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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

I would like to welcome several guests that we have both within the Chamber and outside the Chamber today. First of all, outside the Chamber and watching us from Bell Island are Ms. Lahey's grade five class. They're at St. Augustine's Elementary and they're watching in support of one of their classmates who is the subject of a Member's statement today.

So a great welcome to you out there in television land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I'd also like to acknowledge several members of the arts community who are joining us today. We have with us: Courtney Browne, Amy House, Pete Soucy, Kevin Major, Marilynn Bernard, Josh Goudie, Bridger Canning, Lynn Panting and Calla Lachance.

Nice to see you all. Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we'll hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Fogo Island - Cape Freels, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, Baie Verte - Green Bay and Windsor Lake.

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

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

It was an exciting event last evening at the Volunteer Appreciation Reception at the Visitors Pavilion in Bay Roberts. Volunteers are the heart of our community. The dedication and commitment demonstrated throughout my District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave is both heartwarming and outstanding.

We have secured the Newfoundland and Labrador 2020 Summer Games, which will require immense dedication and hard work by the volunteer community of Conception Bay North to successfully host the thousands who are anticipated to visit our area next summer.

Last night it was a pleasure to be joined by my colleagues, the Members for Lewisporte - Twillingate and Terra Nova, to show support for the future of the 2020 Summer Games and to attend this special volunteer celebration during National Volunteer Week. It was a great way to show support for people who contribute their personal time and efforts to help others and to say thank you.

I ask that all hon. Members join me in congratulating the Bay Roberts 2020 Summer Games Committee and all volunteers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a privilege to rise in this hon. House to highlight milestones in my District of Fogo Island - Cape Freels. This past weekend marked the 25th anniversary of the Crystal Gliders Figure Skating Club. Skaters from the past 25 years filled the Beothic Arena to celebrate the occasion.

To highlight the evening, the club held a special fundraiser to bring in world champion Kaetlyn Osmond. Her speed and grace wowed the crowd, bringing cheers and applause. The club also showed their appreciation to two long-time members. Claudia Drover has been coach since the club started, dedicating 25 years to training young skaters. Daphne Hounsell has served in many positions on the Crystal Gliders Skating Club. She has also dedicated 25 years of volunteering.

A few years ago, I spent time as a volunteer with this club; therefore, it gives me extra special

honour to thank everyone who has served on this club. Each and every one who volunteered for this club has ensured its success. For that, I thank you all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to acknowledge a young man in my district who has shown true leadership, community spirit, ingenuity, but particularly empathy and compassion. I speak of 10-year-old Evan Byrne who was honoured yesterday at his school, St. Augustine's Elementary, by the Town of Wabana and the residents of Bell Island for his commitment to support the Young Adult Cancer Canada program.

This year, Evan shaved his head for the sixth consecutive year to raise money for Young Adult Cancer Canada, and to bring awareness to the need to support cancer patients. Evan has raised thousands of dollars locally by selling tickets, hosting special fundraisers and by contributing his allowance to the effort at the young age of 10

He, like so many young people, have been affected by the loss of a family member to cancer, and wanted to do his part to make the lives of those facing cancer a little brighter. When asked as a five-year-old why he was doing this, he replied: Cancer makes people sad, and I want to make them happy.

I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating and thanking Evan for his leadership and for making people happy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Todd Young, this year's recipient of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada's Rural Service Award, and also announce his nomination for the Digital Health Canada Clinical Innovator Award. Both these announcements are a testament to his leadership, compassion and investment in technology.

Founder and owner of Medicuro, the only virtual health clinic in the province, recently launched an accompanying mobile app. Patients are able to request an appointment via embedded website chat or web-form clinical sessions hosted via live video chat.

Main Street Medical Clinic in Springdale was a pilot site for web-based electronic medical records and provides a web-based education platform for delivery training to patients and care providers.

Providing addiction services from eight locations across the Island, Dr. Young has demonstrated his leadership and care for addiction patients throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Even as a busy rural physician Dr. Young finds time to continue his training and personal education in the following: Addiction Medicine Diploma program, University of BC; medical review officer, the American Association of Medical Reviewed Officers; Executive Master of Business Administration, University of Fredericton.

I ask all my hon. colleagues to join me in offering congratulations to Dr. Todd Young on his many accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, we here in the House of Assembly recently joined in with the Be Cool for Autism Day, taking to our social media accounts. What some may have thought to be a Blues Brothers tribute, was in fact support of the vital work of the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm proud to report that the students at Roncalli Elementary, MacDonald Drive Elementary and MacDonald Drive Junior High also joined in support of this compelling cause, and of their fellow students on the autism spectrum.

Persons with autism are friends, colleagues or family members with so much to contribute to the province and people. I commend and personally support the work of the Autism Society Newfoundland and Labrador for their excellent work in challenging the stigma surrounding autism and providing support to individuals and families.

I encourage the Members of this House to continue their support for the Autism Society and its families and programs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, in October our government, in partnership with Bluedrop Performance Learning, launched SkillsPass NL. These online programs are targeted to help owners, managers, employees and job seekers gain employability skills, save time and money by being prepared for inspections, and ensure personal and public safety by complying with regulations.

Just six months ago, SkillsPass NL launched with four programs. Today, there are 12 programs available to anyone interested, including training on food safety, tobacco and vapour products retail, as well as training for public pool operators and marriage licence issuers and commissioners.

Mr. Speaker, we want people and businesses to be successful and this initiative makes a positive contribution to compliance, and to employee and employer success. The e-learning is available free of charge to anyone interested. Plus,

participants' training records will be available to them electronically.

In keeping with the objectives outlined in *The Way Forward*, we have entered into a four-year partnership with Bluedrop to develop SkillsPass NL. Our government will continue to work with Bluedrop to offer additional courses with other departments on a number of initiatives.

We are certainly looking forward to our province's workforce using this innovative training technology to improve their knowledge and skills.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my hon. colleagues, and all residents of this province, to explore these programs at ServiceNL.myskillspass.io.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of the statement. Mr. Speaker, we, on this side of the House, join the minister in recognizing the value of SkillsPass NL by bringing more government programs and services online. We also know the value of a digital economy is unquestionable. I'm glad that after three years of little action, government has engaged with Bluedrop to offer more help for those unemployed and more user-friendly platforms for businesses and organizations. Clearly, the early success of SkillsPass NL has only been successful through the massive unprecedented expansion of Internet coverage through our administration.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, whatever we can do to serve the people of the province better is a good thing. I encourage all residents of the province to take advantage of SkillsPass NL.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. It's good to see one of our local technology firms continuing to develop this online training. Hopefully, this training will help owners and managers comply more easily with regulations. We are told it will also help employees and job seekers.

So, I ask the minister will she be reporting on a follow-up review of how the impact of this training is on people looking for work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight our government's investments in municipal infrastructure. By collaborating with the federal and municipal governments, we have invested more than \$259 million in provincial funding for over 630 municipal infrastructure projects in the past three years. We are providing quality infrastructure, creating jobs and enhancing services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The provincial government prioritizes projects that communities tell us are important to them. Earlier this week, the Premier announced budget 2019 will commit \$129 million for municipal infrastructure. This includes new cost-shared projects to provide 29 communities with better quality water and waste water systems, improved roads and community buildings, and regionalized services.

In line with *The Way Forward*, we are using some of that investment to leverage as much federal funding as possible. In September, we signed an agreement for \$555 million in federal funding under the Investing in Canada Plan. We anticipate releasing this year's project list after the federal government completes its review.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the supportive relationship we have with municipalities and our private sector partners. We look forward to continuing to work together to build safe and sustainable communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We, in the Official Opposition, clearly support investments of improved infrastructure in communities throughout the province. There are many municipalities that are in need of upgrades on their water, waste water and community buildings, roads and other services.

However, projects announced by the Premier on Monday will only go ahead if the federal government gives approval. Instead of waiting to have all three levels of government, the Premier wanted to start his election campaign early.

I look forward to the federal government giving these funding approvals and to the improvement of services and infrastructure which our communities badly need.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. It's good to see that much-needed money being spent on municipal infrastructure projects. It's sorely needed and thank goodness there's a federal government there to back it up. Government knows the huge deficit in the province's municipal infrastructure, the need for cash for roads, for water systems and the like.

Under the current cost-sharing formula set by the provincial government, however, most municipalities struggle to come up with their share, so I encourage the minister to revisit these formulas to relieve the financial burden faced by so many municipalities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, in last week's Throne Speech government boasted that it has stabilized spending, yet so far this week government has announced almost \$350 million and counting.

How do all these announcements impact the fiscal forecast?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: First of all, Mr. Speaker, before we get into this week's announcements and the opportunity to give back to people of the province, it really reiterates the plan that we put in place in 2016 is working. But I do want to clarify for those that are watching and would have listened and just heard some

misinformation that just went out there by one of the PC Members. This is really about cost-shared arrangements about an announcement that we made on Monday of this week.

The cost-shared arrangements that we made on Monday of this week were not federally and provincially funded, they were actually provincially and municipally funded, cost shared. So the information – facts matter, Mr. Speaker, when you make announcements like this, but I just really want to clarify about the announcement that we made on Monday about the \$129 million that we're giving back to the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: The question was how the announcements impact the fiscal forecast, Mr. Speaker.

Monday's municipal infrastructure announcement stated that some of the money would be used to leverage federal money.

How sure is the Premier that these projects will go ahead if the province is still waiting on federal approval?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If you remember back a few months ago, we've entered into multi-year agreements with the federal government. Much of the announcements around infrastructure that we can actually joint share with the provincial government are based on multi-year agreements, but I do want to reiterate the announcement on Monday around municipal capital works with the 29 communities that we just mentioned, nearly around \$129 million, were really just cost shared with those municipalities, which is currently in the three-year plan which we announced on Monday. That is all forecasted, Mr. Speaker.

I will tell the people of this province that our plan is working; we are on track. Our fiscal framework that we put in place in 2016, we are still on track with the forecast that we put in place in 2016.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, next Tuesday, April 16 is budget day for the province. The school year ends June 27. There's plenty of time to debate the budget, if the government wanted to do so.

Is the Premier's intention to debate the budget or will he throw us into an election with no budget debate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Good question, Mr. Speaker. Always proud to be able to stand and debate where we've taken this province since we took government in 2015.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: What we faced in 2016, I think the Leader of the Opposition made mention yesterday about owning up to the mess that they'd left us. Well, first of all, we saw the acknowledgement that you did leave us a mess. There's no question about that. I think everyone in this province would have recognized that.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken this province a long way in the last 3½ years. I look forward to the debate, whether it's at the doorsteps or here in this House of Assembly. But, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: – one thing for sure is that the people of this province, unlike 2015, will get an opportunity to get a clear understanding of the financial picture of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: So, will there be a budget debate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there's always a budget debate. You can't get a budget without having a budget debate.

