



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

---

Volume XLIX

FIRST SESSION

Number 7

---

HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

Wednesday

June 19, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Order, please!

**Orders of the Day**

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

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

I would call from the Order Paper, Motion 4, the Budget Speech.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

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

I'm so pleased that I have the opportunity to get up again so close to when I spoke last because I had so many notes I wanted to go through, I didn't get the chance to get through as many as I would like. So I'm going to start where I left off the last time, which is how proud we were on March 7, this past year, to announce the Terms of Reference for the independent review of the post-secondary education system, which was announced in March, and we're so happy about the appointment of the independent Committee of Experts to carry out the review.

This committee has started the review, and we're very excited about the report that this committee will bring forward. It is expected in 2020. We're not sure exactly when in 2020. We want to ensure that the information is the best it can possibly be, so we're not going to push any timelines to make sure they get it done in any kind of fashion other than they said in 2020.

It has been 14 years, Mr. Speaker, since the last review has been completed and it's certainly timely during this time to do it. There have been many changes in our economy, in our demographics and changes at our post-secondary institutions.

This review will help ensure our institutions are well positioned to meet the needs of students well into the future, address emerging labour market demands and continue to contribute to the province's economic growth, and we know how strong these institutions are for contributing to the economic growth right across our province. We want to ensure this public post-secondary system can meet the educational needs and vocational needs of students in our province.

Among other pieces of work that the independent review will inform, will be informed by the College of the North Atlantic's Modernization Plan, Memorial University's Governance Review, the industry development plans that we've created as part of *The Way Forward* and the ongoing work of the Council of Higher Education, and I'm excited my colleague is on that committee as well.

Another priority for our government is addressing the low literacy rates, Mr. Speaker. We understand that's a major problem in our province but not just in our province, right across this country and this globe. So improving adult literacy levels is key, and a key component to building our workforce and driving the economic growth across our province.

It is much, much more than just reading and writing with respect to literacy rates. The development of this plan must consider such things as employability, digital literacy and technology. The consultations we held provided input from individuals and organizations that have insight and in-depth knowledge of the impact that adult literacy is making and adult literacy on learners, communities and the workplace in which is central to the success and the successful development of a provincial Adult Literacy Action Plan. We continue to work towards the development of the plan for this coming year. So stay tuned, I'm hoping it will be out very soon.

*Budget 2019* also provides funding for programs and services to maintain the province's skilled workforce and to prepare them for careers in emerging industries. Some of the highlights would be \$13 million that we committed to the employment and training programs; an additional \$6.1 million to support youth in

employment and career-related activities; and approximately \$700,000 is allocated to build capacity and provide more flexible training alternatives in the province's apprenticeship system by increasing offerings online which will also ensure that the individuals who are trying to move through that process have the ability to maintain work and do it on their own time and in the communities in which they live; \$161 million is available for investment through the labour market transfer agreements, which will help people prepare for, find and maintain employment.

I'm also very pleased to note that the base funding for the program supported by the Labour Market Development Agreement is increasing by more than \$3 million this year. This additional funding, under the Labour Market Development Agreement, will be used to fund initiatives under the Labour Market Partnerships Program to support the government's priorities, such as piloting the new training approaches at the College of the North Atlantic and supporting the community sector action plan.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we launched a Student Mentorship program. It was a great success. This program provides up to 140 students with the valuable on-the-job experiences, and we know how important that is to get your first job and to try to maintain that meaningful attachment to the labour force. This is a great program, and we're happy to continue to invest in it.

*Budget 2019* allocates \$339,000 to expand the program to include summer career development opportunities in the targeted areas, our industries like aquaculture, agriculture, the tech sector, forestry, mining, the community, and the oil and gas sectors. Our province's children and youth are our future, and we are committed to providing them with the various opportunities to grow and succeed in the marketplace.

*Budget 2019* also, through the youth and student service program, has provided more than \$6.1 million available for that investment. This funding will be used for such things as contributing to organizations that assist youth through a variety of services, ranging from career fairs to youth employment initiatives, focusing on career development and education.

Mr. Speaker, this is key. I worked with youth my entire life and it's very, very important to give them every opportunity we can to succeed and ensure that we have the brightest minds working within our province and making sure they stay here, which is really, really important.

I'm also pleased, Mr. Speaker, to note that through the Workforce Development Agreement with the federal government, we are investing more than \$13.2 million in budget '19-'20 to support skills development, provide apprenticeship wage subsidies and assist people with disabilities to find and prepare for employment, which is very, very important.

I would also like to highlight the importance of the steps we've taken to improve workforce readiness to meet the needs of the labour force markets in Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to be more closely working with the industry to prepare people for jobs. I think by having these plans in place and working in partnership with sectors and the key players in that sector is an important piece through the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, but also it was very visionary by the Premier to bring these sectors and attack them sector by sector with the key players around the table, which is so very important to make sure we get it right.

In addition to the ongoing post-secondary review, \$2 million in provincial funding has been allocated over five years to implement *The Way Forward* on workforce development. We look forward to releasing this plan in the coming weeks, and I look forward to having questions and answering questions on it at that point for sure, but it's going to be a very good plan to come forward with.

This plan will have dedicated staffing resources who will work with the K to 12 system and provide relevant career-development supports, including the provision of sector-specific labour market information and products to incorporate into the new career education curriculum with my colleague, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Working very closely with the K to 12 system is how we think we can impact those youth to make those strong decisions about getting into the careers that are emerging in our province.

I would also like to highlight the success that we are seeing with other efforts: implementation of the actions outlined in our Immigration Action Plan. In fact, we have reached 90 per cent of our target of 1,700 newcomers annually by 2022, already. We anticipate that we will probably surpass that this year, which is impressive. A full, almost, 2½ years early which is important.

Based on our preliminary numbers in 2018, we've already had 1,530 permanent residents make Newfoundland and Labrador their home. We're so very excited about that. As we've talked about many, many times in this House that we're on the wrong side of demographics in this province, it's very important that we try to turn that. Whether that be through encouraging individuals that were from here, living away, to come back and call our province home again, providing them the opportunities is so important to do.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, is when we get the opportunity to invite people to come to our province, and be a welcoming province that we are, encouraging them to make Newfoundland and Labrador home, and choosing to live here in this beautiful province is something that we're really working on and we're getting very strong fruits of our labour from the Action Plan, the first two years, and now we've launched our third year of the Action Plan. We're building on the successes that we've achieved so far to date and we're moving forward with the next set of initiatives under the Immigration Action Plan.

In *Budget 2019*, we're allocating \$2.4 million of provincial funding and another \$1.85 million of federal funding to support the implementation of the Immigration Action Plan year-three initiatives. We all recognize the importance of immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador from a social, cultural and economic growth perspective. While we have great potential and there are fantastic opportunities on the horizon, we are also facing demographic challenges as we have always known here in this province.

The median age in our province is 46, but among newcomers is 29. One of the things I always like to say, Mr. Speaker, is that when we entered Confederation in 1949 we were the youngest province, as well as the coolest province. Now, fast-forward to today, we are

now the oldest province and I still say the coolest province in Canada, but it's one thing that we really got to fix. We have to try to get on that right side of demographics again and steps that we're making now with our Immigration Action Plans are working. Do we want them to work faster? Absolutely, and we're doing everything we possibly can to move that file as fast we can but we want to make sure we do it with a strong foundation of the first two years of the plan, and we're now putting some wraparound supports around newcomers when they come here to ensure they stay here.

It's one thing to invite them to come here and welcome them here but it's quite another thing to encourage them to stay, and retention is so very important. Our numbers of retention are very strong in relation to our Atlantic counterparts and we're excited about that, but there's always room for improvement and we're always looking for ways we can improve.

