantage of their trip to gain insight into their future education by visiting Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic and the Carpenters Millwrights College. I had the pleasure of joining the students with their teachers earlier today for lunch, and they are certainly an enthusiastic bunch.

I wish students John Palliser, Mackenzie Palliser-Flowers, Megan Allen, Taylor Shiwak, Brittany Shiwak and Amber Blake from Northern Lights Academy, as well as Madison Ford Goudie, Erica Jacque and Andrew Tuglavinia from B.L. Morrison School in Postville, an enjoyable trip. I also thank teachers Sherry Maher, Alexis Palliser and Howard Worthman for ensuring the youth are exposed to opportunities that are available to them once they graduate and pursue a post-secondary education.

Thank you.

**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, our government is committed to safe and sustainable communities, and a key component is improving accessibility and equity. I rise today to remind the people of our province that the amendments to the Buildings Accessibility Regulations under the *Buildings Accessibility Act* came into force on April 23.

The amendments include a number of changes related to the requirements for all new buildings to have automated door operators; improved accessibility in public washrooms; van-sized accessible parking spaces; an increased percentage of parking spaces required to be accessible; increased number of accessible units in an apartment complex with more than four units; and clarification of counter height requirements to ensure counters in public buildings are accessible.

The amendments were the result of recommendations brought forward by the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board, the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, disability community organizations, Engineering and Inspection Services Division of Service NL, and individual advocates. The outcome of decisions of the Buildings Accessibility Appeal Tribunal also informed some of the changes.

Mr. Speaker, we are working to create environments that promote greater participation in our communities, employment opportunities and public services. A comprehensive review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act* is also underway with a view of bringing proposed legislative changes forward that further promote inclusion.

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 the advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to see amendments made to the Buildings Accessibility registration coming into force. We are very supportive of any action that will improve accessibility and promote inclusion throughout society. These changes included are very important ones and have tremendous impact on many individuals.

Mr. Speaker, there are more changes to be made and I look forward to seeing the results of the new review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act* in the near future.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of 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. It's great to see these changes to the Buildings Accessibility Regulations regarding accessible parking spaces and some accessibility features in buildings. Congratulations to the community organizations that have worked so hard to make our environment more accessible.

I say to the minister, I'm looking forward to the long-overdue review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act* which I understand is being worked on and which must be done to bring our legislation in line with the best standards in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I was pleased to join the hon. Premier as we announced 22 organizations, representing a broad cross-section of society, have been selected to participate in phase one of multi-year funding.

This announcement follows through on the commitment made in *The Way Forward* to deliver one-window, multi-year funding in a phased approach for community groups. In our province, these groups touch the lives of many of our citizens through the hands-on work they carry out each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, through this process we will provide funding for three years up to \$20 million maximum per year in total to selected community groups and each group will have just one point of access.

By initially moving forward with these 22 community groups as part of phase one, we can approach this initiative in a fiscally responsible way. All these groups have clear social mandates that directly benefit individuals in

need and they have solid records of financial and program delivery effectiveness.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that once we have completed a full evaluation of phase one, we will be able to extend multi-year funding to more community groups in the future. It is our intent that this process will result in more stability for community organizations and assist them in longer-term planning. This multi-year funding approach will allow them to focus less on writing yearly applications and more on the incredible work that they do.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate in this province to have community-based organizations who contribute to society through culture, recreation, social causes and helping others. These organizations rely on the funding they receive each and every year from government.

The creation of multi-year funding has been highly anticipated by community groups for several years. This is a positive announcement for our community-based sector. Not only will this give community groups the ability to budget and plan years in advance, they will also have to spend less of their precious time writing grant applications.

However, I ask the minister to ensure that funding is staggered so that a community group who is not awarded funds in one year can apply in the following year and not have to wait a full three-year cycle before they can apply again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

I'm pleased to see government finally acting on multi-year funding for community groups, which we have been advocating for years. This action does provide stability for these groups, who will be able to do longer-term planning.

The benefit of multi-year funding is so self-evident I wonder why all community groups currently funded by government couldn't be included upfront. I also point out to the minister, and to the Minister of Finance, that most of these groups have not seen an increase in funding in more than three years. Such an increase would also be welcome.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, here yesterday in Question Period when asked questions about harassment and intimidation complaints made to the Premier or the Premier's office, the Premier stated and I quote: "I have not received any allegations or complaints from Members of this caucus or my Cabinet."

I ask the Premier here today, Mr. Speaker, it's a day later: Does he still stand by those comments?

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

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

As I stood in this House yesterday and said, any allegations or complaints that would be made would be taken very seriously. This issue was raised yesterday in the House of Assembly. Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, we took some immediate action. There was no complaint lodged yesterday, up until yesterday, none at all.

I just spoke with the media prior to coming in, spoke to my caucus. This morning there was a complaint that was lodged to me by an MHA, Mr. Speaker, and so we took immediate action. Yesterday, no allegation, no complaint was lodged, but I encouraged people to step forward yesterday, as I always do, and a complaint was lodged this morning.

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

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

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

The Premier also said yesterday – as he's confirming today that he was not aware of anything. He said: I am not aware of anything. He also said: I don't believe this information out there. He said: There is no allegation.

Premier, to be clear, do you still stand by those comments? Have you or your staff received any complaints by any Members of this House of Assembly prior to this morning?

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

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

As I said yesterday multiple times in this House of Assembly, there were no allegations that were made at all. These were my comments yesterday.

The only thing that's different between yesterday and today is that this morning I encouraged people yesterday to reach out, as I have done in the past. My door is always open to our caucus and all MHAs. My door is open. I encourage people to reach out. It's important that we raise those issues. They're extremely important. This morning an MHA reached out to me and lodged a complaint.

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

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

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

It's been a day since this matter was first raised. The Premier has had numerous opportunities to speak to his own staff. My questions were asking if the Premier or anyone in his office had received any complaints. He's said they haven't.

I'll just check again and ask the Premier: Has anyone in your office received any complaints from any Member of this House of Assembly regarding any minister in your government?

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

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

I want to clarify what I said. I spoke with staff last night. No, there are no complaints, no allegations that were lodged in my office. I'm very clear about that, no allegations, complaints lodged with me as Premier of this province.

Yesterday, as you know, I encouraged people to speak out. As I've said so many times, silence is not an option. This morning an MHA reached out to me, we had a discussion and there was a complaint that was lodged.

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

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

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

The Premier said the allegations have been made. He has indicated there's going to be an investigation into the allegations.

I ask the Premier if he'll remove the Cabinet minister while the investigation takes place or will he leave the minister in place in his role with his full authority during the investigation?

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

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

I had a conversation this morning with the person that lodged the complaint. The commitment that I made is that we would look at the necessary steps that we would take to deal with this very sensitive issue.

I will say, with the consent of the person that I spoke with this morning, this is not sexual by nature. This is not sexual assault; this is not any physical assault in nature. This is really about conduct and behaviour.

We've made a decision today that we will act with this very swiftly. I've made it clear to the person that lodged the complaint that whatever the next steps would be, we would sit and have a discussion to determine what that would be, making sure that people are comfortable, Mr. Speaker. This is extremely important to me.

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

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

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

With all respect to the Premier, he didn't answer the question. With all respect to the Premier's comments, I say –

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I say to the Premier any action that causes a level or feeling or belief of intimidation, bullying and any form of harassment can be as serious as any physical assault, Mr. Speaker, and can be as damaging, hurtful and harmful to a person's respectful workplace.

My question is: Is he planning to leave the minister in place during the investigation or will he take the minister out? Simple – are you going to leave him in his role and his responsibilities with his full authority or are you going to remove the minister? It's a simple question.

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

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

Well, I remind the Member opposite, that this is not a political – I'm making every effort to not make this a political response but I will remind the Member opposite that it was just yesterday in the media that he said he was aware of this about two weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, we acted swiftly. I have met with the person that lodged the complaint this morning and we will look at necessary steps, but I can assure you this. We will act swiftly and we will take the appropriate measures, Mr. Speaker. We will do that.

I never once said that this was a minister – that this is really about behaviour and about conduct right now. I need to deal with this making sure that the person that lodged the complaint is very comfortable with the process and we will deal with this swiftly.

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

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

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

I appreciate all the answers from the Premier but, with all due respect, Premier, it was a very simple question and you haven't answered it.

I'll reiterate my comments. You reiterated yours and I'll reiterate my comments; that conduct of a Cabinet minister and the behaviour of a Cabinet minister to the level that requires a Member of this hon. House to file a complaint is a very serious matter.

My question is very simple: Is your intention to leave the minister in place, in his role with full authority, or is your intention to remove the minister during the investigation?

That's all I'm asking Premier. What's your plan?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, this was an issue that came to my attention this morning and we are currently dealing with this. I need to reach out to the officials and look at what the steps would be. I will tell you, Mr.

Speaker, we will move on this swiftly. This is not something that we will be sitting on for weeks, that I can guarantee you.

The Member opposite made it clear yesterday that this was something that he claimed to be aware of about two weeks ago. We will work with this swiftly and we will take the appropriate action.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the Premier – this is so early in this matter from the Premier's perspective, they haven't reached that decision point yet.

Premier, when do you expect to reach that decision point where if you're either going to leave – let's say the Minister of Justice –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I didn't say anything.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I never said you said anything.

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

Address your remarks to the Speaker, please.

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

My question for the Premier is very simple: When does he think he's going to reach the decision point? Will he inform this hon. House and the people of the Province of what his intention is when he does, in very short order, sometime today?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, when you deal with these issues there are a number of things that you need to consider. Number one, the environment must be comfortable for the person that's lodging the complaint and you must deal with this in the appropriate fashion. This is the way we will react.

So, the question is really about timing. How long will it take me to deal with this? When I get the individual to the point where their comfort

level is where they need to be, that's when we will deal with it. But, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this, it's won't be two weeks.

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

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

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

In respect to what we know about what the Premier is dealing with, which is very limited at this point in time, only to conduct and behaviour of a minister. I would suggest it would be very appropriate in the best interest of the respectful workplace that should exist in all aspects of government, that the Premier at least remove the minister from his role and his authority and his position as a minister until he can further determine exactly what's taken place and the gravity of the complaint filed today.