Very clearly, the Leader of the Opposition, a few weeks ago, was here sending messages to me saying bring it on, we're ready, Mr. Speaker. Well, I will guarantee you this, the financial picture of our province that we will put to the people in this province, when we're ready for the debate, will look better than the financial picture that you've missed the opportunity for your own party – you couldn't even get the financial picture of the PC Party right, Mr. Speaker.

This is a crowd that's not ready to govern. They are not ready to govern. They haven't even got their own caucus in shape.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: That's quite a bombastic answer to a very simple question: Will there be a budget debate?

Budget debate is used to flesh out details and examine spending from previous years. Without budget debate government will hide, not only their plans but their actions from the past 12 months.

Will the Premier be open and transparent, as he has promised, and ensure that budget debate occurs so the people of the province can understand the financial condition of their province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, every single government that has (inaudible) – every budget that's passed by previous governments, and this one for sure, will require a number of hours to debate that will occur on the floor of the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province, including the Leader of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Third Party have all been calling for an election. They've been asking for an election. Are they now moving from that position, Mr. Speaker? We've been getting ready. The Leader of the Opposition, he's been getting his – the PC Party has been getting his party ready.

Mr. Speaker, we have no date picked yet, but I can guarantee you, before we go to the doorsteps –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: – unlike in 2015 when we were left with the mess, people will get a very clear understanding of what this government has done.

This province is being turned around by the work of this government, and we're prepared to have that debate with anybody, anywhere.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: How you spend your money says what your values are.

Budget debate gives the public the chance to see what's included and what's not included in the budget. Now that the Premier is making spending announcements with money that we don't have, we need the budget debate to determine what the government has to cut.

Will the Premier open the books and ensure the budget is debated?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, what the people of this province are expecting is an open debate no matter where it is. That is what we were missing.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition, when he spoke about owning the inheritance, does he truly remember what happened in 2012 when the project was sanctioned, Muskrat Falls? Just imagine a province that we live in today, if they had access to some \$500 million that will be going to rate mitigation, if we could actually direct that to priorities of people in this province, and the Leader of the PC Party is yet to stand up and take ownership for that.

We do not take ownership for the mess that we inherited, that has been caused by you. What we take ownership for is how we turned this province around, putting people to work, putting a fiscal forecast in place that is working.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: Our plan is working; people are seeing the benefits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, another bombastic answer that stonewalls a very simple question, the question being: Will there be a budget debate?

This government increased the gas tax, brought in the levy, cut libraries, introduced a book tax, all in 2016, because they needed money. Yet this week –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: – they've opened the taps on spending.

Is the Premier acting in the best interests of the province, or just in the interests of getting re-elected?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Speaking of being transparent and opening the books, Mr. Speaker, the levy – as we said in 2016, the Leader of the PC Party knows this, if he just looks at the plan, look at the legislation that was put in place – will be gone. As the Minister of Finance said yesterday, he will be very pleased to see that gone.

I was very disappointed when we had to make difficult decisions like that. We had to make the decisions like that because the PC Party hid the financial information from the people of this province –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: I will guarantee you that this government will not do that.

The fiscal situation in this province will be laid out there, and we will lay it out there on Tuesday of next week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I remind all Members, I will not tolerate heckling of any kind. I want to hear questions and answers and only that.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I think psychologists call that kind of answer: perseverating. It means you repeat you yourself.

On Monday, the Premier said he wasn't thinking that far ahead regarding the budget debate. The budget is Tuesday. Will the Premier admit that with all of these announcements, he is only focused on the election?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the Leader the Opposition, the Leader of the PC Party seems to be a little nervous of

getting in front of the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, if I was the leader of the PC Party right now I would be a little nervous if I had to go and try to defend a project that will double electricity rates in this province. If I had to defend a CHEAP plan, which says the electricity rates in our province will be 17 cents, I would not want to appear in front of the people of this province.

We are putting in a credible rate mitigation plan, Mr. Speaker. We are putting in a plan that will build on the plan that we put in place in 2016, putting people to work in this province, putting this province back on a sound fiscal track. That is what we are doing and that is what we will take to the electorate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The Premier has been travelling the province handing out goodies. Will he admit that he is using public funds to campaign?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when I was leader of the Opposition I travelled this province and I enjoyed every minute that I did it. When I'm Premier of this province, Mr. Speaker, I travel this province and I enjoy every minute that I do it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Any time that I can get in front of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – regardless of where they are, whatever my job is – I enjoy doing it. I can assure you right now, if I was in, like St. Anthony yesterday or at the Labrador Games, is he suggesting that the Premier of this province should not go into those communities where they really want to speak to our politicians? I look forward to seeing the tour wagon show up where we are, Mr. Speaker, on the campaign trail whenever the election is called.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Another stonewalling answer.

All the indications are we are only days away from an election being called and the government is making many announcements. When will they announce their rate mitigation plan? It should be easy to do. You can just look at ours and borrow from that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there are about five or six reasons why we will not be copying the Crosbie rate mitigation plan. Number one, we don't believe that people in this province can afford a 17 cent per hour electricity rate. We don't believe that they can. We will put in place a rate mitigation plan that reflects the affordability of people in this province, mitigating Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Leader of the PC Party: Will he once and for all stand up and apologize? We wouldn't even need to be doing rate mitigation if it wasn't for the decisions of the PC Party.

Will he at least once acknowledge that and take the responsibility for the role that the PC Party played in getting this province in the mess that it is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: It's refreshing to move from pure stonewalling to personal attack there; that keeps me on my toes.

With yesterday's announcement regarding the replacement of Her Majesty's Penitentiary with an expanded facility, is the minister considering consolidating correctional institutions in the province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to stand here before the Minister of Justice and Public Safety gets up and talk about personal attacks.

I have sat in this House of Assembly when the Leader of the PC Party has come back at me, Mr. Speaker, and said many words that have personally attacked me. I can guarantee you right now, no matter what forum we're in, I will defend what we have done as a government. I will not shy away of telling people in this province who put this province in the difficult situation that we're in.

If the Leader of the Opposition thinks it's a personal attack by me asking him to apologize for his party putting in place this project that is costing hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, if he is ashamed to apologize and take responsibility for that, well, I would say right now, I would be silent for him as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: There's a lot more heat than light in that answer, Mr. Speaker.

Will this consolidation of penitentiaries result in job losses in Stephenville, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Bishop's Falls or Clarenville? If so, what will be done to help these displaced workers?

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

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

I have to go back to the Member's first question, because the second question is led on a wrongful premise: (a) there will be no consolidation and (b) there will be no job losses.

We are very proud to be building a new facility in this province that will be open in 2024, but to go back to ensure there's no misinformation put out there, there will be no consolidation and there will be no job losses.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, we have bills amending both the *Automobile Insurance Act* and the *Insurance Companies Act*, which have received first reading.

Can the responsible minister confirm that this legislation will be debated prior to the election call?

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

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

As you can see, there's a little bit of a tussle there – both myself and the Minister of Service NL wanted to speak to this.

Yes, we have two pieces of legislation that are currently resting at first reading, and I can confirm that our intent is to move forward with the debate next week.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: To whichever minister wins the tug of war, can we be informed as to what recommendations of the Public Utilities Board will be included in the bill?

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

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

Obviously, we will be debating that bill in the House of Assembly, but as the Member knows, any bill that we debate here there will be briefings provided to all Members of the House of Assembly prior to any debate here in the House. At that time, Members will have a full opportunity to review the legislation, to ask

questions and then we will move into the House and have second reading and Committee. I'm sure it will be a very thorough debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 1,000 automated external defibrillators known as AEDs in our province but there's no link to the 911 system; 911 operators need to be able to direct individuals to the nearby AED wherever possible.

Why isn't your government setting up this very important life-saving initiative that I've been advocating for, for the last two years?

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

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

The AEDs were funded through money from Municipal Affairs and were located on the advice of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. They were very valuable tools, as the Member opposite alludes to. The information that's out there is currently the subject of a Hacking Health enterprise through our young entrepreneurs with the aim of providing that information for the 911 service.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to remind government opposite, there's been numerous letters written by the Heart and Stroke, by myself, by other advocacy groups to all of them, including several ministers, and still no one has had the decency to respond to any of those people. I call upon government to provide

answers, explain, to be more clear because this is a life-saving initiative and it's one I'll continue to advocate for.

What work, Minister, has been done towards setting up this registry?

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

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

I thought I answered the questions quite clearly the first time but maybe my strange accent has befuddled people.

The bottom line is the information is out there. We need to collate it and it is currently the subject of a Hacking Health enterprise, among other initiatives. We hope to be able to bring this to fruition in the same way the Hacking Health chapter here has done with at least three other initiatives.

We have the biggest and most active Hacking Health chapter east of Toronto, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to their deliberations at the next hackathon coming up in the spring.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear, what the minister is saying there now has not been communicated to any of the groups that I've been talking to. It's great to keep in their own back pocket, but people in this province, including people who have had heart transplants, are crying out for this registry and no one over there has the decency to tell those people. That's just not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, these AEDs need a regular inspection to ensure batteries and pads are working. With this registry, we can ensure that all are inspected and ready to save someone's life if needed.

Will you commit to the life saving registry today? Talk in plain terms so people can understand what you're talking about.

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

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

I'm trying to take the temperature down on the hyperbole – that means exaggeration for the Member opposite.

From my point of view, the Member raises some very interesting issues. There are wide variety of sources of AEDs, some are owned by the Heart and Stroke Foundations, some are donations to organizations like curling clubs. Those in health authorities, for example, do have regular inspections in the same way that, for example, fire extinguishers and such equipment would.

We are working with Service NL on those background pieces and they obviously would form an important part of such a registry to make sure this equipment is up-to-date.

We have not forgotten about it. We're in regular communication with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

Can the Premier confirm that he has met with representatives from the taxi industry regarding insurance issues?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, yes, we had a meeting, at their request, by the way – the members from the taxi industry. We had a great meeting, all the appropriate time, which went on for quite some time.

The minister responsible for Service NL did attend that meeting, as did members of the taxi industry. We talked about a number of issues that impact their industry, especially around insurance, but not just insurance.

Mr. Speaker, there were a number of things that were discussed. We had a very good meeting. As I said, it was a meeting that was requested by them. It was a meeting that I had made a commitment to attend as well as the minister, who's had numerous meetings with the taxi industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

Last month, the Premier stated that he'd look forward to meeting with the group because he was sure that there would be some solutions that would come from it.

Can the Premier provide an update on the meeting and what progress was made on resolving the serious issues in the taxi industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there is no doubt, we covered a lot of territory and a lot of information that was provided. Some of this was already available to us in Service NL. We all know that this issue has been around this province for nearly two decades. We all know there are concerns around facilities, insurance and the association that the taxi industry is now having really – have no other choice but buy insurance through them, but it was more than that.

We talked about things like registration. We talked about uninsured drivers and so on, Mr. Speaker. There was a multitude of things, all on the agenda of the taxi industry. It was a very good meeting, one that they requested, one that we were happy to attend.