We've created the Minister's Roundtable on Immigration with the stakeholders around the table. I'd like to commend my colleague, my previous minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, the current Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, for starting that Roundtable on Immigration which is really important, and putting those key stakeholders around that table. Because the only way we're going to address issues that newcomers are facing is to hear it directly from the people that are implementing either services for newcomers or the newcomers themselves.

So we think it's much more important to listen to the people with their feet on the ground, as they say, or where the rubber hits the road at that roundtable, which is important. The people in House have their own ideas on what we can do to improve and that's important. What I find even more important is the stakeholders that work with these individuals day in and day out to ensure the success of them staying here in this province and ensuring they raise a family here, create employment here, and we're really excited about some of the initiatives that are coming out of the immigration and multiculturalism department in my department.

A younger growing population helps sustain schools and the Minister of Education and Early

Childhood Development would agree with that. Whether it be child care and all programs associated with our province, having a younger population will help sustain those much-needed resources for all of us, which is important.

Whether refugee or immigrant, newcomers create demand for local goods and services, thereby supporting economic growth. And we don't have to look very far to see that. There are many examples of newcomers coming to our province and setting up strong businesses, whether it be The Gypsy Tea Room or HeyOrca, many high-tech firms, all of these things are positive and employ multiple people, and not just newcomers. Many of our own local individuals born and raised in Newfoundland and Labrador work, whether it be the restaurant or HeyOrca, in these highly skilled areas. Research clearly shows that bringing diversity, innovation – immigrants are more likely to start their own business and create employment opportunities, as I've just highlighted some.

In March of 2017 our government and its partners released the Immigration Action Plan, a five-year plan to increase immigration by 50 per cent and welcome 1,700 new immigrants annually by 2022. As I highlighted, in 2017 is when we launched that plan, so just a little over two years we've been able to almost reach our target, 90 per cent of our target, that was established for 2022. We're well ahead of where we thought we'd be, which is good, so we'll be setting some new targets. I know the hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise will be interested to know that we'll be setting those targets 'cause he would like us to be a little higher on the targets, which is good.

I'm very well versed in the *Blue Book* targets as well. The targets are 15 per cent in the *Blue Book* which they launched, which is excellent, that's great. It's really important that we all have targets. Ours just happened to be 25 per cent but 15 per cent is not bad either. We definitely want to hit more than that, and I understand that he's very supportive of us pushing the envelope to reach as many as we possibly can to help change some trends that we're having in Newfoundland and Labrador. So, kudos to him for the support on that and I know that I'll be getting that for sure.

The premise of the plan was to establish support services around newcomers with attraction and retention by building on the existing partnerships that we have in the community and forging many new ones in all parts of our province. It's really important. One of the interesting things that you learn when you get in this role that's a little different than what you'd think, most people would think that the immigration starts and stops in the metro St. John's region, and that's not true. More than one-third of the newcomers that come to our province come to rural Newfoundland, which is impressive. Would we like that number to go up? Absolutely, because we have some trends in rural Newfoundland we'd like fix, and I see my colleagues across the way smiling and nodding their heads, and absolutely true.

So, we want to provide opportunities for communities, whether it be through Municipalities NL welcoming newcomers to their communities and creating programs. We're willing to support all those initiatives because it's really, really important that we can try to get immigrants to different parts of our province and calling them home because there's so much culture they bring, but also we have so much culture in all of our rural communities that is so very important. It is just an interesting point that more than a third of newcomers that travel to our province settle in rural Newfoundland which is really, really important.

Our Immigration Action Plan – and I know my time is running short so I'm going to try to speak a little faster maybe – is working and making some great progress in increasing the number of newcomers to our province. The new initiatives in this year, in year three, will enhance ongoing efforts to encourage more newcomers to live, work and stay in our province.

These initiatives aim to increase newcomer attraction and retention through a concerted effort led by government, all levels of government, employers, communities and residents. We're establishing an introductory orientation to Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous peoples; supporting migrant workers in their effort to become permanent residents in Newfoundland and Labrador, which is something that we haven't done in the past and it's something new and I think it's really, really

important; collaborating with industry and sector organizations to promote entrepreneurship categories in Newfoundland and Labrador's Provincial Nominee Program, which we know we want to try to increase that; promoting mentorship opportunities between employers facing workforce shortages and employers who have successfully used immigration programs. We want to make sure we build those connections between individuals that have used immigration in the past that have had great success to organizations that haven't and try to figure out the best way to move forward for those organizations.

Sometimes it's an individual thing, Mr. Speaker, that organizations do that gives them greatest success. There is no written formula for success in some of these areas; it's different for every organization, so putting people in contact with each other is important. Working together to support newcomer integration and long-term retention is a key focus of the efforts in year three of the Immigration Action Plan.

In *Budget 2019* we also included a commitment of \$150,000 to support newcomer women through the introduction of an empowerment-focused employment and self-employment initiative. Just in the last couple of seconds that I have left, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's passed the immigration file now and moving into Income Support, one of the things I'd like to highlight is the fact that we've amended the employment supports regulations to exempt payments from child support and of the Canadian Pension Plan disabled contribution benefit and the Canadian Pension Plan surviving child benefit for the purpose of determining eligibility for Income Support, which is a really key point and it's going to put more money into the pockets of individuals that really need it.

I'd just like to thank the people in the department for bringing forth some great initiatives like that, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Finance and my Members on this side of the House. I encourage everyone on the other side of the House to support the budget for some of the key things that I've highlighted in my speech here today, but more importantly, to think about all the people that are impacted by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

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

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to stand and speak today on the budget. On May 16, people of Newfoundland voted for change. Most voted against the government and its approach, and people gave us all the opportunity and the obligation to move forward with a new approach.

Yesterday, an hon. Member from the other side, who I won't name, for fear of embarrassing him, talked about mandate. Mandate is described as the authority to carry out a policy or course of action as given by a majority to an electorate. I'll remind again, there was no mandate; it was a reprieve. And we have an ability right here to do something going forward.

We asked for eight items in our letter addressed to the Premier: the immediate end of the levy, which is regressive, according to the government's own committee; affordable home insurance; affordable child care; affordable medical transport; affordable insulin pumps; access to hospice care; access to school busing inside the 1.6; and ArtsNL funding. Nobody asked for an increase in spending. What we did ask for was a line-by-line level, and change on how that was done was the business of the government.

Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement the other day I referred to a group called Power to Hope, and I talked to them because there are several groups throughout this Island that raise money for medical travel. Power to Hope has raised \$350,000 over the last six years. Over the last three years they've raised \$75,000 in total per year, and that actually represents 75 per cent of the funding that comes out of the H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation family assistance fund. If people don't realize what that fund is for, it's for something as simple as a bus ticket in St. John's or a flight out of Labrador.

In 2008, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She lived in Labrador. Her treatments were based in St. John's. So this is just to highlight some of the things we do wrong. Because she was coming out of Labrador, she had to go to St. John's for treatments. Those same treatments could've been done in Gander, and eventually they were, after we fought, but she had to ask to come to Gander to do it. Flights weren't covered. Had she travelled back and forth for all of these treatments, it would've been substantial. Now, obviously, they are covered to a certain amount by government, but certainly not enough for an individual to do this on a repetitive basis.

Medical travel is huge throughout this Island and I highlight cancer because it's the simplest one to highlight. If you look at people from the Northern Peninsula or anywhere outside the greater metro region where the bulk of our treatment is for any illness, or outside of Corner Brook or outside of the major centres, people have to travel and funding these people is essential. It's essential in the fact that, (a), a lot of them don't have the money upfront to do this on their own, take it on, on their own. I think if we were to look at the statistics, we'd be shocked to find out how many people actually don't go and get the treatment they require because they can't afford to get there. It kind of puts a two-tier system in place, and I really think that medical travel is one of the more important things that we need to look at going forward.