I ask the Premier: Will you remove the minister until at least you can determine the seriousness of this very recent allegation?

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

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

All these things, as a Member opposite, are things that will need to be considered in whatever the process, once it gets established. As we've mentioned before, this is uncharted waters for this government. We will deal with this as swiftly and as appropriately as possible, but my main concern right now is to make sure that we get to where there's a comfort level that we can deal with this with the person that lodged the complaint.

Once again, to reiterate, this was not something that was physical in nature. This was not a sexual assault, Mr. Speaker. This was really about conduct and behaviour. Mr. Speaker, I'll speak to this when we get the steps established.

I just reached out to the people of the province, reached out to the media and informed them very proactively of a complaint that was lodged just a few hours ago.

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

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

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

I hope the Premier doesn't put the complainant in the position to have to make that decision. I hope the Premier makes sure he does everything to protect her and the complaint that she has made. I hope that's what the Premier does. He should step up and make the decision on this.

I ask the Premier: Who will conduct the investigation?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I will guarantee you one thing, we will do whatever it takes to protect individuals in this caucus and we will not be sitting on information. I want to be very clear about that.

Right now, what we're seeing with questions on the floor of the House of Assembly – whatever the forum is I appreciate this. Information comes forward to me as Premier, I deal with it. I deal with it swiftly and I will deal with it appropriately, Mr. Speaker.

It's very important, as I said, to protect the individual. I agree with that, but it's also very important that we put a setting that we can agree upon. Given the fact that we have a safe workplace, safe policies in place, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to deal with it, and we will deal with this swiftly.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you.

I ask the Premier, if he would agree that it would be appropriate to ensure that this investigation is truly independent, independent from anyone within government, independent from anyone within the House of Assembly, independent from anyone within their party, someone independent and who is to the satisfaction of the complainant because it's important that she's satisfied with the process as well.



Will the Premier commit to ensuring a fully independent process?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, this must be a process where not to be determined, yet we need to know that the person who lodged this complaint is actually comfortable with it. That's extremely important. The independency and all of this is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of options that will be available. We want to make sure we explore all those options and we will do that. The importance in all of this is how we put in place a safe workplace, one where people are comfortable in coming to work in a very safe environment. That is where we want to be once this review is completed, Mr. Speaker, but we must work together on all of this; all of us in this House of Assembly. We'll be working very closely with the person that lodged that complaint.

I think that is the fair thing to do, given that this is essentially just a few hours ago that this was lodged.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier, if he believes it would be appropriate, as part of a review and investigation into such a serious matter, would it be appropriate to ask caucus Members to produce their cellphones for review?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting question but one right now that's not one of the options we've explored, but all of those things I'm sure as part of a very thorough, detailed review of the situation is something that can be explored; but, right now, as I said, we very proactively came out and explained to the people of this House, explained to the people of this province that there was a complaint that

came forward. It is very early hours, I say, Mr. Speaker, and we will deal with this.

The objective here is to make sure that we improve the working environment for everyone in this House.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier: Before this complaint was made today, were Members of his caucus asked to produce their cellphones?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I have not asked caucus. I've met with caucus now twice today. This is not something that I've asked caucus to do: to produce their cellphones. Mr. Speaker, we've been focused on the complaint that was lodged this morning and how to appropriately deal with that, and that's where our focus has been so far today.

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

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

I never asked the Premier if he asked caucus to produce them. I asked if Members of caucus were asked to produce their cellphones.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the Leader of the Opposition is going with this line of questioning of producing their cellphones. We also know that throughout this whole process, there is a protection of privacy that we need to make sure that we're fully aware of.

I will say this, coming forward with information, I commend individuals that come forward with situations that they were not comfortable with, and that's what has happened, Mr. Speaker. That's what happened today. We didn't need

people showing up and putting cellphones out there so that we can review those.

But, Mr. Speaker, listen, at the end of the day, what we need to get is a very thorough review of the complaint that was lodged. Mr. Speaker, we will do that, and it will not take us a couple of weeks to get there.

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

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

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

Sometimes this stuff happens closer than we think.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier also went on to say in recent commentary that silence is not an option. He said: We listen to our caucus. This is the first time it's come to me, the Premier went on to say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has now issued an ultimatum in an email to the caucus regarding an MHA voicing concerns – and the minister himself said in the email, “There is no greater violation of trust” in relation to someone disclosing and raising concerns.

So I ask the Premier: Is it a violation of trust for a Member of this House to try and put a stop to harassment and intimidation?

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

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

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

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this question. These are extremely serious allegations that the Leader of the PC Party has been – well, he dragged into the House of Assembly here yesterday, clearly trying to make it political. He sat on the information, through his own words, for two weeks without reporting it.

That is a violation of trust for any Member of this House of Assembly, and especially I find that particularly despicable since he is a former police constable himself, to allege to have information and to not provide that. We tell children, we tell anyone in our workplaces that if you see something, you hear something, you report it. Instead of that, this is the road that the Leader of the Opposition wants to go down.

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

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

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

My question was for the Premier on this matter. I'm going to get to the Minister of Education shortly.

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

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

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

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

Please proceed.

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

No, it's not interrogation; it's Question Period. My question for the Premier was very simple: The Minister of Education, yesterday – he is right; he's the minister responsible for educating our children. He's the minister responsible for Safe and Caring Schools and he issues an email to his own caucus after someone is known to have been speaking out and he condemns them for doing so. No greater violation of trust, he said in his email, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Premier: Is it a violation of trust for a Member of this hon. House to try to put a stop to harassment and bullying?

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

**MR. KIRBY:** As I said, Mr. Speaker, these are very serious allegations. Yesterday, the Leader of the PC Party came in here and said that he

had information about alleged harassment that was taking place amongst Members of this House of Assembly. He knew about that for a period of two weeks. That is a violation of trust.

I reached out to my colleagues to encourage them to come forward with the information and to reveal it, if that indeed was the case. It is an absolute violation of trust to not report this information.

We tell students, we tell people in workplaces, if you see harassment, if you witness harassment and bullying in the workplace, you should report it. The Member did not do that. He decided to sit on the information.

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

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

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

Just to be clear, yesterday, I came in the House of Assembly and I asked questions. I've made no allegations. I've asked questions to the Premier and to ministers of the government on – the Minister of Education is right – a very, very serious matter. I was very surprised to see him in his email saying there is no greater violation of trust when someone wants to report intimidations and harassment, when he should be encouraging and protecting those people.

I ask the Premier: Is it okay for your minister to be more interested in identifying the people, the complainants, the people who have an issue with intimidation and harassment, or is it more important to be protecting those who need assistance and support?

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

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

Well, I've made it quite clear that we will put as much support as possible at all. I'm more than willing to do that and we will do that. The email the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, I think, really speaks to the level of frustration that we see in dealing with matters like this. Mr. Speaker, we are going to put the appropriate

measures in place, but, as I said, my door is always open.

I have to say that yesterday, as the Member opposite asked the questions, I was extremely disappointed to be quite honest with you, very disappointed that someone, a Member of this House of Assembly, would sit on information that would be impactful and impactful like we're seeing here today and did not bring that forward.

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

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

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

The information I had was that the matters had been brought forward to the attention of the Premier's office and had not been properly acted upon. Mr. Speaker, those efforts had not been made.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Education is trying to defend his poor choice of words. We have to remember as well it's the same minister who not that long ago accused a volunteer trustee of not being honest. He's also the same minister that the NLTA in our province, our provincial association, also called for his resignation.

I ask the Premier: Do you condone this email by your minister?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I just want to remind people in this House and who are listening to these questions today, it was the Leader of the Opposition who made it clear that there were direct – so these were not all indirectly. He made comments that there was direct involvement by him and also indirect involvement by him.

At no point in two weeks, an issue as serious as this facing Members in the House of Assembly, at no point did the Leader of the Opposition reach out to me on this issue at all. This was his own words yesterday: There were direct and

indirect. So it's no good for the Leader of the Opposition to say today that there was not a direct message to him because that's what he said yesterday.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, in my lifetime I've had the unfortunate – I say unfortunate with the greatest respect – experiences where I've dealt with people with numerous matters where they've been victims of abuse or assault, or intimidation or bullying and I would never force a person to make a complaint or speak out publicly or against their will or their wishes. I make that known. I would never do it. I would never do it, Mr. Speaker, and I will protect anyone in that particular circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Do you condone the actions of your Minister of Education?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I will say that this is an email that I saw last night. The Member opposite makes mention that he read the email. I think right now it speaks to what is a very high level of frustration that exists as we work our way through this, which is something that is, as I said to the media today, really uncharted for us as a government. This is something that is new to us, but I will assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we will make sure the person that lodged this complaint is very comfortable with every single issue that unfolds. If it's emails, if it's messages, direct or indirect, we will deal with it and we will get to the point where we get a very thorough review, independent review of this issue.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, during Question Period today we've heard reference to frustration. I can't help it, I have to raise this; the frustration that's been

experienced by Members in this House, the lack of response by the Premier and the Premier's office.

It's the frustration that we should all be concerned about. It is the persons who have had to work in an environment that's been much less than respectful that should be focused on here.

I ask the Premier: If some other Member of this hon. House has a complaint and a matter to bring to his attention, what process should they use? What assurance can you give them there will not be repercussions for speaking out?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I will assure you there are no repercussions. I will assure you of that. As I've said many, many times, my door is always open. We take these issues as they come, as they are presented to us. That's when we respond.

Today, we proactively disclosed to the people of the province about a complaint that came forward this morning, just a matter of hours ago, Mr. Speaker. It's now disclosed, which is the appropriate thing to do and the right thing to do.

I said so many times here today that we must now look at the next steps for any single Member in this House of Assembly. No matter who comes forward, if there are other complaints or allegations and so on, we will do so in a respectful way without consequence.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, last session this House passed legislation that would deal with harassment in the public service.

I ask the Premier: Will he engage that particular process that has a very clear, identified protocol? Will he use that in this case?

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

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

When the complaint was lodged this morning, we discussed what the next steps would look like. The Member opposite raises a good point because we are in kind of a transition to where we are.

My preference, as I just said publicly, would be to follow the new harassment policy that would be in place in June of this year that outlines at least four steps – a number of steps, options – that would be available to anyone that lodges a complaint. That would be my preference.