Mr. Speaker, collectively and together, we agreed to look forward and look to putting in solutions to this problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Why were there certain members of the taxi industry not allowed to attend this meeting?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there was no one not allowed to attend the meeting.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, there was.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please proceed, Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I will say I did not, at no point, ever suggest – if that is what the Member opposite is suggesting, I would ask him to tell me who it is I excluded from the meeting.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

PREMIER BALL: I did not.

They asked for the meeting; I agreed to meet. At no point did I say someone should not be there, if that's what the Member is alluding to, not at all. There were people in that room that I met for the first time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, prescription drugs in Canada –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LESTER: – that are not over the counter are not taxed. However, medical cannabis has both excise and sales tax applied to all sales.

I ask the minister: Will the government commit to removing the provincial portion of taxes for medical cannabis users?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated to the Member yesterday, medical cannabis is federally regulated, not provincially regulated. We do regulate recreational cannabis products in this province; that's done through the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation.

The question that the Member is asking is more appropriately asked to the federal government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North for a short question, please.

MR. LESTER: It seems to me that we're more concerned with propping up the tax revenues from cannabis.

This is a provincial sales tax that's applied to medical cannabis that's prescribed for people who are in compromised positions. New Brunswick, PEI and Ontario –

MR. SPEAKER: Quick question, Sir.

MR. LESTER: – all covered medical cannabis under the workers' compensation program.

I ask the minister: Are you in discussions with WorkplaceNL to cover medical cannabis for injured workers if they require it?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, medical cannabis is not regulated by my department. The Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation regulates the sale and distribution of recreational cannabis.

I haven't had any discussions with WorkplaceNL regarding medical cannabis, no.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, artists have mounted a respectful and convincing letter-writing campaign calling for an increase in funding for ArtsNL, the only arts program investing directly in artists for the creation and development of art. The number of artists applying for this funding has significantly increased, yet the ArtsNL budget has actually decreased.

I ask the Premier: Does he fully understand how crucial this ArtsNL funding is?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for her question. Government is firmly committed to the arts community here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, that's why we put forward the Status of the Artist legislation, and we certainly value the important work that ArtsNL does for the promotion and the creation of arts.

I had a very productive meeting with business and the arts and artists on dialogue on this particular matter. I just reflect back on a sunrise ceremony that took place with members of the business community, with business and the arts, where we had Lynn Panting's dance class and it was a way to start off connecting how business and the arts are synonymous. Creativity and innovation go hand in hand, and it's important that we invest in the arts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, Rick Mercer wrote: It is thanks to early support from ArtsNL and groups supported by ArtsNL that I owe my career. Petrina Bromley, Newfoundland actor in *Come From Away* on Broadway wrote: I would never have become a professional actor if I hadn't been hired to act. That only happened because someone got a small investment from ArtsNL to do a project.

I ask the Premier: Have these articulate and passionate artists convinced him yet as to why ArtsNL investment is crucial to the development of the careers of our artists?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have the greatest respect for all of these artists and what they're doing for Newfoundland and Labrador in their production and creation and marketing and promotion of our province in their artistic endeavours and those new comers who are looking to become professional artists and the work that they're doing through their involvement with ArtsNL and all the other entities of government. They do incredible work.

Our government has been working with and listening to them. I have to say that it's important that we continue to have ongoing dialogue, and that's why, as minister, I've been going to various events and activities and festivals and also seeing the investment first-hand, talking to the artists directly.

Any investment in ArtsNL will be reflected in budget 2019.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, award-winning writer, actor, Mark Critch wrote: When I was starting out, some friends and I received a small grant that helped us to put off a show of original comedy at the hall. That investment led to all

I've done since. Investing in ArtsNL will pay off culturally and economically.

I ask the Premier: Is there anything else he needs in order to be convinced how crucial ArtsNL funding is to the well-being and the growth of our cultural sector? Faint praise is not enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said in the beginning, we have been investing in the arts. We continue to do so. We see the value in the arts. This is why we have such a strong cultural community here. It is because of all the individuals that are involved. We work in partnership, we work with ArtsNL, government as well.

Any investment in ArtsNL will come in budget 2019 – that is reflected in the budget that is coming on Tuesday. And that's when the Member would find out if there's any particular investment in ArtsNL.

But what I can say is that the Premier and I have been on site of *Hudson & Rex*, we see where film can come from a playwright, can come from literary works, it's all very interconnected, it all drives the economy, it's \$450 million, there are 5,000 jobs, and the arts and cultural community is so important to this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre for a very quick question, please.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, in the past few weeks his government –

MR. SPEAKER: Quick question, please.

MS. ROGERS: – made several funding announcements totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. Will he now join with our artists and commit to this modest request for one of the best

investments this province can make for our people?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I said that any reflection of investment in artistic and cultural endeavours would be in budget 2019, but what I can say is that we are firmly committed to the arts community here in this province, and we continue to make investments. Actually, there's an announcement being made right now to expand the Princess Sheila NaGeira Theatre in Carbonear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the question to the Opposition, but they don't answer questions, so I'll ask the question for any Member of the Management Commission on the government side.

On October, 24, 2018, during a technical briefing with the Management Commission concerning the bullying and harassment reports, I ask, did Bruce Chaulk make a reference about an individual who refused to participate in the interview process, in what context was the statement made –

MR. SPEAKER: Sir, I'm sorry, I have to rule that question out of order, since it's directed to the Management Commission and not to the House of Assembly. So I need a question directed to government.

MR. JOYCE: I ask the Minister of Natural Resources, whoever wants to answer: Did Bruce Chaulk make any reference about an individual who refused to participate in the interview process, in what context was the statement made, and did Mr. Chaulk –

MR. SPEAKER: Again, Sir, I see this as related to the activities of the Management

Commission. I'd say it's separate from the policy of the government. So I see it as not appropriate for this floor.

MR. JOYCE: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot challenge the Speaker, by the way. The idea of a question is to challenge the policy and the direction of the government.

MR. JOYCE: It is.

MR. SPEAKER: You're talking about the body of the Management Commission, to which I am the Chair.

The time for Oral Questions is over.

Thank you.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to move the following resolution respecting the reappointment of the members of the Independent Appointments Commission.

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Assembly as follows: WHEREAS section 6(3) of the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* provides that members of the Independent Appointments Commission are to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS section 7(1) of the act states that a commissioner may be reappointed; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the following commissioners expires on May 25, 2019: Clyde K. Wells, chairperson; Zita Cobb; Shannie Duff; Philip R. Earle; Derek Young; and

WHEREAS it is proposed that the said commissioners be reappointed as commissioners for a term of three years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following persons be reappointed members of the Independent Appointments Commission for a term of three years: Clyde K. Wells, chairperson; Zita Cobb; Shannie Duff; Philip R. Earle; Derek Young.

Further, Mr. Speaker, under Notices of Motion, I give notice under Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5 p.m. this coming Monday.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further 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, the Adult Dental Program coverage for clients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program under Access and 65Plus plans were eliminated in Budget 2016.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is probably the seventh or eighth time I've presented this petition since I've had the privilege of standing here in this hon. House. I've yet to hear a response from the minister and I, along with the petitioners, would really appreciate it.

As I've said before, people's nest eggs, the little bit of cash they had poked away for those

emergencies and rainy-day funds or whatever it may be, they're long since used, and now people are putting their health issues off as long as they can. They're coming to critical levels. They're ending up showing up at emergency departments with all sorts of problems that are costing the government and province and people a lot more; whereas, a simple reinstatement of this program would ensure that we do not get to those stages.

It's basically, again, where we're shouldering the inability for government to rein in spending on the backs of people who are most vulnerable.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, have not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for extended periods of time. We believe this is directly related to government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation, which includes the mandatory establishment of an adequate ratio, one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's diseases and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of patients.

Mr. Speaker, the petition today, signatories are from Labrador area, Lab City, Wabush and so on. Again, this is a concern that has been raised by the Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights.

They represent thousands of seniors all throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We presented numerous petitions on their behalf, thousands of signatories and their concern is about staffing levels in long-term care facilities housing seniors with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and so on. Their concern is about patient's safety and their concern is about ensuring that there are enough staff at all times – that's the important part here – at all times, ensuring there are enough staff to take care of these seniors that need that help.

They would like to see actual legislation in place that would dictate a certain standard, basically without flexibility, saying that there must be a standard of a certain amount of staff ratio to patients for these people.

That's what they're asking for. They're not satisfied with regulations that the minister could change, any minister could change. They're not satisfied with policy of the health care authorities. They want legislation so that it guarantees appropriate staffing for these seniors to take care of their needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

Seeing no petitions, I call Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, second reading of Bill 2.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 2, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading a bill, "An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act." (Bill 2)

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

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

Happy to stand here today and speak to Bill 2, which is An Act to Amend the Correctional Services Act.

I would preface, I guess, this debate by saying that this particular amendment itself is fairly non-substantive in and of itself. It doesn't contain a significant number of changes per se, but the history of this particular bill and of this situation, I think, carries some interest to people in the general public. I'll try my best to explain where we are in terms of this particular piece of legislation and what we've done since that time.

I think I'll lead off, Mr. Speaker, by talking about this particular amendment. In simple terms, this amendment, which is fairly short in length, it's only a few pages, but it does have a number of housekeeping provisions to it.

This bill clarifies the reference to cannabis in the definition of illicit drug, and that's obviously for reasons that come with the legalization of cannabis in the last year. That's one of the things that obviously was a change from when this bill was originally done.

It includes an additional principle and amends two existing principles, as it relates to, I guess, the concepts that the bill wishes to cover. It clarifies the authority for adult probation officers to procure and report information for the court in respect of a person charged with an offence. It clarifies the requirement that the dates that an offender is eligible for release be disclosed to the victim or victim services on request.

I would point out, these are things that have been happening in practice, but whenever you do some form of – and this, in many ways, was a statutory review that we did here. This is about codifying and clarifying practice and amending the legislation to make sure that it's actually defined.

It provides that the director consult with a qualified health care professional or other qualified person when encouraging and coordinating specific programming and services to provide for the specific needs of offenders.

In this particular clause here, again, this is not something that has changed, this is something that's being done in practice, but it's about codifying practice. It's about codifying what you have been doing. I will go backwards after I go through these changes to explain why it is that we are here.

It provides authority for the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to make regulations respecting investigations conducted under the act. That was probably the biggest change coming from the original act, and one of the reasons that I think that this bill has been delayed by many years.

Finally, it replaces the word Aboriginal with the word Indigenous, corrects the name of the Department of Justice and Public Safety and corrects references to the title adult probation officer. Those, in some cases, are housekeeping. Obviously, since the bill was originally done in 2011, the department name has changed. I think that might have been 2014-ish.

Adult probation officer, that title is again a housekeeping change. I would suggest that changing the term Aboriginal to Indigenous, it's housekeeping in terms of legislation but obviously I think it shows the significance of the terminology that we use, and I think it's the term that conveys our respect. When you think about Indigenous, Indigenous itself, when we talk about the definition refers to origination, the origins. And when we talk about our Indigenous people, they were the forbears, they were the originators of occupation and inhabitation of our land. And that's something that we see throughout government and throughout our federal government.