I'm not saying that we don't help in some ways, but the reality of it is a lot of medical travel is carried out by charities that raise money in order to help people get there. People aren't aware of the assistance that's out there and it's quite shameful, actually, that we don't do better for people who have to travel places.

While I was campaigning, we ran into a young man from Glovertown who got sick while he was driving transport trucks working on the Mainland. He went into renal failure in Montreal, and this government brought him back home on an air ambulance. After he received treatment in the Health Sciences Centre, he received a bill for \$21,000 because they flew him back here because they didn't want to pay for treatment in Montreal. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable in this day and age. This man

certainly couldn't afford it. He ended up off work without insurance and didn't have the ability to pay the bill.

The next one that really jumps out at me is insulin pumps. It's not insulin pumps as such; it's what happens to people if they don't have insulin pumps. I'll give you a scenario. Right here in our province today, if you have an individual who loses a leg, as an example, the chances are, if it's a circulatory issue, within two years they'll lose a second limb. So now they don't lose one, they lose two. That price for prosthetics just doubled, but here's the rub: We don't cover prosthetics in this province. Here's what we do cover.

If you, as an individual, lose your leg, they will modify your home. They will lower your light switches. They will lower your counters. They will pay all kinds of money to do lots of different things, but they won't pay the \$10,000 to \$15,000 to give someone a limb and put them back out and make them employable. That is unacceptable. As a result of what happens with insulin pumps, I would argue that the highest amount of amputees on this Island comes specifically from diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, in my area itself, just from an economic standpoint, in my district, in the last four years, we've had a shipyard that closed down as a result of work being shipped to another shipyard. We don't need to get into the story. We know where it went. We probably know why it went there.

It created a massive loss of work in my district, 120 jobs went into receivership. There's an effort being made now for that plant to be sold. Nobody has any idea what's happening, whether or not it's going to reopen. The reality of it is that work could have and should have still been carried out in Clarendville, and it was a decision made by the government to move that.

We had not one but two golf courses shut down. Now, I'm not suggesting it's government's responsibility to fund these golf courses, but it's certainly a sign of economic times and how things are going.

Just this morning in the media, there was an announcement that there were 44 workers laid

off at grocery stores. I don't see how that paints our future as rosy when we're losing people in that type of employment.

Again, this morning in *The Telegram* we saw workers being laid off with the Autism Society.

There's a lack of Internet throughout all the districts in Newfoundland. If you go to any of the smaller communities, it's one of the major things they argue about. Now, we can talk about tourism, trade and innovation all we want, and I do know there's been some strides made for broadband and there is a program in place where things are getting better, but we need to do that faster. We need to give people the ability to communicate and bring people in.

We have ferries cut right across the Island. In an area in my district, St. Brendan's, four years ago they had five runs, now they're down to three. Again, we understand – and the minister has worked with us on this and we're hoping we can come to a compromise and find a way forward for these people. Again, how do you promote tourism in an area where you can only go there at 9 o'clock in the morning and can't get out of there until 6 o'clock in the evening? It's hard for these people to move forward and really try and grow their area if they don't have the ability for people to come and go at a leisurely pace.

Mr. Speaker, also in Clarendville, I'd like to highlight Newfoundland Hardwoods facility, which is a government-owned asset. It consists of, I believe, five oil tanks which are in serious disrepair, lots of sludge in them. They are on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent to a salmon river, and they are in massive need of some serious attention. It will be an environmental catastrophe if somebody doesn't do something.

Throughout all our regions there are issues with bridges and roads, and we understand there's a five-year plan in place. What I will say – and it was nice to hear the Minister of Tourism last night speak to it – is we need to look at roads more proactively. I think that approach is coming, but I think there are still better ways to do it.

For example, if we're paving through a national park and there's a contractor in there, we should be looking at ways to pave throughout the

communities at the same time in order to save cost. We need to find ways where we can better utilize contractors when they're in regions doing work. We struggle doing that, in my opinion.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance stood up and indicated that the levy is being eliminated December 31. That's great, but there's no understanding as to why the levy isn't immediately eliminated. That's what the people asked for and it's what we should be doing.

Yesterday we voted on a bill to eliminate auto insurance tax. What was left out was home insurance tax, and we need to find a way to get to that.

Affordable child care, if you look in this province right now at the number of single moms and families who have mothers or fathers who have quit their jobs in order to stay home and look after the children because they can't afford to put them in daycare, it's atrocious – and it's an economic driver. If we can get these kids in daycare, it creates jobs for daycare workers. It also gives families the ability to go out and work and it makes them feel better about themselves. All around, it affects mental health, it affects the economy and it affects every part of our daily lives.

School busing, it bewilders me how a government would allow a company – not allow, but we bring companies in from outside and we have such a stringent safety protocol. All you have to do is look to the construction of Long Harbour or Bull Arm or any of these construction sites where people come in, and we hold them to such a high standard of safety that it makes sometimes their work extremely more expensive to carry out and at times it's very difficult to do based on just specific safety protocols; yet, we let children walk on roads with no sidewalks, traffic, no lights.

It bewilders me how we force companies to spend money to be safe but we, as a government, look at our children, our greatest asset, and we send them out the doors and let me go. Listen, it's different in every region. We all understand that, but if one child gets ran over, it's too much.

We just built an oil rig out in Bull Arm and the motto was: Nobody gets hurt, zero. I heard the



government, I heard Exxon, I heard everybody brag for weeks and weeks and weeks about the 43 million man-hours with zero hurt, and we send our kids out the door and we say: you walk up that road, little Jimmy, we don't care about the cars coming, we don't care about any of the hazards that you may face.

It's not just about traffic, Mr. Speaker. Schools don't all get closed down on foggy days. They don't all get closed down when it's snowing. There are inherent dangers that those kids face walking with weather-related issues that nobody takes into consideration.

It's not just about traffic and sidewalks. It's about the overall situation. It's a very, very important issue in all the districts. I know Members in front of me in my caucus here, it's very important to them, but if you talk to people from Gander – and I can guarantee you that the Minister of Health has heard this a lot out in Gander, and I've heard it a lot in my district. It is a big issue.

Hospice care; my hon. Member behind me so eloquently spoke last week about his grandmother, and if anybody didn't have their heartstrings tugged then they weren't listening. Hospice care is something that nobody thinks of until you go through it.

When you have a friend or a family member who's in the hospital sick and dying, your family comes in and there's somebody in the bed next to them, you don't get privacy. Obviously, when you're in that stage of your life you want a person to have as much dignity as they can. We don't give people that dignity in every occasion.

Now, we do try our best. If you go around there are cuddle beds in hospitals and there are individual rooms in some of these hospitals, but, Mr. Speaker, these cuddle beds are so graciously donated by companies like Newfoundland Power and other people who fundraise. Government doesn't do that, and we can't take credit for it. It's part of the problem that we have as a government.

When we do something good, we stand up and we brag about it. When we do something bad we don't find a way to fix it, and it's one of the things we really need to address. We all know

we're here to do good things. That's what we were elected to do.

We're elected to represent the people in our ridings as individuals, and we're elected to represent the people in the province as a whole. We're not elected to come in here and sit down and talk about the good things we're doing. We're elected to come in here and take responsibility for the things we're not doing. Mr. Speaker, in this budget there are a lot of things we're not doing that the people of Newfoundland asked us to do.

Now, nobody on this side of the House expects the government to come in and make all of these wholesale changes right away, but they could have taken a holistic approach and line by line could have looked at what the electorate, all of the electorate asked for in every riding and found ways to substitute some of this stuff in or implement it partially. It never happened.