Mr. Speaker, I have to make sure the person who lodged the complaint is very comfortable with whatever the next steps and the process would look like.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to stress again that I believe it's not incumbent upon those who have lodged the complaint to have to come up with a solution.

I also want to address the issue, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of rumours flying around this House and in media, out there in the public agenda, about issues of harassment in this House.

I ask the Premier: What is his plan to address those rampant rumours now and the attitude that is being shown here in the House.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, rumours and the rumour mill, of course, are always churning. What I can say is that once a complaint is officially lodged – I would think that when you look at the responses and the action that I'm taking today, we take those issues very seriously.

We've proactively now went out with the confidence of the person that laid the complaint this morning. We've done it very proactively and we will deal with it, as I've said so many times today, swiftly.

Just to look at things that could occur out there publicly, you can only deal with the complaints when they become official and when people are in a state where they are comfortable in coming forward. From my point of view, as Premier of the province, I encourage people to come forward and I commend those that do.

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

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

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

In the processes that I'm aware of that are involved when somebody puts forward a complaint for harassment, et. cetera, one of the things that's important is that the persons who continue to deal with the complainant are people who are outside of the process. While a complaint gets brought to the person who maybe is in charge of an employee for example, initially it then moves outside so that those involved are external.

How quickly is the Premier going to move to make sure this becomes the process for this complainant?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I thank the Member for raising this again. Of course, when you look at the new policy that we put in place, there are a number of mechanisms that the individual would have available to them; one would be the individual intervention and seek a resolution. You could have management involvement.

Typically, that's probably the best way to explain what we're dealing with today. Or the Respectful Workplace Division could get involved. Then, of course, there's a formal resolution option which explores a much more detailed review.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get comfortable, get the complainant comfortable with however that individual feels in this particular case. That's

kind of where we are today; we're just really hours into this. But we're going to work on this, making sure the person who lodged the complaint is very comfortable under the number of options that we'll have available to them and making sure that we get the thorough review, independent review that's required (inaudible).

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

Oral Questions has ended.

**MS. MICHAEL:** There is just one aspect of the Premier's language that bothers me.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'm sorry, Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### **Tabling of Documents**

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am pleased to present to this hon. House a report on the Speaker's visit to Turkey as emissary of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador dated April 25, 2018.

Further Tabling of Documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### **Petitions**

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, these are the reasons for this petition:

The Adult Dental Program coverage for clients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program under the Access and 65Plus program were eliminated in *Budget 2016*.

Many low-income individuals and families can no longer access basic dental care, and those same individuals can now no longer access dentures leading to many other digestive and medical issues.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows:

We, the undersigned, call on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the Adult Dental Program to cover low-income individuals and families to better ensure oral health, quality of life and dignity.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of my region. Many –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Three years ago.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** No, it's not three years ago, I say to the hon. Member, not at all. Very few come from that side over there, I'd suggest.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for the petition is related to the Witless Bay Line, Route 13; a significant piece of infrastructure. It's a main highway and it plays a major role in the commercial and residential growth of the region. Therefore, we petition the House of Assembly as follows:

We, the undersigned, urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to upgrade and perform immediate maintenance to this significant piece of infrastructure, which for the safety of drivers and improve the flow of traffic to and from the Trans-Canada Highway.

Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of infrastructure, the petition indicates, that has been presented by the people of the region; residents, as well as those who commute from the Trans-Canada Highway to the Southern Shore in regard to work. It is certainly a key piece related to the tourism industry and as well related to the fishing industry and the transportation of fish products,

particularly crab, back and forth for processing. So it's an important piece of infrastructure.

We've had over the past couple of years done some upgrades to various parts of the section of road. I know I've spoken to the minister and we've had some work done in regard to the asphalt, reuse of asphalt and putting in some potholes and doing some work. There's certainly more required.

I know, I've been in touch with the officials because it's such a busy piece of highway, and certainly in the nighttime with large potholes and those types of things that are there, it certainly causes concern in regard to health and safety and the driver traffic at a particular time.

It is an issue that still exists. I call on the minister to continue some of the work that has been started and look at – it's not in the Roads Program but, as I said, there have been a couple of sections done. Even a middle section for an upgrading would help.

I know the minister said they've even looked at that for the possibilities it might occur in this coming season. I certainly look forward to that and certainly look forward to an opportunity to upgrade the worst section. We can do it over a period of time and make it as safe as possible as we can.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

**MR. OSBORNE:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** It's not a petition.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board has a motion or a request?

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, I ask for leave, Mr. Speaker.

I was involved in something else and overlooked the Tabling of Documents.

I ask if I can have leave to table a document.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** I thank my colleagues opposite.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I am tabling one order-in-council relating to a funding pre-commitment for the fiscal years 2018-19 through to 2028-29.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

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

To the 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 there are many families who face scheduling challenges to get their children to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS because of these challenges these children are required to go to a child care provider before and after school each day; and

WHEREAS current policy and practices does not allow the children to be dropped off via school bus stop where their child care provider exists.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to allow children to avail of courtesy busing and to enable parents to indicate an additional drop-off location in addition to their own.

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

Mr. Speaker, while there's been some movement over the last number of years about courtesy busing and because of the backlash from parents and realizing that kids to be safe after school, particularly that you would have to avail of them, and obviously there's been a decrease in

the investment in our busing process. So the 1.6 kilometre ruling has had a dramatic impact, particularly in communities that are in growth areas, where more kids are travelling or parents themselves, in two working family members, are having to travel to and from various areas.

Because of the geographic locations of some of the providers, when it comes to the daycare providers, or after school providers, particularly in these communities where there's not any public transportation, it's almost impossible, unless you allow the courtesy busing to be able to give a second stop.

The way it works now, if you get a courtesy bus stop, you're only allowed to have one. It depends on where you get on in the morning and where you were picked up, versus going to who your after school care provider would be.

There are a number of groups: the school council association, school councils themselves and parent groups have all lobbied that the courtesy busing, which is an added incentive and has been in play for the last seven years, has been a godsend in a lot of cases. Unfortunately, not everybody can avail of it, but built into that, for those who get it, there should be an ability to stop.

The buses are passing these facilities. It doesn't make sense, particularly when you're stopping at these facilities. You have an individual, a staff person or a co-ordinator who will come out and meet the buses. This becomes even safer than our normal bus stop process we have.

Not taking away from the fact that we're providing a service to ensure that parents who are at work not having to leave early, keeps our productivity up, the stresses within the family and the kids get to integrate in another social environment and a learning safe and conducive to education. So it's an incentive too.

It doesn't cost anything. I understand in government, in education and in any of our programs here, finances have to become an issue.

Mr. Speaker, I'll get a chance to speak to this again. I know it's time that we move on to the next part of our private Member's resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay to introduce his resolution standing in his name, Motion 8.

**MR. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, that the following motion:

WHEREAS restorative justice processes are rapidly being adopted within Canada, as well as internationally, as a way of responding to crime and victimization; and

WHEREAS in 2009, the United Nations recommended to adopt Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urges the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to explore the benefits of adopting restorative justice practices in the province, in consultation with outside organizations and Aboriginal groups.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

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

It's my pleasure to introduce such a relevant private Member's resolution in this hon. House today. I'd like to begin again by reading the text of today's private Member's resolution:

WHEREAS restorative justice processes are rapidly being adopted within Canada, as well as internationally, as a way of responding to crime and victimization; and

WHEREAS in 2009, the United Nations recommended to adopt Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters;



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urges the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to explore the benefits of adopting restorative justice practices in the province, in consultation with outside organizations and Aboriginal groups.

Mr. Speaker, restorative justice is commonly defined as an approach to justice that focuses on addressing the harm caused by crime while holding the offender responsible for their actions by providing opportunity for the parties directly affected by the crime, the victims, offenders and communities to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime.

Mr. Speaker, restorative justice is based on an understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships and the principles of restorative justice are based on respect, compassion and inclusivity.

Restorative justice encourages meaningful engagement and accountability and provides an opportunity for healing and reintegration. With the assistance of a trained facilitator, restorative justice often involves a face-to-face meeting between victims and offenders after a crime is committed where they collectively decide how the offender can make amends; for example, paying for stolen property or community service for a crime. Sometimes when a face-to-face meeting is not the best way forward, the victim and offender will communicate via letters, recorded interviews or video.

On that point, Mr. Speaker, I just want to recall a personal account when I spent some time, actually 28 years of my life back in a family business in Springdale. We had a retail concept, which I managed –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Very thoroughly.

**MR. WARR:** Yeah.

And I remember taking a phone call from a parent one day who felt that one of her children had shoplifted from my store. I asked her to bring the young person in and we would sit down and have a chat over what had happened. Mr. Speaker, I remember quite well actually that the mother of this person, this child, came in – and actually the person was probably 15 or 16

years old at the time. His mother told him, you tell the gentleman what had happened, and he did. I sort of try and take a positive approach to dealing with offenders, especially given my past as being an RNC officer for a number of years; I know what the benefits of restorative justice can bring to situations.

Mr. Speaker, I remember speaking to this young boy and we had a chit-chat over what happened. When I explained to him that the items that he took from me may have cost \$100 for instance, I made him see the point that not only did it cost me \$100 or what was taken was \$100, it took me four times the sales to recover the actual \$100 when you base it on a margin, say, of 25 per cent. I had to sell that item four more times just to recoup back the cost of the item.

When he realized exactly what this was costing a business, Mr. Speaker, I can't begin to tell you how much merchandise started coming back to my store. It was unbelievable actually because I think what had happened he had gone to some of his friends as well who had probably taken the opportunity to take things from my store without paying and started returning it back to the store.

There were no questions asked. I accepted the merchandise back. But that's where we're going with this particular statement, Mr. Speaker. Restorative justice is entirely voluntary and meetings take place in a safe and neutral venue. It could be in a police station, a probation office or a local community centre. If the offender is in prison, then the conference could take place in a suitable room in the prison.

Restorative justice is effective. Research has indicated that it can provide an opportunity for victims to talk about how the crime affected them in a safe place. They have an opportunity to ask the offender questions, have their harm or loss acknowledged – as it happened to me – and have a say in how the matter is addressed. It's a chance, Mr. Speaker, for the offender to truly understand the impact the offence has on a victim.