Now, I want to go back and provide some history to why we are here today. So we all know that back in 2011 the government of the day brought in the *Correctional Services Act*, and that was basically a response to a 2007 report, *Decades of Darkness*, which was a very significant report into the state of corrections in

this province. We had been governed by two pieces of legislation. Back in spring of 2011, government brought in and debated the legislation for the *Correctional Services Act*, which would be the replacement, the combination of the previous two acts, with a number of changes.

One of the big pieces that that act covered off was the disciplinary process going on within the institution. That was changed. Now, without getting into the entire debate – and I certainly have no desire to re-debate something. If anybody wants, they can go back to *Hansard* back in spring of 2011 and they can read the entire debate. But what came out of it? Again, I'd say the vast majority of Members in this House actually, with the exception of a few on both sides, were actually not in the House.

So what happened? The bill is debated, goes through second reading, Committee, gets third reading, it gets Royal Assent, but it was not proclaimed. The reason that it was not proclaimed is that there was still work that had to be done by the department. When we talk about the regulations, in many cases the regulations can form up the substance of a bill, in particular cases. They're obviously very important. In many cases, I'm passing on hearsay. I'm passing on information that was passed to me by staff in the department who were there during that time.

Certainly, I can't say enough about the staff of the Department of Justice and Public Safety. They would have moved at the pace of the direction that was provided to them by the people in charge. The reality is that that act was never proclaimed – never proclaimed.

Now, does that mean that we were still operating right by the specific confines of the previous two acts? No, in many cases, policy would be changed, procedure would be changed and the fact is that there were significant changes that happened. But when you think about the act, the act was never proclaimed and the department did – I can't talk about it or attest to what work the department did between 2011 and 2015.

What I can attest to is that in January of 2016, I am the minister of this department and what we've done since then is I think we've shone a

real light on corrections in this province. If anybody were to look at the direction coming from our department, looking at the changes, the legislation, the policy, I think we've shown a real interest in reforming corrections in this province.

We certainly don't take all the credit for that. It's being led by community, it's being led by staff, by advocacy groups, by inmates, by parents and it's something that we have an interest in too. We really have a group of individuals working together to change the legislation.

So, what happens is we come in – the original bill in 2011 had a five-year statutory review. So, the thought process would be: Why would we proclaim a Corrections Services Act in 2016 that the previous administration had not done, when the fact is that it would have been up for review now anyway? So, that's what we have done over the last number of years.

Now, parallel, operating at the same time as that, we've had a number of issues going on in corrections at the same time, and I can talk about them. One, we have done reviews on disciplinary segregation and administrative segregation. One of the biggest challenges that we face when we talk about corrections, one of the first things we faced was we had over capacity in one of our institutions, particularly the institution in Clarendville that houses female offenders. That has a capacity of 26 and we are getting daily calls talking about capacity being at 32, being at 33, which is not acceptable. So, we had to deal with the transfer of female inmates back to HMP, a practice that had been done in the past but hadn't been done within the past 20 years. That required renovations, required change, required a lot of work.

We look at the things we were trying to change within our institutions, things we wanted to do ourselves. So we've had a number of people, and there are groups out there – they know who they are – many were at our announcement yesterday, they've been working with us, as well as staff and management of the institution.

One of the big things, obviously, in the last year, corrections had a very tough year in the last year, and I say tough in the fact that we had

losses of lives within our institutions. I got to tell you that's something that wears on absolutely everybody, primarily the families – it's hard to know and put yourself in the position. You can have empathy, you can have compassion but I can't say that I know the depths of the sorrow that they face, I can only try.

But you know what? It's been hard on staff. This has been extremely hard on staff, as well as fellow inmates. I've had an opportunity to speak to inmates in these institutions and to listen to them and talk about the difficulties that they face, and we've tried our best to respond to their needs. Out of that came another report, the Jesso report, an independent report.

One of the other issues that hasn't gotten as much attention, for many years, now, many of our RCMP lock-ups in this province have been housing inmates for far too long. They're not supposed to be there for any significant period of time, but the reality is that in many cases, sadly, inmates were serving sentences in these institutions, which is not acceptable, and we've had no choice but to deal with that. I had questions yesterday as it relates to our announcement about why increasing the capacity. Well, the reality is that for many years the system has not been following the rules. Now, that's through no fault of the individuals; it's just been the reality of increasing populations and having space issues. And they've been doing the best with what they can.

That's one of the reasons that we've had to look at increased capacity, because you have to be prepared for it, while at the same time we've been taking many steps on reducing that population. I think that we have a healthier society when we can talk about prevention and talk about trying to prevent the entrance of individuals into that system and falling into that cycle where they continue to perpetuate the same behaviours that lead to incarceration which is tough, not just on them, but on their families as well.

But I digress. So, we're doing a review of the legislation. The fact is that our review of the legislation showed some changes were necessary, which I have outlined here today, but the fact is a lot of it was already encapsulated, was already encompassed, it was already done.

So what we're promising here today is, (a), we will bring in the Corrections Act, we want to debate that, I'd like to pass that, and what we are promising is not just Royal Assent but proclamation within 2019.

There are still regulations that have to be drafted, that have to be done, and one of the issues, too, is with those regulations comes a financial outlay. There is money that has to be spent. Just to deal with the disciplinary process, where we bring in outside adjudicators, the proper budgeting had never been done. It's almost like we brought in a bill to deal with issues but the practicalities were never worked out.

Again, let me ensure that I lay that completely on the leadership, previously. I'm not trying to throw anybody under a bus here but I'm trying to ensure that people do not ever blame the staff. The buck stops with the political leadership, and that's why any failures within the department now, I would say, would rest on me. I would never say these staff that are unseen, working in the department, doing briefings, doing all the hard work, they've been doing a great job and they presented that today.

I was lucky to have people present today, at the press conference, where we spoke about these changes, and do you know what? Mr. Speaker, we had perhaps one of the most wide-ranging press conferences on corrections and just the different things we want to do. It expanded beyond the bill, beyond what we're talking about here and it was a really good conversation, I felt, of what we're trying to achieve and what we're trying to do.

I think I've provided some of the history of why we're here now, what our goals are. Our goals are, again, within 2019, to ensure that proclamation happens and that the changes happen.

One of the questions that came out was, well, this is an election year. At some point during this year there will be an election. My answer to that is that corrections and making positive change knows no political stripe. The fact is, it has to come from leadership and this is something that has to be done, regardless of who

sits in the chairs. We have to ensure that these changes happen.

Again, if I were not to be here, no different then when I spoke about the new correctional institution yesterday, I may not be in the position when the building is complete but I want to see the building complete regardless of who is there because it's a necessity and it's something that needs to happen.

On that note, I think what I will do is take my seat. I think I've spoken to this in length. I look forward to the debate on both sides. I look forward to the Committee stage. I'll certainly try my best to answer any questions that come up, but I will say, and this was something that was brought up during Question Period today, is that this bill, like any bill that we do, everybody is provided a full briefing, a full opportunity to question the very knowledgeable staff that helped to draft the bill, to do the research on the bill.

I want to thank all the members of JPS that helped to do that. I can't name names because I may leave somebody out and I don't want to offend anybody. They all know who they are and thank you to the Justice league for doing that.

On that note, I will turn it over to my colleagues across the way to continue debate on this bill.

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the minister for his elucidation of the policy behind this measure, behind the bill. I think it's fairly apparent that the background to this is the report of RNC superintendent, retired now, Marlene Jesso, who submitted her report on four deaths in the system in provincial custody. Her first recommendation was: *"It is recommended the provincial government take immediate steps to proclaim the new Correctional Services Act and ensure all associated regulations and policies are updated."* This, I suppose, is the impetus behind this bill.

Just to go back on that again: *"It is recommended the provincial government take immediate steps to proclaim the new*

Correctional Services Act and ensure all associated regulations and policies are updated.” The minister has obliged us by explaining that while the government is taking the laudable step of bringing forward the bill to this House, its proclamation yet awaits, presumably, some months more of work, including work on the necessary budget which will be required in order to properly implement the changes which the bill has made to the underlying piece of legislation.

The primary work being in terms of budgeting, and the minister might consider enlightening us as to whether the budgetary work – presumably this is additional budget – that’s needed to achieve proclamation will be reflected in the Estimates of the budget about to be brought down next Tuesday, at the appropriate time.

Again, I’m saying the minister might enlighten the House as to whether – it might be of interest as well to the House if we could be informed that in respect of the amendments that deal with inmate health, who might’ve been consulted on these amendments.

Again, the minister – and I thank him for that – gave us an explanation for the change in terminology. The preferred terminology, it now seems, is not Aboriginal, but Indigenous. He told us that other legislation, other usages, federal legislation, the preferred terminology now appears to be Indigenous and not Aboriginal. I would ask the further question, whether Aboriginal groups, Indigenous groups, as the case maybe, were consulted and expressed a preference as to what terminology they preferred in terms of their self-identification. Did any consultation occur in that connection with Aboriginal groups in this province?

The minister has dealt with the question of proclamation sometime in the year. I’ll just briefly state the principles of this legislation because they underscore the importance of it, the great importance of this legislation and, in fact, underscore the need for expedition to bring it in.

In the Principles, part one, section 4: “This Act and regulations made under it shall be interpreted and administered in a manner consistent with the following principles: (a) the protection of society shall be given paramount

consideration in making decisions or taking action under this Act; (b) the safety of the community and the furtherance of a just and peaceful society will be enhanced ...” It goes on to refer to “maximizing individual opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration that recognize the needs and circumstances of offenders both in correctional facilities and in the community.”

The reason I read those out is that it underscores the great importance of this piece of legislation, not only to inmates but to the community at large and indeed to staff members of correctional institutions because it goes on to describe the duties that the community owes to staff members in correctional institutions as well.

We would commend the government for acting on bringing this forward. We’re disappointed to hear that proclamation will be further delayed and the minister might care to provide some extra information on the few points I’ve raised.

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

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

I’m happy to stand and speak to this bill today. The minister made reference to this bill being changes to a bill that came to this House in prior time and some of us were here. Well, yes, indeed I was on March 31, 2011, as I look at my briefing notes for March 31, 2011, at which time we were told that Bill 9 it was then, and it was an act respecting correctional services, which is what we’re dealing with today, and we were told at that time that that bill in 2011, eight years ago, replaced outdated, decades-old legislation. The officials said in the briefing that the new legislation was long overdue. The officials said there was a need to replace outdated language and outdated terminology, and the list goes on as to why this bill was so needed eight years ago and was never proclaimed eight years ago.

Three years ago, this government came into being and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety was the minister all during that time, yet we’ve waited over three years now for a bill that was helping the *Correctional Services Act*

become up to date, while we were waiting for that bill to be proclaimed. So today here we are and the minister obviously realizes the problem with the fact that this bill here has never been proclaimed, even though he's been minister since 2015.