What happened is the exact same budget that was presented before the election call was brought back here. It wasn't debated before the election was called and it was brought back in here to be passed. There was zero effort made to make change. It's pretty simple: The people asked for change, the government went from 31 seats down to 20, they had 60 per cent almost of the popular vote last time around and they've got 43 per cent this time. At the end of the day, there's no effort for change.

Mr. Speaker, a reprieve is cancellation or postponement of punishment or an undesirable event. That is the mandate that the government has right now. They have a reprieve from the public of Newfoundland who are looking for better. We need to find a way to be better, and we need to find a way to do better.

If you have a look at our province as a whole, we have probably – not probably – I feel we have the most beautiful province in the country. Nowhere else in the country can you go and see mountains; nowhere else can you go see the prairies, icebergs, whales.

In 1989 there was a lady called Josey Aimes who filed a lawsuit down in the States, there was a movie made about her called *North Country*. In 1989 she was one of the first women to go to

work in a mine. My mom went to work in a mine in Newfoundland in 1979. Now, I applaud the Minister of Natural Resources and what they've done for diversity in this province, but there are a lot of pioneers in this province who brought diversity long before these projects came and we went to work with the building trades to try and diversify. We have a brilliant group of people here. If you look at our prominent Newfoundlanders, we've had the minister of National Defence. We got – I won't say his name, but we know.

Anyhow, at the end of the day, we sit here and we talk about working together, and there's nobody in this group who doesn't want to work together. Working together means we take the opportunity to do so; working together means that we listen to everybody who voted – every single person. And if we do that, there's a path forward. We need to find that path forward. It is okay to say we passed this budget and we move forward and we try and work together after this, but it bewilders me how loudly the people of the province spoke and how we haven't all listened. It's what they asked us to do is listen. The electorate has given us a mandate to work together. We have no choice just based on the makeup of the House right now.

It's an honour for me to be a part of this new time, and I think that the makeup of this House will give us opportunities to find a path forward. I think that the makeup of this House will force us to work together but that needs to start today, it's not about after this budget is passed. The mandate that was given to this government was a mandate for change and we need to start that right now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Minister of Natural Resources and the Member for St. John's West.

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

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

It's an honour to stand on this beautiful pre-summer morning and to be in the House of Assembly addressing the concerns of the province and giving opportunity and hope to the people of the province in terms of what's coming and what is here in terms of prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of pre-remarks that I would like to make this morning. First of all, it is to the people of St. John's West. I knocked on every door in the district. I spoke with many, many, many of my constituents over the last number of months. I do door to door on a regular basis and have the opportunity to speak to people, because I think it's the most important thing that we can do as Members of the House of Assembly is have that one-on-one engagement.

I can tell you that it was important for me to hear and to listen; to understand the concerns; to understand the perspectives of the people in my district; and to bring that perspective to the House of Assembly. I can appreciate the fact that they supported me again to be here, to work hard on their behalf with integrity and to do so with their best interests in mind and in heart. I will do that, Mr. Speaker, over the next number of years and I look forward to serving them.

I also want to take a special moment, while I have a few moments, to say thank you to the many, many volunteers. All of us in this House had many volunteers come out to help. The people who gave freely of their time to be part of democracy are something else. It really is and I'll say it is very humbling. I know that I had personal friends, I had people from my district, I had people from all walks of life come to assist me in making sure that I had the opportunity to speak to the people at the door, to make sure that I had the opportunity to represent the great people of St. John's West.

I want to say thank you to them. I think on behalf of everybody in this room – because we all have that moment when people come to us and say they'd like to help us. That is a very important moment for all us because it is a challenging to ask your friends and your family and your next door neighbours and your colleagues to come out and help you, so thank you to all of those that did.

My family, in particular, I know many people here have said that, have spoken of their family and I want to take the moment, while I have the moment, to say thank you to my family who have always supported me in everything that I've done, right from the time I was a small child until now, giving me guidance, wisdom and advice and, especially, love. I want to say thank you to them.

Now, I want to move on to the heart of my speech, Mr. Speaker. I listened intently over the last few moments to the new Member for Terra Nova. I listened intently to many of my colleagues opposite over the last couple of weeks, and I want to say two things. First of all to the Member from Terra Nova, I want to say that I'm sorry to hear that his mom had breast cancer. My mom did as well. I know how difficult and challenging that is to the family. I know how difficult and challenging it is to have any kind of illness in the family because as with every family in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador I'm sure we've seen our share of hardship as well.

I want to say to the Member opposite, I know how difficult it is. I hope his mom's okay, but I did want to remind the Member opposite, as I do the people of the province – because I like to be optimistic in my life. I like to be optimistic about my province. I bring that attitude, I think, to this House. I bring that attitude to my life. We're the only province in the country – the only province in the country – to have a comprehensive travel policy for in-province medical treatment. Think about that. We're a very small province, but we're the only province in this country to have a compressive travel policy for in-province medical treatment. We're lucky and fortunate that we have that.

I'll start speaking about Natural Resources in a moment but it is because we have an abundance of natural resources that we do bring in that revenue that does afford us, as a province, to help one another in times of medical crisis. Is it enough? Of course, Mr. Speaker, we could always do better. We could always do better. We all want more. We all want better, but we are – and I want to say to my colleague who sits next to me, the Minister of Health and Community Services, how important that program is and

how it is of benefit to the people of the province. Thank you for the efforts and work there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, the Member for Terra Nova, and he talked about, basically, the government was negligent when he talked about – he made it seem as if government was negligent, I should say, about school children and busing. I'll remind the Member opposite, because facts matter – facts matter in this House, facts matter in life – that the policy is that the 1.6 kilometre is very similar, if not the same, of every jurisdiction in the country – very, very similar.

**MR. WARR:** One of the best policies in Canada.

**MS. COADY:** I'm hearing my colleague responsible for Education and Early Childhood Development saying it's one of the best policies in the country, and I agree.

I will say this, Mr. Speaker; I understand it has been a policy since 1965. I hear the Members opposite making it seem as if this is something new. This has been a 50-plus-year policy, almost a 60-year policy. I say to the Member opposite, the thing that we have changed as a government is allowing more courtesy busing. We recognize that we can do better. We can do better. And that's why the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has offered a more comprehensive program to ensure courtesy busing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand how important it is, and how critical it is, especially in inclement weather, especially when the 1.6 kilometres, which is about a 10-to 15-minute walk, depending on how fast you walk. It is important, especially for safety, if there are safety issues, that we make sure we protect children. But I'm saying to the Member opposite this government is doing its best to ensure that we have one of the best policies in the country and that we do have courtesy busing.

I am going to say one more thing before I really turn my attention to what I'm going to call the optimistic side of life, and what is really happening in Natural Resources. The Member opposite talked about a responsibility for what we are not doing. Absolutely, I take

responsibility every day for what we are doing and for what we are not doing, Mr. Speaker. As I said, can we do better? Of course we can.

He talked about a holistic approach doing a line-by-line review of the budget. Of course, that's what we're doing every night in Estimates and multiple times during the day. I will say to the Member opposite, I would like to work together; I would like to work collegially in this House. I believe I represent every person on this side of the House to say that. I went door to door to every door in my district. I believe most people in this House did that, and what I heard was we have to focus in our finances and make sure that we are not passing a burden on to our children; concerned about the Muskrat Falls Project and the true desire to work together. And that is what I bring to this House, Mr. Speaker.

I'm hearing actually very much thematic speeches coming from the Members opposite around some of the things that they would like to see changed. And they talk about working together, so let's do that. I ask that we do that.