It helps victims have their needs and concerns addressed as well. It provides an opportunity for victims to receive restitution depending on the restorative model being used. It gives offenders an opportunity to be accountable for their

actions. Offenders get to tell their side of the story, too. This can help victims understand why this has happened to them.

It involves the community in supporting victims and finding other ways to address crime. Communities are able to get a better understanding as to why crime is happening and to find alternative solutions to dealing with offenders rather than putting them in jail. It contributes to the safe reintegration of offenders after incarceration, and there is a reduced likelihood that offenders will reoffend when they have gone through a restorative justice program. This will ultimately help reduce the burden on our criminal justice system in this province.

It is important to note that restorative justice recognizes the many people who are impacted by criminal activity. The primary victim is the person who was directly harmed by an incident. Secondary victims can include family members, friends and community members.

We have to also remember that each case is unique, Mr. Speaker. Within the criminal justice system, restorative justice provides an opportunity for victims, offenders, community members and others to have a say in how a crime should be addressed.

Restorative justice can take place at any point in the criminal justice system. For minor offences, the police sometimes deal with the offence without going to court. Restorative justice, Mr. Speaker, can be a part of this. If the case does go to court and the offender pleads guilty, the judge can sometimes decide to delay sentencing so restorative justice can happen. In most instances, however, they are likely to proceed with the sentencing and restorative justice can form a part of the community or suspended sentence.

If the offender is sent to prison, Mr. Speaker, restorative justice can take place while they are in prison or after release. The important thing is that it can happen at any stage. Restorative justice measures have already been a part of Canada's criminal justice system for over 40 years through the *Criminal Code* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The processes that are used in restorative justice are in line with the traditional indigenous views of justice. In fact,

there are currently two justice programs in Newfoundland and Labrador: the Miawpukek First Nation Healing and Sentencing Program and the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation Community-based Justice Program.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador believes in restorative justice. The province recognized November 19-26, 2017, as Restorative Justice Week. Also, last November, my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety took part in a panel discussion at Memorial University that explored the use of restorative justice approaches to address challenges in the province's legal and education systems.

The event was organized by the Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education Consortium, which includes the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in collaboration with the Public Legal Information Association of NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre and the YWCA here in St. John's. The panel explored the use of restorative justice approaches to addressing challenges in the province's education and legal systems, including access to justice, increased demand on courts and correctional facilities, the well-being of youth and the need for safer and healthier communities.

The Department of Justice and Public Safety has been exploring initiatives to improve people's interactions with the justice system. The Minister of Justice and Public Safety will discuss some of the work being done in his department relating to restorative justice sometime later this afternoon.

People, Mr. Speaker, have the right to live in a safe and peaceful society. Communities and governments must work together to address crime. Crime rates are rising in this country and in our province. The Minister of Justice and Public Safety has stated publicly that we need to find innovative ways to address the number of people in prison, look at how they got there and find ways to lower the risk of reoffending. More restorative justice measures can help.

Restorative justice gives victims a chance to meet or communicate with their offender to

explain the real impact of the crime. It empowers victims, Mr. Speaker, by giving them a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and to make amends.

Many victims feel the criminal justice system does not give them a chance to get involved. Restorative justice puts victims at the heart of the justice process; it gives them a chance to ask the offender any questions that they have and to get anything they want to say about the impact of the crime off your chest.

Restorative processes create an environment where offenders can take responsibility for their actions. Offenders who have participated in restorative processes can be accountable to victims and communities in a number of meaningful ways, depending on the restorative model used. This may include acknowledging the harm done to the victim, providing an apology or fulfilling the conditions of an agreement between participants. These agreements sometimes include conditions such as having the offender pay restitution, undertake community service work or participate in counselling and treatment programs.

Many people find that after they have been a victim of crime they have a question they want to ask or things they would like to say to the offender. When the case goes to court there's rarely a chance to do this after. Restorative justice can help to address this by giving victims the opportunity to have your say, ask the questions you have and potentially receive an explanation and an apology.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly look forward to listening to the rest of my colleagues here this afternoon. I look forward to them going along with the private Member's resolution today as read earlier.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak in support of today's private Member's resolution.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Restorative justice is an old concept that's been gaining traction in recent years. People are looking for new approaches of justice that will work more effectively and help us build a safer society.

Over the ages, societies have tested many approaches to crime. One approach is retribution – an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth – to even the scales of justice by imposing punishment in proportion to the offence. Another approach is to lock people away in prisons. The intent is to keep the community safe while punishing the offender with a loss of freedom. Another approach is rehabilitation, which is based on the idea that if you change the offender through programs and training, you can help them turn their life around.

There are various other approaches as well and they are not mutually exclusive. No matter what approaches the authorities try, crime remains with us and people continue to get hurt. Some of those are property crimes like theft and vandalism and some are violent crimes where people get hurt or killed.

What do we do? Do we lock people away for longer or do we try to divert people down a different path away from crime? What about the person who's already been injured or traumatized by a crime? How do we help them?

Restorative justice is about looking at a crime in a completely different way. Instead of seeing a broken law or an offender who needs to be punished, restorative justice sees our society as a series of relationships between people. Crime often flows from broken relationships and crime does its own damage to relationships. The important thing is to focus on healing and strengthening the relationships because that will lead to a more harmonious society where everyone can feel a lot more safe.

It's not surprising that restorative justice has its roots in indigenous traditions and spiritual communities like the Mennonites and the 'quackers.'

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Quakers.

**MR. PETTEN:** Quakers, is it? Sorry.

These communities were often relatively small and relatively isolated. More indigenous communities moved around with the seasons. Many Mennonite communities were isolated on vast farms. In such a community, it is imperative to find a solution to crime that would keep the community whole and cohesive, while at the same time promoting safety and order.

To send an offender away from the community for a small crime could mean sending that person to his death, while tolerating the crime without an effective punishment and deterrent mechanism would lead to a breakdown of order. In both kinds of communities, one solution was to come together in a solemn and orderly way as a community with the elders presiding, and work out a path forward.

Victims are given the opportunity to let offenders know the impact of their offences. Offenders were given the opportunity to face those harmed and own up to their offences. It is never about being soft on crime; it's about bringing home the full impact of crime and finding a way toward restitution for the benefit of everyone: the victim, the victim's fellow community members and the offender. It is a powerful way of making offenders see their offence through the eyes of the person they have hurt.

Insights like that can deter people from offending again. When the victim and the community see the offender acknowledging the impact of the offence on the victim, the pathway opens up healing and restoration. The victim may be able to find peace and feel less vulnerable; the offender may find a path to personal growth and transformation. We are all human; we all make mistakes. Some mistakes are reckless, some are selfish and some have terrible consequences. Restorative justice is not about making excuses. It's about owning up.

Placing the responsibility where it belongs is important for the healing of the person harmed. It's educational for those looking on. It's therapeutic for the entire community. In fact, those who have participated in such a process

may be the ones best equipped to lead the healing circle in the future because they know how it works and why it matters.

A society that can deal with difficult matters in such a way is exceptionally mature. It's not surprising that these communities that have adopted practices like these are also societies where elders are held in high regard and listened to.

When those with the maturity of years and experience chart the path, the entire society benefits from that wisdom. The question is whether these small community approaches to restoration can be applied effectively in larger society where people do not have their natural family and community bonds and may not have connection with their neighbour whatsoever. That's precisely the issue at the heart of restorative justice. The entire premise is that we are too disconnected from one another and that creates a breeding ground for crime.

Proponents believe that fracturing our society and the isolation of people from one another is at the heart of anti-social choices by people at its margins. The best solution is to bring people together and weave new and stronger relationships. The challenge of course is that restorative justice intervenes after some sort of break has already happened, a crime has already occurred, someone has been already violated. It's reactive rather than proactive.

After a crime has happened, of course there are wounds, and it is the most difficult time to work on relationships. Some people who have been harmed are not ready to enter a relationship of any sort with the person who has caused that harm. Restorative justice is not the solution for every situation, but the reason it is worth considering at all is that it can help the healing process for some of those who have been harmed.

Think of the traditional justice system. Crime is reported; the person is charged with committing an offence; the person harmed is called upon to testify about the damage done and to demonstrate the impact of that damage; the justice system acknowledges that the violation has occurred and imposes a penalty on the offender. But how does that help the victim

heal? How does that help the victim deal with the fear and vulnerability they may be feeling?

The wound may be left wide open and the victim may be unable to move on. In fact, the victim may be afraid the offender bears some resentment for having been accused. Meanwhile, the offender may see the victim only as an accuser and not fully as a person who has been harmed by his actions.

Justice may have been served, but lives remain in tatters, and the door is wide open to crimes yet to happen. Victims continue to live in fear; offenders stew in their thoughts of revenge. This is not healthy. Restorative justice comes at the challenge in an entirely new way. It deals with the whole person and not just the law, violation and the penalty. It treats the victim as a whole person. It treats the offender as a whole person. It seeks to get beyond the victim-offender labels and help people move beyond seeing themselves defined by and forever locked into the event that occurred. That's its power. In fact, it may have the greatest power when it's applied long before serious crimes happen.

Often when you hear of serious crime in the news, you hear the phrase "known to police" in the description of the offender and you wonder: Why are they back in trouble? Why is the system not diverting people from crime? If you could divert people who are known to police, how much safer would it be for all of us and how much better off would offenders be if people had been in trouble with the system before, make is less likely that they will be in trouble again?

The best use of restorative justice may be the first offenders in the cases of the pettiest crimes; maybe for the first offenders. In fact, maybe it's better to begin even earlier. Restorative justice is being used in the school system to address bullying and other anti-social behaviour.

If you can divert a person from a pattern of bad, anti-social choices very early in life, you may be able to divert people from crime. Bringing bullies together with those who have bullied can only make the school system safer, but also help troubled kids get on a better path. In the school system, this philosophy can actually be applied in a way that's proactive rather than reactive. If

we can get kids before they have crossed the line and weave stronger relationships before they have fractured.