He found it so important that he actually did put out a release this afternoon, earlier on today, saying that definitely the bill we're talking about today, which is Bill 2, also *Correctional Services Act* amendment, that the bill we're talking about today definitely will be proclaimed sometime this year.

Well, I would think after waiting since March 31, 2011 for new language, I would think that this bill should be proclaimed the minute that we vote on it and we get Royal Assent. I'm rather surprised to hear sometime this year we're going to see this bill brought into play.

There are points to be made. Obviously, some of it is so-called housekeeping. It's not so much housekeeping, what it is doing it is making up for the changes that have happened in the last eight years from the bill that wasn't proclaimed eight years ago. For example, we have moved forward with some language in our society, hence the change of the word Aboriginal to Indigenous.

We have many things in it which are bringing things up to date, so I suppose even if this bill, which was Bill 9 back in 2011, even if that had been proclaimed, there may be changes we'd be making today, but we would at least have been making them to a bill that had been operative.

The original bill had to do with changes that were being called for by the 2008 review of corrections in Newfoundland and Labrador, called *Decades of Darkness*. So we're even that much more beyond where we should be because the review was done in 2008, the bill came in in 2011 and here we are in 2019 trying to bring things up to date from the recommendations of *Decades of Darkness*.

The new bill, 2011, was legislation drafted to include recommendations from the report, *Decades of Darkness*, and from best practices in other jurisdictions. And again, when you read the briefing notes that I had in 2011, some of it

based on what we'd been told by the officials of the department at that time, they did talk about how they went to other provinces and looked at the legislation in other provinces. They talked about how the Yukon was felt to have the most modern legislation, but best practices adopted from other legislations, they did all kinds of consultations. I wonder where the Yukon is now? They were ahead of us then; they're probably even more ahead of us now as we waited eight years for this new bill.

So, here we are today with a bill, changing a bill, upgrading to a bill that has been around for so long because of not being proclaimed that it's out of date, so we're modernizing the bill. I suppose maybe it's symbolic that we're doing it in the week where the government says they're going to put in a new facility replacing Her Majesty's Penitentiary. I hope that we're not going to have to wait as long for this proclamation as I am sure we're going to have to wait for the new penitentiary.

Here we are amending a bill which remains unproclaimed, not in force since 2011, updating this legislation. I just hope that the piece of legislation is not going to remain on the shelf the way the 2011 piece of legislation was left on the shelf, and I do hope that it comes off, but I really have to question why we have to wait for some time in this year for this to be proclaimed. This should be proclaimed the minute we get Royal Assent.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

What a pleasure to speak on a progressive piece of legislation such as this one. It does a lot for not only our justice system, but for our communities, as I consider just the preamble which captures the essence of the bill and what it creates for each and every one of us, for a stronger, more just society, for a more secure community in which we all live.

The preamble and the principles behind the bill state very clearly that the protection of society shall be given paramount consideration in making decisions or taking actions under this act; and further, that the safety of the community and the furtherance of a just and peaceful society will be enhanced, as far as possible, through maximizing individual opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration that recognizes the needs and circumstances of offenders, both in correctional facilities and in the community.

And that staff members who are responsible or charged with the responsibility for engaging in these services, that staff members will be given, wherever possible, appropriate career development and training opportunities, and a workplace environment that encourages integrity and personal accountability and that it is consistent with the relevant code of professional conduct established under section 11 of this act be given consideration.

And it goes on further, Mr. Speaker, offenders shall obey community supervision conditions and correctional facility rules and will be subject to the least restrictive measures consistent and necessary for the protection of the public, staff members and offenders.

It goes even further, Mr. Speaker, inmates are entitled to fair treatment with access to effective grievance and disciplinary procedure; that inmates are entitled to equitable access to health services consistent with the goals of public health; and that policies, programs and practices will respect age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences and will be responsive to the particular needs of women and Indigenous peoples, the needs of offenders with particular mental health and addictions requirements, the needs of offenders with respect to the social determinants of health, and the needs of other groups of offenders with special requirements.

I cannot help but think, Mr. Speaker, in the context and the backdrop of the recent announcement by our Minister of Justice for a new provincial prison, and the importance that we all place on this facility, recognizing that this is a facility that houses some of the most dangerous, but at the same time, people who do deserve human dignity and human respect, but

most importantly an opportunity to rehabilitate and to come out better people, more law-abiding people, and create an environment of safety for each and every one of us.

You know a very wise person once said to me, a former minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada once said to me that to simply be punitive, to simply impose incarceration for incarceration sake, without being mindful of the further necessity for natural justice, for good justice, the justice afforded through rehabilitation, we do not succeed in our objective.

Now, that was a federal minister of Justice and Attorney General who was seeing it from the perspective of he himself had been attacked. He himself had been the victim of what appeared to be a hate crime, someone who was very incensed and angry, who himself appeared to have been homophobic and was very concerned about the decisions and actions of the federal minister of Justice related to matters of justice of equality for members of the LGBTQ community.

He was attacked viciously, viciously assaulted and attacked, and this individual was convicted. Upon sentencing, the federal minister of Justice asked: What is required to occur here? And he said: Do you think I or my family or my community will be better served if this individual's incarcerated without context, without reference to rehabilitation, without counselling, without proper mental health guidance and services? No, I will be less safe under those circumstances.

So a federal minister of Justice, who himself had been a victim of a vicious assault, took a very high road, a very reasoned road, and said that it is easy to be punitive; it is very human and very fair to seek justice in a higher order. That was Andy Scott. He was a great friend of mine. He's passed away now. He will be missed dearly but he really, really talked the talk but walked the walk.

When I think of the prison that was just announced, the necessity of that, I can only say that this was a good measure. This bill today follows suit with the initiatives that we see and recognizes a better future for each and every one

of us by responding to the true needs within our justice system, empowering our justice officials, our probationary officers, those that are so important in dealing directly with those who face criminal prosecution and conviction and incarceration of some variety or other. So these are the methods that create a real 21st-century legal system, a 21st-century justice system.

It is so important that this prison be replaced to a modern facility. It's not for the convenience or comforts, per se, of those who would be housed in it, but that is an element to this. We are not safe as a society. Our safety is not increased by just simply imposing a very brutish or unfair justice system which does not respond to the realities and the opportunities of rehabilitation.

That's why I certainly applaud my government, the Members on this side of the House but led by our Justice Minister. He's not only bringing in this piece of legislation which responds to the needs of a 21st-century justice system, but he's going to take a facility and turn it into a 21st-century facility. That I think, Mr. Speaker, is why I will be supporting this piece of legislation and all Members of the House should do so as well.

Thank you very, very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety speaks now, he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I thank my colleagues for their contributions to the debate, especially the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for giving us some insight from his many years within political legislatures, so I appreciate that.

What I'm going to do now is I know that the Members opposite have asked some questions. I'm not going to address them now, for the sake of I don't want to answer one and miss one. So what we will do is put the bill into Committee, the questions will be asked and I'll certainly try

my best to answer them to the best of my ability. On that note, I will sit and take my seat and conclude second reading.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 2 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act. (Bill 2)

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

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 2)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

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.'

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 2, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act." (Bill 2)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: My question for the minister is in connection with the delay in proclamation to sometime during this calendar year needing budgeting work, will this appear in the Estimates for the budget coming next Tuesday?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

What I can say is that the delay in proclamation is more to do with finalizing the adjudication's process, and that right now the actual financial piece is not – you will not see it specifically allocated in the line by line for the budget, but obviously it would have to be established within the corrections budget that you'll see in the line by line when we do the Estimates.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 9 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 9 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 9 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 2.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 2.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 2 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 2 without amendment.

When shall the report be received? Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the said bill be read a third time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

On motion, reported received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to the Throne Speech. I think all of us in this House had the opportunity to listen the other day, not too long ago, to what I thought was a Throne Speech that laid out the future of our province. It told of not only where we've come from in a lot of ways and the struggles that we've experienced in this province especially the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, but it also said with hope and aspirations where we are going.

It is on that vain today I would like to speak about some of the things that are happening in Natural Resources. I do rise in this House quite frequently to give explanation as to what's happening in the growth and development of the oil and gas industry, on growth and development of our mining industry, but it bears repeating, Mr. Speaker, how often and how much growth that has occurred since this Liberal government took office back in late 2015, early 2016. It has been my pleasure to serve as the minister responsible for Natural Resources, the minister responsible for oil and gas, for mining, as well as for electricity and energy generation.

I've had the experience over the last number of years of managing the Muskrat Falls project, Mr. Speaker, and you will know, based on the outcomes of the inquiry, how difficult that project that we inherited and the mess that it was

in. I know yesterday the Leader of the Opposition, of the PC Opposition, stated that we should own the problems that we inherit, but I reject that premise. I say that we'll manage them, we'll clean up the mess that we inherited, but I certainly do not own them. I will do my best for the people of this province to make sure that they are remedied.

I want to speak on a positive note here today. I want to talk about some of the things that are happening in the oil and gas industry, some of the things that are happening in the mining industry, and the prosperity, I think, that they bring to the province, and the hope and opportunities they bring, and the amount of work that we've been able to do as a government, as a people of this province, of ensuring that we are on the right track of growth and development.

I spoke in this House about *Advance 2030*. It's a plan that we developed, government developed, with stakeholders in the industry. About 150 stakeholders came together from the oil and gas industry, supply and service industry, from what I'm going to call the education industry – I don't want to call it education industry, but I will do so for this purpose – from labour and from all different aspects of the oil and gas industry. We came together to have a conversation and set a path and a course, and it's called *Advance 2030*. It really is setting up the province as a preferred location for oil and gas development.

I could tell you over the last year we have advanced that plan forward very, very well. There are over 30 recommendations that we're actively working on. I think almost 100 per cent of the short-term aspects of that plan are being worked on as we speak; some are completed, some are still being monitored and managed.

The targets in 2030 are ambitious; they're ambitious but achievable. For example, over the next decade, in between now and 2030, we believe we can drill 100 new exploration wells. That's a significant number, Mr. Speaker, and it will give us – imagine if some of the prospectively that we're seeing on seismic – and we've had it independently verified – imagine when we discover that oil, when we actually drill and there's a positive result, how beneficial it will be to this province.

So, 100 new exploration wells. We have five companies today, five large oil and gas companies today with applications before the Canadian environmental assessment process to drill offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. I know that ExxonMobil, for example, have an exploration program this year. I was out most recently to visit the West Aquarius, which will be the drill rig that they will use, and they are actively pursuing some of the targets that they have seen, both in new areas like the Flemish Pass, as well as existing areas in the Jeanne d'Arc Basin.

For those listening, I'd like to make sure people understand that the four projects that we have active offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, four of them are in the Jeanne d'Arc Basin.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have over 20 basins offshore Newfoundland and Labrador – 20 basins. It's pretty exciting to think that while we only have four projects today in one basin, we've just signed up, and I'm looking here, Mr. Speaker, the framework agreement that we have on the Flemish Pass.