I did hear from him and I do see the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port is sitting in his seat. I did remember from what he said in the House, he talked about the people of the province have told him that if things don't go right, they will pull the plug on their behalf and they have put us on notice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will say to the Members opposite, the people of the province gave us a mandate. I will acknowledge that it was a reduced mandate but it was a mandate. They did want us to continue in our efforts. I do offer, and I do say that this government is very, very interested in making sure that we are doing better as a province, that everything that we can do, everything that we must do to ensure our future and our present is as prosperous as possible, we should be doing. I say to the Members of this House let us all work collegially and with that focus in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I have about a few minutes left that I really wanted to get into a lot of what's happening in Natural Resources because it is not all doom and gloom in this province. I'm saying to the people of the province, to the people in this House, that things are really happening in

Natural Resources. There's hope, prosperity and jobs. So I will remind the Members opposite of some of the things that we have been able to achieve.

In oil and gas, \$4.3 billion – think about that: \$4.3 billion in work commitments in our offshore. We have now five different companies going through the environmental assessment process to ensure that they could drill offshore to discover, hopefully, the next Hibernia. Imagine the impact, but imagine that most of that spend of the \$4.3 billion it will be done here in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We, this government, has been to attract eight new entrants in the last three years alone, eight new companies like BHB out of Australia, like BP out of the UK, like HESS and Anadarko, and Total out of France. We've been able to attract them to this area of the world, to our little, beautiful province to do work. They want to make discoveries, so our next Hibernia is one drill away and we're looking forward to that.

We have 650 leads and prospects. What does that mean? There are 650 chances to discover the next Hibernia. We know what that means; it's transformative to this province. We have four projects today that are all in one basin called the Jeanne d'Arc Basin for those that aren't familiar. There are 20 basins. Imagine the possibilities here.

This week Noia, the Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association, has gathered a record number of people I understand to the conference here in St. John's to discuss the opportunities and the possibilities offshore Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm going to talk about right now there's a project under way in Argentinia that is really outstanding, the number of people that are working there. Their total in-province, person-hours of employment is over \$10 million. Think about that, Mr. Speaker; that's a tremendous amount of employment.

I think the last count I got was something like 2,300 people working there, building the next platform, the next gravity-based platform. It's a smaller platform than what we have seen because it's a smaller project in a different

location, but it is still an incredible project being built here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Skilled labour – the majority of the engineering is being done right here in our province. It's an exciting project and we're continuing to see the growth and development around the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, we've just signed up an agreement last year with Equinor, and it's a first deepwater. This is a new frontier offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. It's deepwater and it's the furthest point forward. So it's really far from land, Mr. Speaker. It is in a deepwater basin. Most people know about the framework agreement that has been signed for Equinor. Equinor is now going through its reviews and looking at how it's going to develop the project. They'll make decisions around December and we're working with them to ensure that the maximum benefits are accrued to the province.

So just let me say that there is going to be approximately 11,000 person-years of employment – 11,000 person years of employment. Now, that's roughly 1,100 people for 10 years, and you can do the math, it's 550 people for 20 years, rough math, but all I'm saying is a tremendous amount of employment. There's going to be \$11 billion spent over the life of that field. Imagine the activity here in Newfoundland and Labrador because of that.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to run out of time before I can speak to some of the other great things. We have an \$11-million Innovation and Business Development Fund that we're investing money now to develop our supply and service industry. Imagine the opportunity.

As we continue to grow our offshore oil opportunity, imagine the opportunities for the supply and service industry. So we're investing monies into developing the supply and service industries and making sure that we can service all of the offshore oil, and make those jobs and make that economic generation here in the province.

I will say one more thing on oil and gas before I go. Mr. Speaker, we had a record bid last year, and that was – I know we've been speaking recently in the House about the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and now Bill C-

69, the Impact Assessment Act. I will say that under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act we did have record bids last year, \$1.38 billion in commitments to exploration, and the largest single bid from a new entrant of \$621 million.

So what you're seeing is companies coming from around the world with large sums of money to make the investments, to make the discoveries, to find the next Hibernia, to generate not just jobs but wealth and opportunity for the province. I'm very proud for the part that I play in that.

Mr. Speaker, I will advise the House that I will be speaking tomorrow at Noia and I will be speaking about *Advance 2030*, which is our comprehensive plan developed by 150 stakeholders in the province to develop oil and gas.

Now, in the few moments I have remaining I want to talk a little bit about mining, because that's another exciting opportunity. We have done an awful lot in mining this year; 6,300 people are employed in operations and construction. That's an 11 per cent increase from last year alone.

We opened Beaver Brook Mine in March with a hundred new jobs. We're investing \$4.6 million in the geological survey, \$1.7 million in the mineral incentive program, and we're investing a \$250,000 new investment in airborne geophysical work.

That's coming in this budget, a \$250,000 investment that this government is making so that we can go out there, it's innovative. It's timely in that it gives a first initial pass for new discoveries through our geological survey; timely and efficient collection of geoscience data. That's a new investment. Coming out of our plan for mining that we introduced last year, *Mining the Future*, Mr. Speaker, that is really going to help drive growth and development in our mining industry.

Natural Resources also is supporting a hyperspectral imaging project that digitalizes our provincial core samples, producing advanced data that would be publicly available. Now, Mr. Speaker, we talked a couple of years ago about

doing this. We put it forward in our Mining the Future document that digitalizing our data and having that data available to the world is essential.

Imagine if you're a company in Australia and you're thinking about where your next global investment will be and they can touch on their computer and be able to see some of the core samples we have, and that'll drive their interests. They can do some more advanced research and utilize our geological survey and make the next Vale and Voisey's Bay discovery.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on energy. I only have 55 seconds available to do that, but we are developing a comprehensive plan. I told you about a plan in mining that we have done. We've done a plan in oil. Now we're just starting to develop a renewable energy strategy for the province. That's underway.

We've made commitments, for example, as well, to continue to focus on getting the Muskrat Falls Project completed. As you know, we've been very methodical and diligent over the last number of years to get that project on track to be finalized, and we are somewhere around 96 per cent complete.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'm out of time. I thank you for this opportunity and I welcome the opportunity to be able to again say some of the great things that are happening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

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

Again, it's my distinct honour to rise and represent the people of Placentia West - Bellevue that gave me their confidence in this past election.

As I said before, and I'll always state it when I get up, that this is not a one-man job. It incorporates a lot of people from your district and from outside your district as well.

A couple of people I would really like to acknowledge that I never got the opportunity to give them a proper acknowledgement, I guess, the last time is my parents. They were instrumental in my campaign, very helpful community leaders that, obviously, I didn't get all the votes on my own, trust me.

Some of the things I got to do while I was in – just before I touch on the budget – a couple of things I got to do while in my district, I got to go and attend and be one of the reviewing officers for an army cadet corp in Norman's Cove - Long Cove. One of the things I really noticed about them was if they run into any kind of financial trouble or anything like that, it's actually the towns that pick them up and help them out.

They are about 15 strong, and what a great group. They put off a really good static display and all that kind of stuff. It was pretty amazing to watch, to be quite honest. Like I said, because I was pressed for time at that event I wasn't able to go to the reception, but I certainly accommodated for pictures and everything before they moved on to their event. I was very honoured to be asked.

One of the big ones, that I've already actually done a Member's statement on, was the 40th anniversary of the Placentia West Development Association, which are very instrumental on Route 210 down in the Boat Harbour, Parker's Cove area. Not only do they operate a Tea Rose, which is a little restaurant there, but they have a heritage grounds that they maintain and everything. They also have a medical clinic there that's maintained, and something else that I'll touch on in a minute when I speak about the budget.

I also got the distinct honour to go to the fifty-plus district dinner, Mr. Speaker. I was quite impressed with the energy in the room, to be quite honest. It was a district dinner, so it was fifty-plus clubs from Point May to Swift Current. So in and outside my district, but certainly people with all the same kind of thoughts and ideals, and really good for their communities, keeping a vibrant aged group together, and celebrating together and enjoying their time.