Mr. Speaker, in August 2012, 17 educators in Newfoundland and Labrador embarked on a two-week long institute to explore possibilities of Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education. Beginning with an exploration of their core beliefs and values, the educators dug deep to reflect on many relationships that make up the school community and began their journey toward creating and sustaining healthy, inclusive relationships in schools. Since then, many others involved in education in Newfoundland have discovered the benefits of restorative justice in schools.

In 2014, in Relationships First, a restorative justice and education consortium was formed and engaged a wide variety of education stakeholders within and outside the traditional schooling systems. This approach may help us recognize some of the social underpinnings of crime such as poverty, neglect and violence in the home. If we can address precursors of crime, we may be able to keep people from going down that road to begin with. If we catch them when they are taking just a couple of small steps down the wrong road, maybe it's still not too late to save a life.

When young people engage in petty crimes like stealing something small or doing petty vandalism, restorative justice may be more effective than the slap on the wrist that they would otherwise receive for such an act. Years down the road, instead of seeing that person heading to court for a burglary or a violent assault, we may see the person getting an education or a new job.

Mr. Speaker, we refer to some severe crimes. But when we're talking severe crimes, what about when the crime we're talking about is truly violent and particularly severe? Does restorative justice apply to those circumstances as well? Maybe it can. What about if someone was murdered?

Take a look at this. There was a story a few years ago about a woman in the United States whose three-year-old son was killed in a drive-by shooting that targeted someone else. The

story was published in *The Denver Post* on July 9, 2012. The story follows the woman's path as she engaged on a restorative justice process with a man who killed her little boy. You can only imagine how difficult this must have been, as she says she froze before she walked in the room with the offender. Nevertheless, she chose to move forward because she had tried every other coping mechanism and they weren't enough.

It is important to note in Colorado the offender is not offered any leniency whatsoever in exchange for participating in the process. There was no incentive to put on a show of remorse; the process was designed so it would be genuine. As the mom froze in the doorway, she saw the offender drop his head and shake it with such sorrow that she knew he was aware of her pain and the pain he had caused. The mom admitted that at times, as the process moved forward, she was intensely angry – and who wouldn't be given the circumstances – but she needed to see the offender acknowledge in front of her what he had done and what it had cost her in human terms. Not just what it cost him in terms of freedom lost but what it cost her.

That acknowledgement had a profound impact on her and I believe it also had a profound impact on him. It is said that offenders who participate in such a process are better able to change the way they see themselves. They are better candidates for rehabilitation and reintegration. If that means less recidivism, then all of us benefit but, most importantly, it's about healing of the person who has been traumatized and victimized.

This mom has actually become a strong advocate for restorative justice. Her advocacy is compelling because she can speak with authority as someone who knows how the process works. She is not speaking about it in theoretical terms; she's talking about personal terms, someone who bears the scars.

Some people say approaches like this are soft on crime. There really is a risk and there could be, if they are applied improperly and vulnerable to manipulation or driven by purposes other than helping the victim, but those who have benefited from restorative justice see the potential for good.

They would say that restorative justice is not softer on crime but extremely tough on crime. The process is designed to bring the offender out of the shadows and deny that person a chance from responsibility for his actions. It forces the criminal to stare at all aspects of his crime right in the face and bear responsibility.

This is how Aboriginal restorative justice remedies are described in the national Justice Education Society website, quoted: "The process is intensive and in many ways more difficult than a passive jail sentence since offenders are made to face and accept the harms they have caused. Victims often find the process much more satisfying and empowering than conventional justice procedures as well. They often report feeling less fear and trauma after taking part in a healing circle."

"A restorative justice remedy is one that places the emphasis on healing the harm done by the offence and rehabilitating the offender to avoid future harms. Such processes are in line with traditional Aboriginal views of justice. In addition to similarity in principle, there are severely uniquely Aboriginal elements that can be used in a restorative process.

"The core of an Aboriginal restorative process is generally a healing circle, which aims at developing consensus on how to repair harmful results of the offence.

"A healing circle: Will include members of the community including the offender, elders, and often the victim if they agree to participate; will discuss the offence and how it is has affected the victim and the community and the relationships between these and the offender; in addition to healing community ties, the circle focuses on the offender and the underlying causes of their offence ...."

Mr. Speaker, as my time winds down, I just want to reiterate that we do support this private Member's motion. As I've laid out some things, there are a lot of benefits to restorative justice. It may be a secret to untapping some of the – locking people away is probably not the answer. Maybe this is the key to curbing some of our crime, lowering our crime rates and for that, we will be supporting this motion.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

I'd like to begin by thanking my colleague, the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, for introducing today's private Member's resolution, which will hopefully lead to this government exploring in more detail the benefits of adopting restorative justice practices or alternatives to justice in this province in consultation with organizations and Aboriginal groups.

Mr. Speaker, in our country, it's sad to say but 26 per cent of those incarcerated are Aboriginal people. It's surprising because the Aboriginal population only makes up 4 per cent of the country's population. The numbers are staggering and it leads to problems with – and we hear this almost every day – overcrowding in our prisons, things that need to be worked on and improved around the justice delivery programs that exists today.

I guess the question is: Is the current application of justice failing us as Aboriginal people? When you look at why people are incarcerated, you have to look a little bit further than the crime committed to get yourself incarcerated. What are some of the underlining problems?

My hon. colleague, the Member for Conception Bay South, spoke about some of the interventions that could be designed for a school, for bullying, and I commend him for raising that.

As an Aboriginal person, I guess I'll spend a few minutes talking about the Aboriginal component of restorative justice. The simple fact that the Aboriginal populations in this province, in this country, go a lot further back than our current justice system and how it's applied.

There have been different models that have been implemented and adopted. Some work, some

don't. The Miawpukek First Nation, for example, have a healing and sentencing program that was started with the objectives to provide youth with the opportunity to show respect for traditional methods by encouraging them to participate in the sentence circle process.

The Innu Nation has implemented the sweat lodge ceremony, which provides you access to cleansing your soul and your body. It teaches how to be a better person and how to better manage your anger.

Just to talk a little bit again about the models of restorative justice. Some have been applied but have been adopted from one ethnic group in country or in province and applied to another. In some cases it worked. People followed, bought into the process, sat down and went through the process and brought some resolve to the situation and kept it out of our existing court process.

But, Mr. Speaker, some of them didn't work. Some of them have been unheard of in an Aboriginal community. It may work good for the Haida in BC or the Maori in New Zealand, but it wouldn't necessarily work for the Inuit in Canada's North because it's a different concept and a different history of evolution when you look at the healing process.

My forefathers, Mr. Speaker, were nomadic people. I was thinking about this just last night. We value our lives on currency and current judicial processes, but in my forefathers' day, the only currency that was good to you was knowledge. We're talking of a people that lived in the harshest environment in our country and there were crimes but more often than not, the justice system was based on survival and a lot of it was based on the (inaudible) or the chief or the tribal leader of a population. I'm not saying there were communities of 1,000 people. We're talking groups of three or four families led by a chief or an elder, and if this person made a wrong decision, Mr. Speaker, people died. It's as simple as that.

There were times when crimes were committed, where the elder actually banished a community member or a community family and they had to move on. It doesn't necessarily mean a crime, Mr. Speaker. In some cases where a group of

families ended up, it was determined that the land could not provide enough to keep this family going for the length of time they were there. So they forced families, sons, daughters, cousins; they forced other families to move on.

Just to go back a little bit to our history and how things evolved – I'm actually going to cut my time short to allow for some other presenters, Mr. Speaker. I just talked about customary law and how it was applied. Then I think in the mid-1700s we saw the arrival of the missionaries. They established missionaries all up and down the Coast of Labrador, across the north and throughout the world.

It was in their customary law, Mr. Speaker, where what the church said went and you couldn't argue. As a matter of fact, in 1958 and 1959 when they announced the closure of the communities of Hebron and Nutak and made them relocate to Nain, Makkovik, Hopedale and Northwest River, they made the announcement in the church because there could be no debate, such as we have in this House. It was final. There was no argument. To the people who lived in their homeland, they had to move to a totally foreign land and carry out their lives.

In Natuashish, Mr. Speaker, and I spoke about this in this House earlier, the church in their wisdom took a nomadic group of people and they settled them on an island. When you do that to an Aboriginal community and you introduce other negative influences, what you see is a loss of pride, a loss of culture and a loss of self-esteem.

Then we advanced to, I guess, the current forms of government we have now. We have community councils that make laws in the community. We've had provincial governments since 1949; the federal government for 150 years. All these governments come with laws. We actually make the laws in this hon. House.

Then in 2005, Mr. Speaker, and 2010, we say the formation of a Nunatsiavut Government, which is a regional government that looks after its own. So in a sense, we've gone kind of full circle and we're going to look at alternatives to justice. Some work, some don't, but it's certainly a forward step.

I'm glad my hon. colleague brought this private Member's resolution forward because it gives us the possibility or the opportunity to explore some of these other options, but it has to be adopted, it has to be modified and it has to be bought into by all groups involved.

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about the offender and the victim and the community because if you look at some of the reasons for crime, a lot of it comes from how a child was raised. We always say in small communities up and down our coast, it takes a whole community to raise a child and we stand by that.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly support this. I'm glad to hear my Members across the way say that they're going to support it. What it does is it opens up a venue and it could even advance to a time when the Nunatsiavut Government could look at devolution and incorporating their own justice system, which would, I'm sure, be more people applicable and more people to buy into it.

I certainly support this PMR. I look forward to hearing anymore comments.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It's indeed an honour to speak to the private Member's resolution presented here by the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay. It's a unique private Member's resolution. We have all kinds of distinctive ones that we bring in here about programs and services or encouraging government, but this is at a different level. It's looking at a new approach to an enormous issue but it's looking at an old, effective, workable approach that comes from – more than decades – centuries of people looking at the justice system and ensuring that the best result is what's important here; one for the victim but also for the person here who commits a particular crime. It's about a whole inclusive process here.

I'm going through it and trying to get my head around it because it's a whole process that I



haven't heard a lot of in the last number of years, but I do remember years ago when I did some work in Labrador – as a matter of fact, I spent some time in Sheshatshiu with the former Leader of the Third Party. We worked with a particular group up there and sitting around with the elders, and I guess my responsibility was to work with the younger people, and talking about some of the challenges up there and some of the criminal activity on how it was being addressed and getting an education, and that's what it was, a thorough education about approaches that the Aboriginal community would use and how they would be effective.