As you know, this past year we made an agreement with Equinor, a Norwegian company, they are now working through the sanction process to develop the Flemish Pass.

I have to say that it's pretty exciting. It's the first remote, deepwater project in our offshore. It's some 500 kilometres from shore and in approximately 1,200 metres of depth. So, it will be a deepwater project. It will be the first, as I said. All of our projects today, the four that we have active today, are in the shallower waters of Jeanne d'Arc. This is in the Flemish Pass in 1,200 metres of water.

They have nearly 300 million barrels of oil. The total project cost is \$10.9 billion – \$10.9 billion. That's the life-of-field cost, but we're expecting really outstanding benefits from that.

For the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador we're expecting \$3.5 billion in revenues, and we're expecting 22.3 million person-hours for the life of the field, in terms of employment. That really does strengthen our oil and gas industry and strengthen our economy, and I'm

looking forward to Equinor advancing on the development of that find.

But, Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about more discoveries. So we have Equinor, who's currently active in sanction and I know that they're looking at their exploration program. We have ExxonMobil, for the first time since 1991, doing pure exploration offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. We also have a company called Nexen, BHP, BP – all of them actively pursuing exploration offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. So it's a very, I'm going to call, exciting time offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. A great time to grow and enhance our offshore oil and gas opportunity.

I will also like to tell the people of the province, for those that are listening today, that our oil offshore Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the lowest GHG – greenhouse gas emissions – in the world. About 1/3 less than anywhere else in the world. So I have a lovely chart – I don't have it with me today, but it shows looking at many of the fields around the world and what the GHG emissions are for those fields. And if you look at those, Newfoundland and Labrador's Hibernia Project is on the lowest end of GHG emissions.

So as the world continues to consume oil and gas, as we know, for the foreseeable future, at least 40 to 50 years out, that the world will continue to consume oil and gas. And it's not just in transportation and others, it's in things like – and I'll hold up my phone, here, Mr. Speaker. Plastic is very much part of the oil and gas industry. So this is downstream, I realize, but that's where plastic comes from. It's from the upstream oil.

We have to realize that while the world is still consuming oil, how beneficial it will be to develop more oil offshore Newfoundland and Labrador because of many reasons. But one of which, of course, is the lower GHGs – greenhouse gas emissions – per barrel.

Secondly, are the requirements under the clean energy plan that my colleague, the Minister of Environment, recently put before the people of the province. Under that plan, emissions for oil and gas companies will continue to come down. That's a requirement. Under a lot of the carbon emission requirements of oil and gas, and I'll tell

the people of the province, I think it's 100,000 tons will have to be taken out of that industry this year alone and, by 2030, I think it's 2.5 million tons. That represents about 600,000 vehicles taken off the road.

So there's a lot of effort going into taking the carbon out of the barrel on our offshore, making sure we're very focused on environmental protection. But if we're going to develop oil in this world, I'd rather have it developed offshore Newfoundland and Labrador because, of course, we have lower GHG levels.

Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of looking at some of the other opportunities. So I talked a lot about exploration and the fact that we're looking at having 100 wells offshore Newfoundland and Labrador between now and 2030. We're looking to grow the industry to about 650,000 barrels of oil a day, that's significant growth, and we're looking to employ in operations several thousand people, direct operations.

Mr. Speaker, it brings big benefits to the people of the province in terms of employment, in terms of growth in our economy but it also brings a tremendous amount of revenues to government. I can tell the people of the province that over the last decade some \$20 billion – I know under the decade from the former administration, about \$20 billion to \$25 billion came into this province. This government thinks that we have to be very prudent in those expenditures and, as you will have heard in this House before, the Premier speaking about ensuring that we save some of that money for our future projects.

Mr. Speaker, currently underway in terms of projects, the West White Rose is under construction in Argentina. We have a tremendous number of people working there. I think it's 5,000 person-years of employment during construction, so a tremendous number of people working on the West White Rose project. First oil is anticipated in 2022; they're still on track for that. It has about \$3 billion in economic benefits to this province.

So, the oil and gas industry contributes significantly, but I don't want to just stop there, the mining industry as well. I can tell you in the last two years in the Department of Natural Resources we have signed up about \$18 billion

in economic activity through oil and gas and through mining. Isn't that tremendous?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: A lot of it in Labrador, some of it in Baie Verte, a lot of it all around the province and we know that both offshore oil and gas, as well as the mining industry, really do contribute to our success as a province, and we want to continue to encourage – mining is vitally important to us all.

I held up my phone previously. You know, the mining industry, all of the technology in this phone starts with the mining industry. I know, for example, cobalt and some of the rare earth minerals are required both in the new green economy, and we're seeing – pardon me?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Batteries.

MS. COADY: Batteries, good point from my colleague opposite, who is a supporter of the mining industry. I have to say the Member for Ferryland is a strong supporter of both oil and gas development, as well as mining development. He's been encouraging that growth and development, and we all have to come together to do that.

But in the last year, we had about \$48 million in exploration in the mining industry; \$48 million, that's a lot of money, all around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, where junior miners, where prospectors are out looking for the next Voisey's Bay. We know how many people Voisey's Bay does employ; some 16,000 person-years of employment, 1,700 jobs on a regular basis. So, they're out looking for the next Voisey's Bay, the next opportunity, and, boy, do we have opportunities.

I could tell you that over the last number of years it's been very interesting in the Department of Natural Resources when we see online prospectors coming in and making stakes all around the province, and we've seen a bit of a gold rush in this province, a bit of a gold rush where in one day I think we had one of the largest rushes, I'll call it that, to stake claims in Central Newfoundland, and a lot of that exploration is going on today in both Grand

Falls-Windsor area, in Gander area, in the Baie Verte area, a lot of exploration going on.

But, Mr. Speaker, Mining the Future, again, another plan that we have working with stakeholders in the industry, we came together with stakeholders all around the province in the industry and said: How can we grow our mining industry? When we looked at that, we said: What are some of our yardsticks? So, we're currently at \$48 million in exploration activities. We want to be a \$100 million. We want to be one of the places in Canada where people come to explore, and we're putting significant investments in our geological survey, as I've talked about before. We've even had conversations with our neighbouring Province of Quebec to say, how do we ensure the development of the Labrador Trough? Great opportunities await us in Labrador, more –

MR. LETTO: Gem of the world.

MS. COADY: Gem of the world, as my colleague from Labrador West says.

Mr. Speaker, we're looking actively. We had 12 active-field projects under the geological survey last year. Those have contributed greatly to the knowledge. We have core samples stored around this province where people come in from all over the globe looking at the opportunities in the mining industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we want to continue to grow that industry. Currently, there's direct employment of some 4,800 people in the mining industry. We think we can really grow that industry and we're looking forward to that. We have a plan, mining the future, to do just that.

Let me tell you some of the great things that have happened in the mining industry. Wabush 3, this is the Moss Pit, recently opened, myself, the Premier and the Member for Labrador West were all there. It contains some 744 million tons of iron ore. They're about 1,700 employees in IOC, and they're increasing production about 23 million tons annually. It's a great story.

We know last year we made an agreement with Vale to go underground at Voisey's Bay – 16,000 person-years of employment during the construction phase, and once operational, of course, 1,700 jobs at the underground mine and

at the Long Harbour processing plant. There's going to be about \$1 billion spent in economic activity. Can you imagine – \$1 billion spent in economic activity. Just that activity alone generates about \$69 million in tax revenue. Think about that, that kind of activity.

We also had the reopening of the Scully Mine with Tacora. They're reactivating the Scully Mine and mill for a minimum of 26 years – 280 direct positions. We've seen the reopening of Canada Fluorspar – \$250 million in project capital costs, 3,000 person-years of employment and 255 full-time positions, Mr. Speaker. That's on the great Burin Peninsula.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the Beaver Brook mine. My colleague from Gander recently joined me and the Premier when we talked about reopening the Beaver Brook mine. Again, great contributions to our economy.

We're seeing some exciting things happening in both the oil and gas and the mining industry that are really driving economic success and employment. I say to the people of the province, we're working hard to ensure that we continue to grow the economy, we continue to add jobs. As the Premier said the other day in the House, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing nine months of consecutive employment growth.

Now, if you look back from what was projected under the former Progressive Conservative government, that wasn't going to happen. It was because of this extra effort and extra diligence, I say, Mr. Speaker, on the oil and gas and the mining industry that we're seeing this.

I want to thank the great people of St. John's West for the opportunity to represent them and to work hard for them, Mr. Speaker. We've done a lot in the district. Of course, the extension of the Team Gushue Highway has finally been completed that runs the length of my district. We've brought some employment opportunities for people in the district. We most recently announced some announcements in child care in the district.

I know that I attend a lot of the events at many of the community centres in the district and I'm very, very happy to do so and to continue to drive both the opportunities for the people of St.

John's West in our economy but also to help them with both housing and ensuring effective health care and ensuring effective transportation, ensuring that we have the money to reinvest in our economy and that's driven by a lot of what we do in the Department of Natural Resources.

I thank you for the opportunity today to speak to the event.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Are there further speakers to the Address in Reply?

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly my pleasure to stand in this House in response to the Throne Speech and to make some comments. Of course, as we know, her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, presented such an eloquent Speech from the Throne with the plan of government going forward for the next year. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I count it a real privilege to be able to stand in this House and be in the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor as she presented the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, it's also my real pleasure to represent the beautiful people in my District of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans. I count it a real honour every time that I stand in his hon. House because if it had not been for the wonderful people of my district, I would not have had this opportunity. Everyday I reflect upon that and say a huge thank you to all of them for making this possible.

I know, Mr. Speaker, in the last 3½ years, I've worked hard on behalf of my constituents to ensure that their voice has been heard and their concerns have been addressed. We've been fairly successful in being able to address some of the issues that have been prevalent in my district.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, of course, I've taken a number of opportunities to talk about the people in my district. I realize, and I've said this

before, that my district has been somewhat hard hit over the years. As you know, in 2009, March 31, 2009, a very dark day for the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor when Abitibi closed its doors and over 700 people were impacted. We know the impact of that, Mr. Speaker. Then just roll forward a few more years into 2015 when Duck Pond in the Millertown-Buchans area, they closed and another additional 365 people were unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, where we are today in the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, in Buchans and in the Badger area, in the Central area, Millertown and Buchans Junction, talks of the resilience of the people in the area. Many people could have looked at the glass as half empty, but, thank goodness, most people look at the glass as half full. As a result, we've been able to rebound. Our economy is growing and it's been my real privilege over the last four years to look at some of the significant investments that we've made in my district.

Of course, most of it, Mr. Speaker, is in relation to the infrastructure, a lot of the infrastructure having to do with roads. I refer to the Buchans Highway. Last year, we were able to do nine kilometres of road on the Buchans Highway. Mr. Speaker, we're not there yet; we haven't completed all the work when it comes to the Buchans Highway. There are still some concerns in that area that I will be addressing going forward, Mr. Speaker.