Again, Mr. Speaker, some things in the budget that were a little bit disturbing along the way were, obviously, things with seniors and stuff like that. They find themselves a little bit below the threshold once you get hit with so many fees and taxes and stuff like that and you're on a fixed income.

So, obviously, there are some things there in the budget that we'd like to have removed, and sooner rather than later would be more appealing than anything.

One thing that I heard about while I was on the campaign trail, and I guess this was due to budgetary constraints as well, was that there was a program brought in for low-income people. They were trying to help, in this program, to give them back their dignity and to help them with their teeth.

I have a couple of constituents that came to me and said that they were part of the program, but then once the program stopped then they weren't grandfathered in to fruition to what the original program was. I can understand, Mr. Speaker, cancelling the program if the budgetary constraints have to allow that, but not to finish the program for the people that were already entered into to it, to be quite honest, I was very, very disappointed to hear that the current government decided to that.

Because not only is it your dignity, your presentation of when you talk to people, but your teeth have a lot to do with your digestion and your well-being as well. So to stop the program and not grandfather these people in to see them through to getting their new teeth, I think was very disappointing, to be quite honest, because these people deserve their dignity as much as anybody else.

Another thing I noticed when I visited Keyin Technical College in Marystown is that there's a gap there between people being able to actually avail of accommodations to get to school, whether there's no public transit system or anything like that. So they rely on things like taxis and the goodwill of their classmates and stuff like that, or probably even family members to drop them off and pick them up.

But when I was there, it was brought to my attention that there is an allotment and an allowance for transportation for these students to avail of their adult basic education and stuff like that to get them back into the workforce. But I could not believe that the gap that kept them from getting to school every day, as opposed to making choices of which days to go to school, was actually only \$5 per student.

I really found that to be quite appalling, actually, that we're in a situation where we're going to give people an opportunity to go to school to better themselves, to bring them back into the workforce and to give them back that dignity and respect and all that kind of stuff, and then we shortchange them by \$5 and it just takes away their whole dignity again.

It's a program that I think needs to be really looked at. We can talk about immigration all that we want, but unless we give our constituents the same opportunities to succeed, then I think that we're kind of putting the cart before the horse, because it's our people I think that need the support first and foremost. Not that I'm against immigration or anything like that, don't get me wrong. I'm all for it if it's going to work, but it's like robbing Peter to pay Paul. We have to make sure that we can get sustainable work for our own people before we can start worrying about the many multitudes of others.

One of the biggest things that I spoke about in my last speech here was about attracting business to Newfoundland. Without the Internet, I think that we're really shooting ourselves in the foot because, like I say, nobody wants to come here from Norway and be operating down in Bull Arm and have to go over and get on the payphone to make sure that they're able to communicate with their colleagues.

A lot of these businessmen and women also, as a lot of us in this House I'm sure do as well, like to electronically communicate with a lot of people and do a lot of business while we're en route to the next meeting. Sometimes we have a couple of hours between meetings and stuff like that. So, as efficient people, we try to utilize every piece of our time. But it's pretty hard when you're in the middle of an important phone call and you have to pull over because

you know coming up around this turn there's no Internet service or there's no cell service.

It's disappointing to know that we're going into 2020 and this technology has been available to us for some 30 or 40 years that we're not availing of and it doesn't seem that we have a priority put there in order to do that. It's not only business that needs the Internet and the cell service, Mr. Speaker, it's also big for tourism, as my colleague across the way would probably attest.

When somebody comes here from a foreign country or anything like that, they want to talk to their loved ones. They want to FaceTime with their loved ones. They want to be able to get on WhatsApp or whatever and let their loved ones see where they are and all this kind of stuff, but if we don't have the cell service and we don't have the Internet service that's just not possible. So it's not attracting those people that are more tech savvy than certainly me, that's for sure.

The biggest thing with the Internet service I think instead of doing these pilot projects and stuff like that, the Internet is not going anywhere and it's something that's proven to globalize the world and to bring in more specified markets. If we can attract those more specified markets, then maybe it will bode well for our economy as well.

The biggest proponent in this that needs the Internet is actually our constituents. We're living now, basically, in the dark ages. I have a lady in Brookside that has to go her front window, her big bow window to make sure that her text is going to go through to her daughter because it's an important text; or if they want to download something, they can't download anything without going to a certain area in the house and stuff like that.

It's too far behind the times and it's something that I think we can certainly accomplish with very minimal cost, for the simple fact that we have private companies that are here doing this business that are getting a stipend off each and every one of our constituents. At some point in time, I guess, we have to stand up to them and let them know that there's a price to doing business here in Newfoundland as well.

When we talk about the Internet when it comes to constituents, I think the biggest thing about it is, too, one thing that we are missing here is that we are an aging population, which these are the people who want to talk to their grandchild and stuff like that, and their sons or daughters or in-laws or whatever. With an aging population, this is giving them that social development that we so desire and we so need.

It's not only for our seniors, but for our children and for our business leaders and stuff like that in our communities, that if they can avail of the Internet, at any given time without having to worry about where the service is or if they're in or out of service or anything like that, then it will bode well for them and their confidence of being global partners and being able to set up businesses globally and stuff like that through the internet. We need a reliable Internet service. We need a reliable cell service and that should be a major, major, major priority for this government.

As we were told through this election mandate that changes are needed and the status quo is not good enough. So if we could find money just before the election to get ready for an election budget that wasn't passed, then we can certainly find the money to prop up our constituents to make them feel like they're living in the 21st century, Mr. Speaker.

Another big thing, obviously, with the Internet service, which can't be lost on us, is that it would be utilized by the emergency response teams. This one piece of what I've explained here this morning with the Internet service, this one piece alone should be enough to fund it to whatever it's going to cost. It doesn't matter about the cost at this point because these people need the support. They need to be able to communicate with each other, and the people that are in trouble or in distress need to be able to communicate with the emergency response teams as well. This is, like I said, the 21st century and we're living as if we're still in 1948.

One of the real great honours I had while accepting this position was I was invited to go back to RCSCC 121 Mary Rose in Marystown, which is a sea cadet corps that I actually was a part of as a kid. I was quite honoured, to be quite honest, because there were so many young



people that were engaged in the actual campaign that it brought me great joy to know there is actually a future of people that are interested in government and interested in what we're doing here in this House.

I so humbly represent those people as well. Although they're not able to vote for me or anything like that, I feel a deep connection to them as well. I really feel that if we show our youth some respect, it'll come back to us tenfold or even a hundredfold, because they feel worthwhile, they feel worthy, they feel a part of the community, and that's what grows people into becoming community leaders. When an adult shows a kid some respect, then that kid will take that and take it to heart, because they know this person went out of their way to be nice to them when they probably didn't have that in their life so much before.

So, Mr. Speaker, showing respect to our youth is how we engage them and bring them on board. Whether they vote for us or not, they're a part of our society. They deserve our respect and they deserve the services of the 21st century, like the Internet, because all their friends do, every other kid in the world their age does. They have to use it for school projects, to find out what clubs are available to them in their local service area. It gives them an opportunity to probably get a little bit more involved in their community as well. I think it's high time the Internet and cell service was looked at in a deeper light instead of these pilot projects. I think we can go out on a limb here and say that the Internet is working.

I'm just looking down through. One of the biggest things – I just heard my colleague talking about the oil and gas industry, the service in the oil and gas industry and stuff like that. As a one-time offer towards the coffers, I would like to express my sincere opinion on where we should be going with this, just for the simple fact that if it is a one-time thing then we've noticed extra and we're able to expand some oil fields, but if this is a one-time thing then it needs to be utilized to the best of our ability for the people of the province.