I remember being intrigued and asking questions about, what would happen if somebody had committed a particular crime? How would you address that? What would be the process with the victim itself and the perpetrator? What would happen there is there would be an open discussion and elders or a set – open practices were already outlined in a lot of cases. Things may not have been written down but they were written down in people's minds of practices that went on.

It was amazing to see how somebody would be so remorseful for something they had done at the spur of the moment or had done it out of anger or done it because of under influence or for what other reason had done it. There was a discussion, particularly around elders, and there was a realization that they had victimized somebody. There was a realization here that they were part of a community. It was a bigger entity here, and their actions reflected on everybody else. The inaction of the community reflects on everybody else.

The community had to take a lead in ensuring that there was restitution of some form. There was a whole process, and I was amazed at how it worked. I knew in what we call modern day, the criminal justice system might be a little bit different or a little bit harder to implement that on the scale of our court system as part of that, but I could see – as when I came back and I would keep my ears and eyes open when I'd hear stuff, documentaries on television, or I would go to conferences where people would talk about particular interventions or particular ways of addressing unacceptable behaviour,

criminal behaviour, criminal activity within communities.

The restitution, or the punishment for want of a better phrase – I don't think they ever used the word punishment. I think that was one of the things that I thought was amazing, that it was never about you're punishing somebody for something they did. It was about restitution of some form and that whole type of dialogue.

I remember over the years, 30 years in my career travelling to different parts of the province and different countries, discussions would come off – I was always intrigued. When there'd be a workshop I'd go. Alternatives to the justice system, and a lot of it was around how we do restorative justice and how do we get back to the basic ways of ensuring that justice is done, but that the whole process is engaging enough that there are no victims at the end of it; there are victims at the beginning because somebody has obviously committed a crime, but there are no victims at the end of it. It becomes a solution that everybody buys into and it meets the needs of everybody as part of a holistic approach.

I thought that was amazing. You heard my colleagues here speak to it and now I have a better understanding of where it is. I've read some of the notes that we researched to get our heads around where we are with the whole process. I think it's a great process. Is it the ultimate solution to everything? Of course it's not. Is it particularly useful in particular areas, in particular crimes and in particular approaches? Sure it is and that's been outlined here by a number of speakers of the benefits of how that could be put into play.

There are some limitations to a system like this and we have to be realistic on how we do it. We could jump on board and say, you know what, our justice system, as we see it, doesn't really work in the way that we want. Our system is based on you commit a crime, you get arrested, you get a trial system, you're convicted and you get a punishment that's relevant to it as part of that process. Part of that punishment is that it's rehabilitation. Somebody, then, is rehabilitated enough to be back into society and be a contributing member of society. It's five or six steps that if one of those goes astray, the end result of rehabilitation is sort of lost.

This process adds a little bit more to it. It eliminates a couple of steps because it includes a different dynamic. So it does, from an outsider looking in, see the benefits of it. I think we do it without calling it part of our justice system or restorative justice. We do that in issues within organizations and that, particularly youth organizations if somebody hasn't followed the rules and there has to be some form of acknowledgement of that, and restitution for what it is they did or haven't done.

I ran a group of organizations at one point where members would damage property. Instead of charging them or instead of kicking them out, there would be a dialogue between their parents, the organization and the youth council who would come up with what their restitution would be. In a lot of cases, it would mean they would have to come in with one of their parents and repair it, if they'd broken a door or broken a desk or something to that effect, and/or then write an apology or speak to the membership.

There are processes here that have been in play for a number of years that do come from some of the more traditional historic cultures that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador, in Canada and in the world that are based on more explicit ways of the communities addressing the needs of solving and dealing with issues. Rather than just going through an encompassing, costly court system and guaranteeing, in a lot of cases, better outcomes because there's a better acknowledgement of it.

There has to be some understanding of limitations. While I wholeheartedly support this and will be voting for it, there has to be awareness there so people don't think this panacea – that we can bring this in. This will be the new solution, our new justice system. There are some, because at the end of the day there has to be – make a pathway available to victims as one of their options that can be freely chosen.

This can't be imposed, that this is the only way we're going to deal with the situation that you're facing. The victim themselves should be the first individual who has a choice whether or not this is the process they want to use. In some cases, people are victimized and it's so traumatic they want to have very little, if anything, to do with

the person who's committed the crime or the act against them. That has to be a choice there.

Once we get to that point where the victim is comfortable and understands that restitution would have to be in the best interests of everybody, then you can move forward on that. There are some things here just to keep in mind as an umbrella process as we do that. It's particularly important not to pressure people to participate when they're not able or not ready.

As I talked about, this has to be a volunteer process because the victim has to be the one who comes out of that process feeling that justice was done, but not at the expense of somebody else. You don't want to also victimize, after the fact, the person who committed the particular crime either. There has to be a balance there of ensuring that everybody is happy with it. You don't want to traumatize people any further, different things like that.

There are concerns about applying this process in circumstances where there are power imbalances, where those who have been harmed are not given the proper supports they need. It depends on the level of crimes that you're going to deal with there. There are some across-the-board standard ones that you can fit in pigeonholes, that you can come up with a process that is less intimidating, less harassing for the victim until they're comfortable that justice has been served here.

You have to be able to come and find where it is there because there are certain crimes against individuals that will have an everlasting effect. As a result, they need to have those particular supports in play. Forever and a day they may need supports, they may need particular counselling. There may be some things there. We need to get cognizant of where the balance is on those and I think there's an ability to do that. It's already been proven by societies, by other jurisdictions on how this would work.

I think here in Newfoundland and Labrador we could develop that. I think there's an ability here to do it. I would think, from my conversations in the general public and talking to those in law enforcement, and particularly those not-for-profit groups who deal with victims of crime, there is an appetite to come up with a better

process here. A policy like this or a particular program, restorative justice would be another avenue to use. It is not the only one but it's another tool in the toolbox to deal with our justice system and make it more inclusive, but make it more rehabilitative for those who are engaged in the whole process.

There are things there that we have to be realistic about. We also have to look at and have the support mechanisms to assess these. The person who commits the crime, what are the particular issues relevant to them? If it's a mental health issue, if it's a PTSD issue, is it a personal abuse issue they have themselves? What caused it as part of that?

That would have an effect on how you would offer a service for that because now you've got a victim who was victimized by those who committed the crime, but you also have the person who committed the crime is a victim in their own right. You have to be able to have the supports and the proper approach to ensure the outcomes you want are obtainable. Not everything is going to work perfectly. There are going to be left and right channels you're going to have to take to get back on the straight and narrow, but there are ways to do that.

As we move this forward – and we invest hundreds of millions of dollars in our justice system here and we have, by far, some of the best qualified people to be able to do that – we need to ensure we also have the proper supports. If we're going to bring in this program – which would be, again as I mentioned earlier, another tool to ensure our justice system is fluent and addresses particular needs, and doesn't bog down the administrative system we have now or the court system we have that is better used for more complex crimes or at a certain level when we set where that trend is there as part of those.

We have to ensure that at the end of the day this is truly beneficial, from a therapeutic point of view, because it's about healing. My hon. colleague from the Big Land had noted that in the Aboriginal communities it's about healing. It's about healing the community, it's about healing the victim, but it's also about healing the individual who has committed the act. That's what it's about; it's a holistic approach here.

I did some research, looked at it and talked to my colleagues. Then, I realized at the end of the day this is an umbrella process here. It's not just about justice. It's a bigger picture here than just the justice. The umbrella of justice is where it fits under, but it does better things within the community because it helps heal the community and find better directions to move things forward.

That was one of the marvelous things I learned in my days of working with Aboriginal communities. They have a different approach, a more holistic and a more even-keel approach, particularly when they look about how every stage of somebody's life and every level of community leaders have an input into what goes on. The respect levels go up there, as we have in our justice system a respect level if it's a police officer, to a prosecutor, to a lawyer, to the judge in these types of things and to a jury.

But the Aboriginal communities here have the holistic approach; everybody in that community has a stake in what goes on. Particularly, some of the elder states people in those communities, their wisdom, their knowledge of how to deal with it and the respect that the community has. I think that system that's already been in play, that tradition that's been there has been effective.

There are nuances in that and processes in that which can be taken and implemented into the same system we have here, the justice system, to put a system in place that works with dealing with the victims of crime. Particularly, making it more inclusive but, particularly, more solution-oriented, at the end of the day that we know that our end results are more beneficial to all involved: the victims, those who committed the crimes and, particularly, the community as a whole. We've already set the trends here. We set it because we have the natural ability to do it there.

The fact that this is going to take on a new approach here – but I like the fact there are agencies here who have already been engaged to look at how this should be done. We have some of the key ones here, when I look at Choices for Youth, I look at the Constabulary, I look at Turnings and all these agencies here that would understand some of those people who have committed crimes are not what we would

consider – and for want of a better phrase – hardened criminals, by no stretch of the imagination. They need some guidance, but they also need to take responsibility for their actions. Their actions have had an impact on a victim. That victim has to feel comfortable that justice has been done, yet society is better served by this new integration of how we do things.

I'll end again by thanking the hon. Member for bringing this forward and saying that I will be supporting this private Member's resolution. I look forward to see how this gets implemented in our court system and no doubt using what we have here to benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I think this is a very important topic this afternoon. I'm proud to stand here in support of this private Member's resolution. I thank my colleague for giving me a few moments just to speak to this. I thought the words from the MHA for Torngat Mountains were very poignant and important. I thank him for allowing me a few moments of his time to have a couple of words.

This is an important issue, of course. Restorative justice really does focus on addressing the harm caused by crime while holding the offender responsible for his or her actions, by providing an opportunity for parties directly affected by crime, victims, offenders, community to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime. I thought it was very poignant to listen to my colleague talk about how this has been in place in his community for millennia, I guess, if you want to use that, as long as time.