The other areas – we've worked closely with the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor and in Badger, we've made investments in water and sewer, and, of course, as well in the Town of Millertown. A very small picturesque town that has a very vibrant council, a very small council in that, Mr. Speaker, but yet very energetic. It was my pleasure just a few weeks ago to be able to go to Millertown where we had a meeting about the remains of the Beothuks and where it should be; a town hall meeting that was very, very productive, that was organized by the council in Millertown.

These are just some areas, Mr. Speaker, that I think the members of my councils within my district are making significant progress.

One of the other areas that I think – it's not unique in Newfoundland and Labrador but certainly I'm proud of in my district is that the towns work in partnership. When I say that, there are a lot of opportunities happening there, particularly in the history. It was also my real pleasure to work with the Heritage Society in Grand Falls-Windsor. As you know, Mr. Speaker, over a hundred years of history in the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, going back to the pulp and paper mill, and that history, the memorabilia, a lot of the information, even right from every single *Advertiser* that was printed in the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, was sitting in a very, very small area.

So I was able to work with my government to be able to provide, for the Heritage Society, a new home that they are so proudly working on now to make it to a situation where they will have, for many years to come, a home whereby they can display all of the memorabilia that belong to the Abitibi paper mill, and really, not only the paper mill, but also the entire history of the town and the surrounding areas.

There's a lot of pride and there's a lot of interest in ensuring that we do diversify our economy. I've worked closely with the EXCITE Corporation and with the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, and with the investment into research. Research in Grand Falls-Windsor and the EXCITE Corp is actually on the cutting edge of research, really in Canada, and the partnerships that have been built there, and I am so proud of that. So, I will continue to lobby on behalf of my constituents, and certainly look forward to serving my constituents again.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of more references. This of course, as you know, is Volunteer Week, and without volunteers, really our communities would not survive, they would not exist, and I just want to make reference of a couple. I had the opportunity and the privilege of attending the Kiwanis Music Festival last Friday night, the highlights, the stars of the festival, and that's a very successful festival, but it is only possible because there are literally hundreds of volunteers that make it possible. Last week we had participants right across the Central Newfoundland area, from Springdale to Lewisporte and down the Connaigre Peninsula.

Every year our young people come to Grand Falls-Windsor and participate in the Kiwanis Music Festival, and really that has been the beginning of many of our young musicians going on to university to become music teachers and have a career in the music. So, it's very, very important for all of us and for the Music Festival.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak, as well, when we talk about volunteers, my pride and my joy is the Grand Falls-Windsor Cataracts. I'm been a Cataracts fan all my life and, as you know, they are now involved in the Herder finals against the Southern Shore Breakers. And I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to travel to Mobile for hockey game between the Clarendville Caribous and the Southern Shore Breakers.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, my hon. Member.

Last weekend I had the opportunity to go to the Jack Byrne Arena in the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, my colleague was there as well, two great hockey games and I'm looking forward to this weekend returning back to Grand Falls-Windsor and looking forward to the Grand Falls Cataracts and the Southern Shore Breakers. I know where my bias is at, but I just want to say thank you to all of them because it's very important that behind both of those teams and every team that's in the province are dedicated volunteers who give of their time, that really get out there, raise money, they sell tickets, there are 50/50 draws, they do all kinds of things that are happening to make it possible.

While I'm cheering and pulling for the Cataracts, I know that in order for the Southern Shore Breakers to make this trip this weekend as well, Mr. Speaker, that it could only be possible with the volunteers, from the coaches to everybody else that is involved. I just want to say that because I think it's important from time to time that we recognize all the work that our volunteers give to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, for me, this has been an interesting year in a number of portfolios from Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to Education and

Early Childhood Development, and the transition between two of those portfolios has been an education in itself. There are many challenges that we face from time to time and I think it's important that we do that and we face it and we embrace it.

One of the things that I really wanted to make reference to, of course, over the last number of weeks, we're looking at changing the Schools Act. The Schools Act is somewhat outdated. I think the last time it was changed was 1997. We've gone out for consultations with the general public and we have heard back, and the consultations from the general public have now concluded and we are meeting one on one with the stakeholders. We will have those conversations looking for feedback.

Mr. Speaker, the early indications are that there are a number of areas that parents are concerned about and areas that we look at, whether it's inclusive education, we're looking at better opportunities for our children and addressing some of these needs. So all of these things will be taken into consideration. Once we complete our one-on-one consultations with our stakeholders, then obviously I'm looking forward to a new Schools Act.

One of the other things that we've been looking at, and consultations are still ongoing with a tremendous response from the general public and response from different stakeholders, is in the implementation of junior kindergarten. As you know, the education task force was one of the recommendations that we would look at and we would do consultations for implementation.

Mr. Speaker, so far, initially, there are varying ideas of how implementation of the junior kindergarten should happen, what the model should be, who should be delivering it, how it should be delivered. So consultation is an absolute, tremendous opportunity for whoever, the general public, special interest groups, stakeholders to have an input in how you would go about implementing such a program.

I'm continually looking forward to seeing some more direct ideas on what we're looking at in the junior kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, that leads me to a couple of other points I just wanted to make and one of them is that I think it was brilliant of

the Premier when he wanted to put together a Premier's task force on education. It was certainly something that I think was very important and it has certainly led to a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the task force, an independent task force, that really looked at the education from a somewhat a different perspective. Did they come back with everything new? No, Mr. Speaker, they didn't. There were some of the things that were taken from previous task forces.

One of the things that impressed me was the fact that last July when we looked at the Education Action Plan, I was really so pleased that the Premier was adamant that there are 82 recommendations in that Education Action Plan, and that he wanted to see all 82 of those recommendations implemented. I think that says a lot – and I'm not pointing any fingers at anybody – but over the years many times we have a tendency to have a report done, to have put a plan in place, and a lot of times it just sits there and collects dust and never really anything gets done about it.

So I was so pleased and so happy when the Premier gave me the direction and said that one of the things that, as minister you have to ensure, that the Education Action Plan, the recommendations are implemented. Mr. Speaker, in such a very, very short time we have over half of the recommendations already implemented, and we do have some short-, medium- and long-term plans. So we are on track for the implementation of all of these recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, there's a tremendous number of areas within this Education Action Plan that really speaks to improving resources within the education system. And one of them is – and I'm not going to go through the details of it, but realizing, in three years, there will be over 350 additional resources added to the education system. These are additional. They include specialists in reading and math, and they include teacher learning assistants, they include librarians and they include English as a second language. So, we are adding resources.

This is very important. Last year we did 40 schools, phase one. The results and the feedback that I'm given, and I've had the opportunity to

visit many of these phase one schools, has been overwhelming, and talking to the teachers and administrators that are in these schools, very, very positive.

Mr. Speaker, very shortly the school board will now announce the 40 schools in the phase two. As you know from the Education Action Plan, beyond year two, in year three, all of the remaining schools will be included. This is a very important direction that we're taking in education to ensure that our students are given every opportunity and making sure that resources are available.

One of the other areas that we looked at, because mathematics is certainly a focus area – literacy and numeracy is so very important in our education system. One of the things that we looked at, mathematics, particularly in K-to-three, K-to-six area and looking at providing resources.

I saw a couple of comments – I don't have them with me today, but a couple of teachers that responded, have done the bursaries that we make available. We make available bursaries to teachers – not to students, to teachers – to improve and to look at other methodologies within teaching math, and improving their professionalism.

So today, I had some very, very positive comments that came from teachers that have already taken the course, that have already taken advantage of the bursaries, and a very, very positive feedback. They're excited, and in their correspondence to me they wanted me to share with other teachers to encourage as many teachers as possible to take advantage of these bursaries. These are just a tip of the iceberg on what we're doing in education. I know my time is just about gone, but I could take an hour and talk about the improvements were making in the early childhood educators and all of the measures we're putting in place to improve that.

The bottom line in all of this is that we want to ensure that when we implement these recommendations, when we put in place new measures, when we put in place new resources, we need to have performance measurements that would tell us that what we're doing is making a difference. There are a number of areas or

resources that we have provided to our K-to-three schools and to the teachers and to the students that we are beginning to see we're beginning to make a difference, and we're beginning to see improvements within our school system, and our students are benefiting, and will benefit from the measures that we've taken as a province, and we will continue to invest in our young people.

These are really our future, and we really want to make sure that our young people have the best possible education, and that they have the resources that are necessary for them, not only to be productive citizens in their community but also be able to give back to their communities and be able to give back to the province as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you for giving me this opportunity today to speak and to highlight just a small portion of what we have done as a government, and we will continue to do. I'm really looking forward and I'm really enthusiastic about where we're heading and the direction that we're giving and the direction that we'll move forward to as we improve our education system for our students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave speaking on a point of order?

MS. P. PARSONS: No, I was popping up to speak next.

MR. SPEAKER: You've already spoken to this motion.

My records show you –

MS. P. PARSONS: I have, but I am willing –

MS. COADY: (Inaudible) Address in Reply?

MS. P. PARSONS: Was that Address in Reply?

MS. COADY: If you have spoken, you cannot speak again.

MS. P. PARSONS: Oh, well, if my assistance is needed, I'll gladly stand up and speak again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: You're not able to speak again, though.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a great opportunity to get to stand here and speak to Address in Reply from the Speech from the Throne, because there are so many great things happening in the economy and what our government has been doing to create jobs and stimulate the economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I had the pleasure yesterday to be with the Premier in my District of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows in St. Anthony and he had addressed the Chamber of Commerce, and a number of business people there were asking a series of questions, things around our immigration plan and how we can continue to look at gaining specialists and the various supports that are needed from the service industry and hospitality, all the way up to specialists in health care. We had numerous dialogues.

But there's great economic potential, Mr. Speaker, in St. Anthony, with the Great Northern Port development in Crémaillère Harbour. And it excites me when people have a long-term vision of being able to look at something that will develop over quite a number of years that can lead to significant job growth. To be able to have a supply base and service area for international and shipping through the Northwest Passage, because St. Anthony and area on the Northern Peninsula, we're very strategically located, and it presents tremendous opportunity to capitalize.

We already have the second-largest international containerized shipping port. So it was really positive to hear our Premier and hear government affirm our support for advancing projects such as the Great Northern Port because of the economic development that it can bring.

Obviously, it has to go through an appropriate due diligence process, and that matter is certainly unfolding.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the economic potential and we see the growth that's happening in areas such as the tourism sector, coming up the Great Northern Peninsula through Gros Morne National Park, we're seeing an investment in the Cow Head Gros Morne Theatre. That's upwards of close to a \$10 million investment, and that's bringing people further north at Cow Head. They'll continue to go from one UNESCO to another UNESCO in L'Anse aux Meadows and then across to Labrador on a brand new ferry that has greater capacity and that can take more tour buses.

I've talked to accommodators on both sides on the Great Northern Peninsula, and in Labrador, and they're very excited about the bookings that they have and the number of visitors that are coming this season to go to Red Bay to see places like Battle Harbour, or to go to L'Anse aux Meadows and see what's happening at St. Anthony and the various festivals. The icebergs and whales that we are absolutely phenomenal.