I don't think we need to keep focusing on where contracts can go outside this province. I don't think we have to compromise on how much steel is going to be promised to us and all that kind of

stuff. If the project takes an extra three or four years and we're doing it ourselves, then there's still no issue there. The thing about it is if we're using our local contractors and we're using our local tradespeople, by the time we hit first oil with Bay du Nord or anybody like that then it's profit, because the economy is already going because we built the project. So we have to focus that way as opposed to the giveaways.

I was born in 1970, and since 1970 we've given away our fishery, forestry, mining, just about everything that came into existence for us that could have given us a lot better future. The biggest giveaway we've given to date, really, is our human resources.

If we look at the economy here in Canada, the two big powerhouses right now are Ontario and Alberta, and both are right chock full of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. So it's not like we can't do this ourselves. We know we can do it ourselves. We just got to have a government that stands up and got a backbone to make sure that it's our people who are benefiting from this and that we can bring those expats in to give them the jobs and give them Alberta money as opposed to making them take the hometown deal. Give them the money they deserve. There's a lot of money going to be rewarded from this oil and gas exploration and from drawing first oil.

The Premier has stated a few times here that he's trying to put the province in a better position. Well, the first thing I'm going to say to the Premier on that side is a true leader won't keep making reference to past governments after making government himself. So it's time to take responsibility. It's time to look at your own budgets of what you've done in the last 3½ years and make that better. We do want to work with the current government over on this side but we're not going to have everything just kind of thrown out as status quo when they were obviously given a mandate to make some changes.

So with that being said, the last thing I'd like to say is I take a great honour in being named the critic for Children, Seniors and Social Development. I look forward to working with the minister in that portfolio and I look forward

to representing the people of the province, not just my own district, by accepting that portfolio.

Like I said before, Mr. Speaker, the issues in my district are really not much different than any of the provincial issues, but what I would like to state to the current government is that the status quo is not good enough. It's enough with the giveaways. It's time for us to start rewarding our people with our own resources and moving us into the 21st century by helping everybody as opposed to just a few.

Like I said, there's a lot of money tied up in a lot of big projects here in the province. I just hope the government holds those companies to task when it comes to looking out for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

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

A wonderful opportunity to address the budget here today. Interesting commentary from the Member opposite speaking about particular giveaways. I can't leave it unaddressed, because it was only the Minister of Transportation and Works, the former minister, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island who had awarded ferry contracts in Romania to have work that could have been done at an idle shipyard in Marystown that was – or Harbour Grace or other areas in the province, but that work was done outside the province. There are many areas of which we have value, and we've been working very diligently with Marystown to unlock opportunities and potential to create economic value within the region.

I want to say, first up, that I want to thank the people of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows for their faith in me and their support in the election and returning me to the House for a third term. I had the opportunity of going door to door and knocking on 5,000 doors in the district in sixty communities and hearing first-hand concerns, issues, ideas and opportunities.

Every community is a little bit different in terms of where some of their opportunities would lie. I would say that during the election, I had the pleasure of having the Premier come and tour a shrimp plant in Port au Choix. It was really positive to see some of the implementation that the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources had taken to see the benefits of CETA and work with companies to bring an industrial shrimp deal to this province, so that industrial shrimp that would've been processed in Iceland or Denmark or other European countries, now being processed on the Great Northern Peninsula and other areas of this province.

It's adding value to the local economy and creating additional employment, and that is really positive. These are the types of initiatives that we must continue to take. So I commend the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for making that particular deal. The residents of the Great Northern Peninsula are benefiting.

One of the devastating impacts that I had to deal with as a newly elected MHA was, just the day prior to the election, we had a fire in Black Duck Cove with Gulf Shrimp. We actually lost the Black Duck Cove shrimp plant in totality. I have to say, the Departments of Municipal Affairs and Environment, Fisheries and Land Resources, Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, the Department of TCII and Service Canada provided a very quick response in being engaged with community, working with displaced workers and those who were totally devastated by the loss.

We'll continue to work with the community to provide support, training, advice to help them attach to the labour force, but also work with the company as they work through their plans. And it is our goal to see the facility rebuilt, because it is so important to the economy of the Great Northern Peninsula. The fishery is the backbone and it is a major employer in and around the region, and this is why when we look at innovation, we look at opportunities and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund that was successfully negotiated by this government of \$100 million to be supporting where we go forward and help plan for fisheries in the future.

The budget has an exciting investment for Port Saunders and the Great Northern Peninsula area.

I thank the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women for listening to the groups and women's groups in the area, by *Budget 2019* having an allocation for a new Status of Women Council for the Great Northern Peninsula. It is certainly an area where we have not had that level of service and engagement in this region. So having that new office and programs and supports to help women certainly puts a greater focus on their leadership and the role and the support, and I commend the minister for taking that initiative and being able to find additional funds in *Budget 2019* to make this a reality. I'm certainly supporting our budget as we go forward.

We've seen some investment in major road infrastructure on the Great Northern Peninsula. Conche road, the first time in 50 years, is seeing pavement; Route 433 to Englee, Roddickton area; the route to L'Anse aux Meadows also saw repaving; and Port au Choix, which had a 60 per cent increase in tourism visits that's been sustained over the last two years, has also seen repaving.

The federal government recently, their Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, basically made a recommendation to endorse a fixed link which would be one of the greatest economic enablers for the Great Northern Peninsula and Labrador, and Quebec as well, with the completion of Route 138. This can help create a great circle route and ensure that there is greater predictability of movement of goods, services and people, and also create significant opportunity, and be a great nation-building exercise when the Island of Newfoundland can be connected to Mainland Canada, mainland North America, hundreds of millions of consumers. That will open up many doors for business to be more competitive and enable more opportunities.

We've seen in the budget where the automobile insurance tax is being removed. We debated this bill in the House of Assembly retroactive to April 15. This is positive news for consumers. They'll be able to have more disposable income that they will have in their pockets, and that was a commitment of *Budget 2019*. We've also seen a focus on health care in *Budget 2019*, with various initiatives around mental health and addictions, implementation of *Towards*

*Recovery*, and how important it is to enhance these services.

There's a primary health care team that has been committed for St. Anthony and area, and we'll continue, as I've heard from many constituents, the importance of health, given the aging population, but also to look at where we can work with the private sector where investment can be created like the Great Northern Port Project, the Crémaillère Harbour on the Great Northern Peninsula, as that looks to move forward and the investors can unlock international opportunities and attract major companies to come to the Great Northern Peninsula. It can create future economic prosperity in and around that region that already has the second largest international container port that would link into Europe. The largest would be Argentia in my colleague's, the Minister of Service NL, district. There have been a lot of great things happening in Argentia, a robust level of activity and business that's happening. We would also like to see where we can create that level of industrial activity and industrial park on the Great Northern Peninsula as well.

So we work very diligently to unlock all of the opportunities and *Budget 2019* commits more than \$16 million for research, development and business innovation; more than \$10 million for Regional Development Fund for economic development infrastructure, marketing, research and capacity building.

And we've seen where's there been some great investments in co-operatives such as the Port aux Basques partnership with Leading Edge Credit Union in terms of their child care centre, that was a great partnership where the department was happy to support; the St. John's Farmers' Market, the co-operative there; the Farm and Market Clarendville has seen significant investment and support through the department; the Fogo Island Shorefast Foundation and co-operative has seen support.