As a government, we must always been seeking alternatives to the established way of dealing with offences and look to justice reforms, and we need to find a way to address these higher levels of incarceration at its source. All relevant departments need to start looking at an approach

to see why they are there in the first place and what we can do to prevent incarceration.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Linda Ross, who is the president and CEO of the provincial status of women organization, and we spoke yesterday how important that organization is to this province and to ensuring equality and justice for women. I know that she has been critically active in this area, and very vital to ensuring that restorative justice is on the agenda of the provincial government, but also being actioned. I thank her for her efforts, and I thank the provincial status of women for all their work in this regard. I know they have done tremendous work.

I thank the Minister of Justice as well for all his actions. Initiatives such as the Drug Treatment Court, the restorative justice programs, the adult diversion programs are all things the Department of Justice and Public Safety has been working on, and I certainly support and really encourage continued work in this area.

To be in a position to establish restorative justice programs such as bail supervision, we need to work with stakeholders. We have been able to establish strong relationships with our community stakeholders, which will help us to move forward on many of these initiatives. Government strongly believes in restorative justice and recognizes we need to find innovative ways to address the numbers of people incarcerated to look at why they are incarcerated and determine how to reduce the risk of reoffending.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is an active member of Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education consortium. The department has been working very closely with Dr. Dorothy Vaandering of Memorial University regarding restorative justice in education and how it can be supported through the Safe & Caring Schools Policy. I think that's to be supported and encouraged.

The policy recognizes restorative justice as a proactive or preventative practice, not as a response to conflict, but a school-wide practice that will develop a culture in which conflict is

less likely to occur. And that's critical, Mr. Speaker. We have to be pursuing ways to eliminate violence. Mr. Speaker, if we can have an opportunity to impact and make sure that conflict is less likely to occur, it's certainly to be encouraged. It's something that we all strive to have less violence, less bullying, less harassment. This is something that this government – and I know everybody in this House – strives to have.

I'm encouraged to hear this private Member's resolution. I'm encouraged to hear the actions of the Minister of Justice. I'm encouraged to hear the actions of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning in this regard. I think we all need to support this and I'm glad to hear the Members opposite talking in favour of supporting this resolution.

I know that, for example, in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning they're developing guidelines for restorative practices in education, a procedure to the Safe & Caring Schools Policy. I know the department has contracted Dr. Vaandering to provide professional learning for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District safe and inclusive itinerants who are responsible for supporting implementation of safe and caring policy and, therefore, restorative justice.

Mr. Speaker, we all hope that in the future we can have a society that really is more responsive to the needs of having a caring environment, a safe environment where violence is lessened and harassment is lessened, where bullying doesn't occur; and the only way we can do that, the only way we can ensure that is if we shine a bright light on the actions, if we shine a bright light on this problem that we have in our society, and make sure that we have the type of restorative justice, the type of programs to address root causes.

I know in the department, in the Women's Policy Office, as Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, we work day to day, day in, day out, to address violence in our communities. I know that the Minister of Justice is consumed with this, I know the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Minister of Health and Community Services – I happen to be on a committee to address violence in our

society and I really want to continue to encourage all of us to work in this regard.

I thank the Member for bringing this private Member's resolution forward and I thank the House for having the opportunity to speak a few moments to this very important issue.

Thank you.

**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 to speak to this private Member's motion that encourages government to proceed in looking at implementing programs of restorative justice province-wide.

Mr. Speaker, every one of our correction facilities, whether it be HMP, the Clarenville Correctional Facility For Women, Stephenville, Bishop's Falls, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, every lockup in the province is filled. They are full and overcapacity, and oftentimes, Mr. Speaker, with folks who perhaps need not be incarcerated. Perhaps there are alternatives for some of the folks who are incarcerated. So I support looking at this, encouraging government to look at implementing a restorative justice program here in the province.

I'd like to commend and thank my colleague from Torngat Mountains who has very clearly identified the power that restorative justice can have in communities. Particularly when we see the restorative justice programs that in fact are at play in indigenous First Peoples communities here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have much to learn from that way of doing justice. Everywhere from the community involvement to healing circles to having a whole different focus on what does justice really mean.

We've heard from many victims of crime where they feel left out of the justice process. We know with our particular type of justice system that we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador, that the role of the courts is not primarily to ensure that victims are compensated, whether victims

feel they have received justice, it's really about applying the law and dealing with the perpetrator or those accused of a crime. Often victims feel really cheated. They feel they haven't somehow achieved justice.

One of the great roll outs and benefits of a restorative justice program is we know for the most part that crimes do not happen in a vacuum. They happen in our communities. Sometimes they happen in our homes. Sometimes they happen in our schools. Sometimes they happen in our places of work or they happen out in the marketplace, they happen in our streets. Crimes affect not only individual, what are seen as targeted individual victims, but our community as a whole. The community has a role in addressing what is happening in the area of justice because it's about justice. Our justice system is how we decide how we will live together peacefully and respectfully. That's what restorative justice is about.

I'm very excited about this potential. I had the honour of attending two of the Minister of Justice's Justice Summits so far. At each summit, I was lucky enough to be at tables with indigenous leaders who talked about restorative justice, who talked about healing circles, who talked about other ways of restoring justice in their communities.

I learned a lot, and I think we all can learn a lot from the work of indigenous communities. Particularly, when we look at what's happened in New Zealand and Australia. Particularly, in New Zealand with the Maori community and the work they have done around dealing with family violence issues, dealing with child abuse issues and dealing with the whole area of restorative justice. They have done incredible work. There's a lot that we can learn from them by looking at the work they have done.

Again, when we look at our prison system and our justice system, we see a whole lot of recidivism. We're not dealing with crime in a way that's beneficial to our community. If we see people are repeat offenders – and part of restorative justice is looking at not just the particular offender and then the particular victim, it's also looking at what can we do to ensure: (a) the healing of those who have been

offended, but also (b) the rehabilitation of the person who has done the offence.

We know what happens. There are a number of people who we see are incarcerated, maybe on remand for a really long time, waiting for their day in court when they may – after their day in court – not be sentenced; yet, they have spent a lot of time being incarcerated. What does that mean?

We basically have ostracized somebody from our community. We haven't really done much in the way of rehabilitation, and because of our current way of dealing with issues in our justice system, we're seeing high rates of recidivism. We are not seeing high rates of healing. We are not seeing high rates of rehabilitation.

The whole approach of restorative justice offers us increased healing and a feeling of satisfaction on behalf of the victim, but also it looks at perhaps a decrease in recidivism. Because what is being said in a healing circle in restorative justice is being said to the – because what happens once you're incarcerated? When you come out you are still seen as a social pariah.

If you've had a criminal record, try getting a job. How many of our young people have been incarcerated and then they have come out – perhaps they have been incarcerated because of drug issues and addictions issues and then they come out. They're no longer using. Maybe they've gotten a little bit of schooling at Her Majesty's Penitentiary – certainly not enough.

There are certainly not enough rehabilitation programs in our prisons across the province, but maybe they come out and they're ready to work. They're ready to re-enter society. They can't get work because they have a record, because they've been incarcerated. So they continue to be excluded from our society, excluded from our communities. They can't get work. They can't be fully integrated. Sometimes landlords want to know whether or not you've been in prison. It's hard for them to re-enter, to feel part of their community again.

These are some of the issues that really restorative justice addresses. How do we, as a community, deal with someone who has offended? How do we make sure they aren't

excluded from community? Because we know that once people are incarcerated, for the most part, they re-enter community. If we make that really difficult for people, that's when we see the high rates of recidivism.

Restorative justice is really about empathy. It asks the offender to take responsibility for what they have done. That takes empathy. It asks the offender to step inside the shoes of those who have been a victim of his or her actions.

Then, it also asks for empathy from the community. It asks for the community to say we understand what you have done, we do not condone what you have done, we accept that you take responsibility for what you have done and we want to restore your standing in community. We do not want to exclude you from our community. We want to say you are welcome back into community but on these conditions.

So it honours the needs of the victim, it honours the needs of the offender and it honours the needs of the community. Again, the goal is to have a greater sense of healing, a greater sense of rehabilitation, true rehabilitation, and a greater sense of safety within the community, so that the community has a say again in how we live together, how we deal with some of the problems that pop up as we live together. Restorative justice is really also about our community. Again, we have much to learn from indigenous communities who have practised this for years.

I'd also like to raise one particular issue about restorative justice. We know that Nova Scotia has 32 programs. There are approximately 400 restorative justice programs in Canada for adults and youth. We've done some work with youth in the area of restorative justice. Many are run by indigenous organizations, by provincial governments, by the John Howard Society and some other equality and social justice groups.

Nova Scotia has 32 groups; New Brunswick has 22 groups, including a provincial Alternative Measures program for adults – and that's what we're talking about because we really have nothing for our adults right now. We had similar Alternative Measures program but the previous government in 2010 cancelled it. I don't know why they would have done that, Mr. Speaker,

because it was really taking root and it was doing some very good work.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we really do need to develop more programs here. We have some measures for youth and, again, there are two specific indigenous programs that are listed by government, but we really need to look at what we can do as an alternative measure for restorative justice.

The NDP and my caucus supports the implementation of restorative justice practices in accordance with UNDRIP, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, that calls for restorative justice and healing circles in the traditional indigenous manner. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, their *Calls to Action*, also calls for restorative justice. In the Truth and Reconciliation, *Calls to Action*, it's items 31, 32, 35, 42 and 50.

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, UNDRIP, in Article 5 they call for restorative justice. Relationships First Newfoundland and Labrador are also calling for restorative justice. I would like to say that as the NDP, for years we have been calling for restorative justice as an alternative mechanism for dealing with issues. A lot of this as well, when we look at restorative justice measures, we can do work in conjunction and collaboration with indigenous communities who have been leaders in our province in this area.

One of the issues, though, I would like to raise is that a report from the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime – in 2016 Canada's Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime made a submission to Status of Women Canada who were working on a federal strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence. The ombudsman ensures that the federal government meets its responsibilities to victims of crime.

One of its roles is to ensure that victim's voices are heard. That's one of the things that victims often speak about in our mainstream justice program. Victims often say they feel they are not heard, that their voices are not heard. We know how important it is – particularly for victims of sexual violence, gender-based violence, victims of domestic violence – that there's a strong need

to be heard, there's a strong need for a witness to hear the effects of the violence in their lives.