We've seen new businesses start. As the province's Minister of Tourism, we've seen where there's been significant job growth in that sector, not just on the Great Northern Peninsula and in Labrador but all across this province. In 2016, when the Exit Survey was done, it had shown that the sector had grown from 18,000 jobs to 20,000 today. That is very exciting, and we have over 2,800 businesses involved in that industry.

As we navigate and we look at our opportunities, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see today in the news that because of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement, we've known as CETA, something that I've certainly championed since I've been in this House since 2011, to see the benefits of what CETA can bring with the removal of seafood tariffs and we're certainly seeing that now.

On the Great Northern Peninsula, in my district where there are four shrimp plant operations, today it was announced that more industrial shrimp product will be landed at these processing facilities; places like Black Duck

Cove will see more product. Quinlan were out highlighting their investment. Ocean Choice International are highlighting that they're going to be able to create more work in Port au Choix and that is going to have a tremendous trickle-down impact on workers locally here on the Great Northern Peninsula, so that's very positive.

The fact that the crab quotas had not declined as predicted and that there was a 1 per cent decrease in 3K, with the higher price, this is certainly positive to see that there will be more landed value from this particular resource. The fishery is the backbone of our economy. Newfoundland and Labrador has Canada's largest ocean economy. We have 37,000 people employed in the sector, whether it's in oil and gas, whether it's in aquaculture, in fishery, and in supply and shipping and transportation. And we have been working together through our various sector work plans as part of *The Way Forward* with the Minister of Natural Resources, with the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, and various other plans that have come forward. We're starting to see significant opportunities take place.

Mr. Speaker, health care is so important. Yesterday when I flew up to St. Anthony, I was sitting next to an individual and he came with his spouse and three kids. They are coming to St. Anthony for a period of three years, hopefully longer. But this is a specialist, an eye specialist, an ophthalmologist. We haven't had that service in St. Anthony for a very long time.

A very good social enterprise, St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc., purchased specialised equipment a couple of years ago. So when people with our aging population and demographic on the Great Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador – and I anticipate that we will see this specialist either travel, or residents in Labrador come to St. Anthony to utilize and avail of this service because of the distance and because of the opportunity for wait-list and access to service that as people have cataracts and need those specialized services, they will get them because the health authority has hired this specialist.

They recently hired an audiologist. They have a pediatrician coming, another anaesthetist. There are a significant amount of surgeons and

offerings at St. Anthony hospital, which is really important. I want to acknowledge the work that's being done by the employees at Labrador-Grenfell Health, all the staff, from the front line all the way to the top. Because one thing that we've seen in the Labrador-Grenfell Health authority is that it's seen a lot of change. You had a CEO that was serving in a part-time capacity, and then you had an acting CEO before the new incumbent CEO. The new incumbent CEO has taken a significant approach to community engagement, to listening, to seeing what the needs are. And we're seeing a return on that by listening to people – that is so important.

We had a health forum and we talked about recruitment and retention, we talked about how we can engage and make sure that once these specialists come that they feel welcomed in the community, that they know about all the services and great volunteer groups and all the offerings that are available so that they'll want to stay longer. We've had significant success in St. Anthony and area where doctors and specialists spent decades. And they're our biggest ambassadors. That is phenomenal.

Yesterday, the Premier had announced eight additional long-term care beds at Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital. That is really a great step in terms of helping to address the long-term care needs of the region. But we still have a lot more to do when we look at the housing needs. Our government, working with the federal government, invested in 10 affordable housing units in St. Anthony, but we had also been working with St. Anthony Basin Resources to look at other housing mixes.

Then if you look at the John M. Gray and the protective care unit that is there, there have been recent upgrades in terms of artistic endeavours of murals to stimulate and provide a more inviting experience, and that is important to the people, the residents who are living in the protected care unit.

My vision would be to see dementia or protective care bungalows, like they have in other parts of the province, like in Bonavista and Clarenville so that these people can have a higher quality of living and have a more supported environment. We all know that the changes of residents and complexities change

for care needs. Because when the John M. Gray Centre was built, it was built 20 years ago and we certainly know that things are changing.

We have a home first support program. We've just announced that there will be two PCA positions to help with those complex care cases so that people can stay in their homes longer. But we also look at opportunities to be more innovative when it comes to health care. The Minister of Health and Community Services has embraced Hacking Health and how we bring that level of innovation, how we get into more telemedicine, how we unlock the potential of all of our health resources, whether it's through primary health care teams, which was also announced in St. Anthony.

We have smaller centres, like the White Bay Central Health Centre, which is more than 150 kilometres away. There are opportunities to look at housing supports there as well, as I've raised in this House previously.

We must continue to be working on the opportunities where we can unlock potential, where we can find collaboration and growth. The Town of Port Saunders, for example, they've created a community centre in their town building. They shut down two of their other operations, their buildings, and they're working on another, to bring all their stakeholders under one roof. That is leading to them to have other opportunities.

They not only added a youth centre for the youth, this is a community that has vision because they're investing in their youth. They also been able to attain the SEDLER community support program that will have a satellite office there to help people with disabilities provide employment supports and services. These are important investments.

Investments in basic infrastructure are so critical, Mr. Speaker. I have over 650 kilometres of road in the district and if you look at the amount of roadwork –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: – that has been able to be done through having a vision of a five-year Roads Plan, where you can plan and do more work, bundle work and partner with municipalities.

We've seen investment done in Port aux Choix, which had a really terrible roads. Now, since they have done that road, we've seen where the tourism numbers, through Canada 150 and the advertising at the National Historic Site, they've seen an increase of 60 per cent and they maintain that. They were, I believe, the only site in the country that maintained their momentum after Canada's 150th birthday with a 60 per cent increase. That shows that there is momentum in terms of numbers coming into this community. They've embraced it; they're partnering.

We're seeing where investment is being made in brush-side road cutting in terms of River of Ponds to the Eddies Cove area, the Plum Point area, and going to St. Anthony; you have a much safer highway. We've seen significant investment, Mr. Speaker, on Route 430 this year, and there will be a multi-year plan to see that paved.

We also saw investment where, for the first time in the history of this province in 50 years, this is certainly something I've advocated for for quite some time and I'm proud to be part of a government that's delivering on paving Route 434, the road to Conche. Last year, saw eight kilometres, there will be additional roadwork this year and next year it'll see completion. We also paved the road going to Englee and the Roddickton area to see significant upgrades, and the road to L'Anse aux Meadows going to a UNESCO World Heritage site.

These are critical and substantial investments. It frustrates me because the former administration had significant amounts of money, but the Auditor General's report was very clear that MHAs, at the time, put forward their priorities and that sometimes wasn't in the best interest. There was politics at play and didn't get the significant amount of roadwork done.

We are seeing results through our approach and our plan where roads that should have been done years ago are getting addressed and we'll continue with the momentum, Mr. Speaker.

The forest sector has great opportunity on the Great Northern Peninsula and we've seen where permits – this has been a discussion in this House of Assembly – have been issued; there are private contractors. We already have a small sawmill in Main Brook, but we would love to see a sawmill operational in Roddickton that would also do value-added product. There is that opportunity to do so. The same way with how a proponent is looking to move through a process to get to financial close and to lead to a significant investment in the area.

We certainly have not given up on the forest sector, Mr. Speaker, whereas the Members opposite have. They invested \$13 million and short-changed the people of Roddickton-Bide Arm and area, having them believe that this would be able to come to fruition and create jobs in their economy. It certainly didn't do that. They've seen where the mills have closed in Grand Falls-Windsor under their watch, and in Stephenville. We actually have a forestry sector action plan, we're focusing on the sectors.

For an administration previously, the PC administration, they talked about it. Even the Acting Opposition House Leader had talked about their overspending that had happened, that maybe they were a little too fluid in terms of how they kept spending and spending and spending.

We've had to make sure that the decisions that we make are prudent, that they're working in the best interests of the people of the province, and not just focus on one resource in terms of the oil economy and a hundred-dollar-a-barrel oil. We focused on our mining assets, that's why we have the vision mining 2030. We've seen where new mines in Gander and in the Glenwood area, the Antimony Mine, we've seen these investments happening where they're being reactivated. There's prospectivity on the Great Northern Peninsula, and I'm so pleased by that.

I'm pleased by the multi-year and the significant historic infrastructure plan for municipalities, for local service districts, for community, for water and sewer projects that will improve a better quality of life.

For a government that's not just focusing on one commodity, oil, but focusing on aquaculture, on

the fishery, focusing on technology, focusing on all sectors, on tourism and cultural industries, these are significantly important. On modernizing our College of the North Atlantic throughout this province because we must focus on everybody, from beginning, at a youthful age, to make sure that they are invested in. That's why the Premier started the Education task force, and it has the recommendations. They're looking at junior kindergarten and seeking feedback. We implemented all-day kindergarten. We're adding resources for inclusive education.

We've done significant work when it comes to mental health and addictions and Health-in-All-Policies. There is so much, Mr. Speaker.

The time that I have is quite small, but the vision that's been put forward by this government is significant. We are making a difference in an urban economy, in rural economies, in Labrador, and internationally. Our companies are going global. We're seeing them scale up. We're seeing where we'll be able to compete with the best of the best, because we're investing in our youth. We've done investments in coding. And that was another aspect of the task force on education. We want to challenge our youth. We want them to be tomorrow's innovators and problem solvers. They may not all be software engineers, but they will use this skill set to take them through whatever career field they want to do with the rest of their lives.

That's why we continue to invest in Memorial University, the Marine Institute. We made a significant announcement in our ocean sector today of collectively, from the provincial government through Natural Resources and TCII, \$3.5 million, with the federal government, \$8.5 million, to see more than \$20 million invested to see the next phase of the Holyrood Marine Base. That's going to continue to solidify us as an ocean leader, because we are the leader in the ocean economy. Newfoundland and Labrador has Canada's largest ocean economy – 37,000 people employed, and over 50 per cent of all of our exports it accounts for.

There are great things happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I've never been more pleased to be part of a team that is delivering and making sure that we have a mental health facility here in our province to

replace the Waterford. The Minister of Justice and Public Safety has announced a plan and investment to replace the prison, Her Majesty's Penitentiary. We all know that these are important investments for the people of the province and for the future as we move forward in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly been a pleasure to hear the Speech from the Throne, to hear the vision of government, of our Premier and leader, and the approach that is taken on consulting, listening, being out in community.

For me, I've taken that time over the last eight years to be in every community in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the exception of La Poile. And I keep saying to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety it's a place I must get to, I must see it, because everywhere in Newfoundland and Labrador there is opportunity, we must all get out there, go there and see it and unlock that great potential, because there's so much we can do, but we have to do it together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I'm going to adjourn debate on Address in Reply. At this time I would move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday,
April 15, at 1:30 o'clock.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned
until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 o'clock.