One of its roles again is to ensure that victims' voices are heard and that victims are informed, considered, protected and supported in the criminal justice system and in federal laws. We know there are some very particular issues around whether or not restorative justice should be used in areas where there has been sexual assault or gender-based domestic violence. Those are issues that women's groups who have been working in the area of justice for victims really should have a say in how we operationalize and roll out restorative justice in these ways.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'm extremely happy to stand up and speak to this motion today. Unfortunately, I won't be able to use all my time. There are so many people on this side that have actually wanted to speak to this that we're trying our best to accommodate everybody.

First of all, I'd like to thank my colleague from Baie Verte - Green Bay for bringing this in today. This is something that's not just work for me, it's a passion. It's something that I'm very interested in. To see that it's a passion amongst our caucus here is a great thing, and my other colleagues that have spoken.

I'll just start off. When we think about restorative justice, basically, to me, it's such a huge concept but one that in many ways is so simple. I don't think for a second that we will not be able to accomplish the goals of restorative justice here in this province; I think it requires a mindset change. I think it requires people partnering and working together to make this happen, but I'm so confident that we can do it.

When we talk about restorative justice, it's basically taking a different approach to the system that we use. It's one that is very much

based on the victim. What I'm going to do is I'm going to just talk about, basically, my introduction to this, where we are.

One of the big stories that's resonated with me from other provinces – and finally I have some shout-outs that we have to give. There are a lot of good people working on this in the province – a lot of good people. I've had the pleasure and the benefit of working with them. I want to recognize them as well.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** When we talk about restorative justice, I was actually introduced to it back when I was in Opposition by a gentleman named Ken Templeton. He came in; I can still remember the meeting very vividly where we talked about it. It was such a different approach to how we do things.

I'd like to think in this province that sometimes we have a crime-and-punishment mentality. Not just in this province, it really exists in much of North America where we look at people who have committed a wrong doing, a criminal wrong and we think: Punish them, punish them. But we don't look at many other things that are principles of sentencing like rehabilitation, deterrence and denunciation.

In many cases, we also don't look at the person that the wrong was done against. We don't look at what these people want. It's a change in philosophy, and one that accomplishes all the goals that I set out, but also takes into consideration maybe what the victim wants.

That was brought up to me. Quite frankly, we're behind in this province, but we're not behind due to the people that have been interested in it. I would imagine that restorative justice – this is the first time that really it's been brought up by government. That's because in the last two years our government has committed to this, we've invested in this and we have a team approach to doing this. The good news about that sometimes, being behind has one positive and that is you can look elsewhere, see what's working and you can take that and make it yours. There's no need to reinvent the wheel.



We've had that benefit of looking to other provinces, jurisdictions and leaders and saying we can do that. That's just within government because the fact is some of the leaders in this movement are from here, are living here, are working here and we're sending them elsewhere. Again, I'll get to that now in a second.

Perhaps the greatest thing I can say about restorative justice is when you see it. Somebody once told me that what we take in is basically 80 per cent visual. If you can watch something it's a lot more powerful than reading it or hearing it. That's why I would suggest to everyone – I wish I had the link here today that I could put out. The Government of Nova Scotia has a really powerful small video – very short, about five minutes – that talks about restorative justice.

If I could sort of give you the takeaway or paraphrase the video in words, basically it talks about a situation over in Antigonish, a real-life situation where we had a young girl, a college student, got intoxicated one night – as many people have done and will continue to do, that's very human – and did something out of character. Had never been in trouble but damaged a local small business's property, I think. Smashed in the gate and went in and then took some of the money from the till.

Obviously, this was very upsetting to the small business owner. The usual practice is we find the individual, we investigate, we charge, we bring them to court and we penalize them, but that doesn't benefit the store owner. In many cases they don't want somebody to be punished in the traditional way of jail, they want to know why and they want to know how. In some cases, they just want to feel reassured that the situation was fixed. Why did this happen?

What happened in this case, they were brought together. How is a criminal record going to help this girl's case? Out of school, not able to contribute in her community, working, anything else, volunteering over a simple human mistake? To err is to be human, to be human is to err. We do it. We all do it. None of us are perfect. In this case, the person made a bad decision. It didn't involve harming somebody else physically; it involved making a stupid decision under the influence of alcohol.

What happened was they brought them together. This person just wanted to be apologized to. They wanted to feel safe. They brought them together and that was more difficult than any court process. This person could go in and give testimony. This person is going to go in and deal with it, but that's not going to help these people. What happened, this person actually came and volunteered in the small business, worked there. To make a long story short, the wrong was righted. The victim felt 10 times better with this process than any regular court process.

I would say to those out there that might question it: Who did it hurt? It didn't hurt anybody out there. The provisions are there in the *Criminal Code* to allow this. We've been doing it for years, especially in youth criminal justice. In this case, it was a win-win for everybody.

To those who suggested we should have penalized this person and put them in jail, I say fine. To incarcerate one person is roughly \$110,000 per year, per person. So let's jail everybody. Your taxes are going to have to go up to pay for it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How much?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** It's \$110,000 a year, per person. Incarceration is not the right approach to everybody.

Lest it be confused and some people say soft on crime – I heard it mentioned here – there's nothing soft on crime. It's being smart. Some offences can't go this route and some offences can. It's a case-by-case basis. It's working elsewhere.

Before I end, Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot in the two years we've been doing this. There is a lot of work going on in the department, different steps we want to take. We're working on things like bail reform. We're working on different forms of courts, drug treatment courts. We're working on expanding the Family Violence court. We're looking at providing advice to those who have been sexually assaulted. These are just some of the things. Some of it is restorative and some is not.

I visited the court in Conne River. I went down and talked to Chief Misel Joe about what they've done. He said it's amazing, some of these offenders will tell you it was a lot worse to sit there with your family and community around you than it is to appear in front of a judge. It works and we can continue. It's already been here, we just have to take and expand it.

In ending, I do want to toss a shout out. I've been lucky to meet with some great people doing this work, people like Linda Ross, Dorothy Vaandering, Ken Templeton, Rose Ricciardelli, Jennifer Mercer, Kevin O'Shea, PLIAN and the Status of Women. We have the community champions out there doing the work and they're working with us. They're not working two separate silos going forward; we're going together hand in hand. We're going to make it happen. It's for the betterment of everybody.

I was just down at HMP again this morning visiting with workers and inmates. We can keep building a bigger box, but if we don't look at the underlying reasons why people are there, we'll never address the issue. That's why restorative justice will work because we're working with offenders but, mostly, we're working with victims and we're working at making the wrongs right.

On that note, I appreciate the time to speak to this. I'll be supporting it. Thank you to my colleagues for bringing it up today.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the Member speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to rise. I took several notes along the way, so they're all scattered. I want to just make sure that I get this in order.

I certainly appreciate the comments, Mr. Speaker, of all my colleagues on both sides of

this House. I listened attentively to all that they said and most, if not all, I agree with.

I want to thank the following Members; the Member for Conception Bay South who talked about a mother, a parent, who had gone through a terrible incident in some part of the US, but through the restorative justice program, actually became an advocate for it in the end. A good-news story came from that terrible incident.

I want to talk as well and thank the Member for Torngat Mountains who spoke, Mr. Speaker, about the Aboriginal methods of restorative justice and their customary laws. I appreciate everything that he said. He just brought it to a whole new perspective when he stood in his place and talked about the indigenous community and about their Aboriginal methods. It's something that I won't forget.

The Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, I certainly want to say I appreciate his comments as well. He talked about an inclusive approach and the intervention. He talked about the alternatives to the justice system and really, Mr. Speaker, getting back to the basics. He touched as well on the limitations to the system. He spoke about the volunteer process in restorative justice as well. He talked about persons with mental health and PTSD issues and how to deal with those certain situations as well.

I want to talk and thank the Member for St. John's West and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who talked about restorative justice and dealing with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. She talked about the fact that their policy recognized restorative justice as a proactive or preventative practice, not as a response to a conflict but a school-wide practice that would develop a culture in which conflict is less likely to occur and when it does can be responded to in a manner that is inclusive, respectful and obviously an opportunity for learning. I certainly appreciate her comments as well.

I want to thank the MHA for St. John's Centre who talked about the focus on what the Justice system can do to help communities restore justice within their own community. She talked about offenders re-entering the community, and

she talked about restorative justice is about empathy. I certainly concur with her thoughts on that as well. She talked about we have so much to learn from the indigenous community and the importance of developing programs. She talked about the importance as well of the fact that victims will have the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, the MHA for Burgeo - La Poile and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety who's recognizing the people and the groups in the province who are working on restorative justice programs. He talked about the fact that our province is just adapting to restorative justice and the programs, and the fact that it's a benefit to us that we can see what's working elsewhere within the country.

He talked about the young girl – I think his comment was to err is to be human, and talked about the young girl from Antigonish. Something like the personal story I shared in my opening comments about my own personal opportunities, that I had to speak to people who have offended. Like I said, it was a good exercise from where I sat and it's something that I certainly wouldn't hesitate to do again if I had the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I missed a few comments in my opening, but I want to talk about restorative justice in schools. In 2012, 17 Newfoundland and Labrador educators spent two weeks exploring the possibilities of Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education. Their goal was to work towards creating and sustaining healthy, inclusive relationships in schools.

Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education Consortium was formed in 2014. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has been an active member as part of its Safe & Caring Schools Policy. The policy views restorative justice as a proactive or preventive practice as opposed to a response to a conflict.

Mr. Speaker, in the UK, schools have introduced restorative justice practices in order to try and reduce the number of expulsions from schools. By changing the approach to discipline in schools, they are hoping to change the way kids and teachers deal with conflict resolution.

Restorative justice processes in schools are said to move towards understanding why incidents that would normally result in punishment happen in the first place and work to remedy the situation if possible instead of blindly punishing the individual. Research has suggested that the zero-tolerance policies which result in suspensions and expulsions have been linked to long-term mental health issues and future criminal behaviour.

I think that says it all in that statement, Mr. Speaker, of where we are going with this private Member's resolution. Again, I certainly want to thank my colleagues on the government side here for giving me the opportunity to raise this important Member's motion, given me the opportunity to speak to it. I thank all Members in the House today who have spoken to it and who have supported it.

Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and respectfully ask for your support in going forward with this private Member's resolution today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

It being Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.