Mr. Speaker, \$3 million is announced in the budget, of which we're partnering with the Minister of Natural Resources in that department to create a Digital Ocean Innovation Centre of Excellence. There's tremendous capacity, if we look at the oil and gas sector in our offshore, but

we also look at the ocean economy as a whole. We have 53 per cent of Canada's ocean economy in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have an incredible amount of companies and capacity working with offshore oil and gas, working with sensing technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, aviation and aerospace and defence, as well as the aquaculture industry. The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune would certainly highlight success and growth and how it's been able to create tremendous benefits on the South Coast of this province. Together, we look at all of these ocean opportunities that exist here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The budget also committed \$2.5 million towards the construction of a new 36,000-square foot facility at the Marine Institute's Holyrood Marine Base. And I was present with the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to highlight this and where there's incredible growth, because Holyrood itself has a start-up community, they also have this educational opportunity where you can connect closely to the ocean. There's more opportunity there and this is why we partnered with the Marine Institute with making this investment. It's more than a \$20-million investment once it comes to completion.

There's \$500,000 in the budget to implement a new approach to investment attraction as well, so it could be very direct and very targeted. This was a recommendation based on the McKinsey report to look at where we can go and seek out direct investment or make attraction in various sectors of the economy.

Highlighting some areas like our defence and aerospace industry, it is an area that has a lot more opportunity. This is why we have \$200,000 committed for a feasibility study to explore opportunities, to expand the maintenance repair and overhaul in the airline industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. That was also a recommendation that came out of the McKinsey report.

We have \$250,000 in *Budget 2019* to launch an ocean technology competition; \$250,000 to support social enterprise outreach. There's also \$200,000 to support the Drive Program offered

through the Community Business Development Corporation, CBDCs, which offers loans to young entrepreneurs up to \$10,000. They're throughout the province. There's a network of 14 CBDCs and metro business opportunities to make 15.

I was at the launch of the Youth Ventures Program, seeing how inspiring it is to have young entrepreneurs look at their first opportunity to make their own money, be their own boss. Whether it's the lemonade stand, whether it's the lawn care business, art or other endeavours, there's capacity for people to get access to low-interest loans through this supportive program with the CBDCs to create new opportunities.

We also will partner with credit unions in the province to pilot a small business loan guarantee program and look at the extension of a cellular service pilot project.

The Member opposite, the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, had talked quite a bit about Internet and it's certainly a priority for us. His district will receive a number of areas of Internet upgrades that have been previously announced. We made it a priority to leverage federal funding and other supports. In fact, TCII was able to leverage nearly \$40 million in federal service – with service providers to improve Internet access in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Projects continue to be implemented and by doing so this improved access to high-speed Internet allows hardworking Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become more engaged in the digital economy, seized with business opportunities and connect with friends and family around the world. This investment will help make a significant difference in enhancing productivity and competitiveness in many rural and remote communities across our province.

Last year, we launched a cell service pilot project to expand wireless coverage in communities throughout the province. In collaboration with service providers and local proponents, TCII has supported 10 projects to expand wireless coverage in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was very pleasing to see that 4,000 constituents on the Great Northern Peninsula in 17 communities in the St. Anthony basin region will see a benefit from the elevation of two towers, one in St. Lunaire-Griquet and one in Raleigh that will open up cellular service to a World UNESCO heritage site. Fifty independent businesses along the route of Routes 436 and 437 will see a greater enhancement. It's going to lead to business growth. It's going to lead to younger people wanting to move in communities that didn't have cellular service otherwise, and help the visitor who is coming be able to way find, get information as well. There are all kinds of reasons why we should be investing in cellular service.

We saw a great partnership in the Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair district where the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment and CSSD had highlighted that six communities, including the World UNESCO heritage site in Red Bay, will see coverage.

The Member for Stephenville - Port au Port has a project that is supporting the francophone community in economic development in La Grand'Terre and Three Rock Cove, Mainland there.

We also see where I was with the Member for Cape St. Francis. He was quite delighted in Pouch Cove to see investment in that district; as well as the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, to talk about the support for Riverhead and a number of communities around St. Mary's where they will have cellular service.

The Minister for the Status of Women has seen an investment in the community of Lord's Cove. Lord's Cove is a unique example of where a small investment in a trail has led to development in Sandy Cove; also saw business growth in the community; has supported tourism and also innovation through the Wave Energy Research Centre; and partnerships with the College of the North Atlantic.

We're seeing activity happen in small communities, and that's the exciting things we want to continue to see. As well, how communities on the Burin Peninsula are benefiting from Grieg in and around the region

through places like – is it Lamaline or Lawn that's –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Lawn.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Lawn is seeing the cages being designed and built. We see other companies that are accelerating growth down in the district, with Grand Bank in Dynamic Air Shelters. Very wonderful companies that I've had the opportunity to tour with the Member. I'm very proud of the initiatives that are happening.

I think as Members of this House, we are certainly all proud of our districts and the communities and the highlights of what's happening from an economic point of view. You only have to look to the Member for Bonavista to see and talk about, as we did in Estimates last night, the robust business growth that's happening there.

In 2016, there were only 80 members of the chamber of commerce of that area. Now there are nearly 160 members; that's 80 more members. There were 60 businesses that started up in just over two years on the Bonavista Peninsula.

This is the type of activity and this is the climate that we're creating that's conducive. So for Members opposite to get up and talk about doom and gloom and how bad things are, there are good things happening in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're seeing it, and this has happened since we have formed government in 2016, where we've seen this business growth on the Bonavista Peninsula. They've capitalized on their cultural assets and small business growth and collaboration, and we look at where those opportunities are, whether they're through regional innovation systems pilot projects, or whether they're through trade activities or whether they're through industrial activities.

Our department is very, very diverse in the types of initiatives we undertake and we support, because we have our tourism and cultural division and parks, business, regional development and diversification. Tourism has grown to 20,000 jobs, up from 18,000 from the

last time the exit survey was done. So we've seen growth in that area.

We've seen last year 3.6 million trips in the province by residents spending nearly \$570 million. So combined resident and non-resident tourism spending in Newfoundland and Labrador reached \$1.14 billion last year. That's incredible.

Nearly 700 articles were written – and the Member for Gander will certainly love this – by Travel Media about *Come From Away* in 2018. That reached an audience of \$110 million. This is a promotion, an advertising about Newfoundland and Labrador that we did not have to buy. Tour operators are expanding tour packages and offerings throughout the province. We've hosted two promotional events in London at *Come From Away* and we want to keep hearing from our visitor experiences and those opportunities.

We also had, through our tourism development initiatives, 24 opportunities, experiences, sessions, 900 operators, potential entrepreneurs, municipalities and stakeholders that have been engaged in this process.

We continue to see where there's \$1 million in budget 2019-20 to support an investment in the growing art scene that we have here in this province. So we're making Arts NL a grant program, \$2.9 million up from \$1.9 million because we have incredible contemporary arts, arts organizations for the creation, development and supporting artists.

The film and television industry has seen robust growth: \$50 million in production last year, a record; 650 full-time equivalent jobs. This is why we've added \$4 million to the equity program. We've doubled that since we formed government.

We also support the technology sector through our Technology Sector Work Plan, made incredible investments, whether it's through equity, loans or others to attract investment and grow the economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I thank everyone for my time to address *Budget 2019*.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Like I say, I always remind, it's a pleasure to get up and speak in the House for the people you represent, because I think it's important for each and every one of us to stand in this House and not only speak what we feel about the budget, but every time we speak in this House we speak for the people we're representing.

I'll say it every time I stand, it's something that should be repeated, because it's not us speaking. We're speaking on behalf of the people who elected us that we represent in the House of Assembly. It's something that I don't take lightly and I'm very proud to do. So on behalf of the residents of Conception Bay South, it's always a pleasure to stand in this. Like I said, it's a privileged job. Sometimes we don't say that enough, either, but it's not everyone who gets this opportunity to sit in this House and represent their districts.

It's a very humbling experience, but it's one that I think we all should never lose sight of the fact how important our jobs actually are and how people depend on us for a lot of things to make a difference in their lives. Not only in our districts, Mr. Speaker, but provincially, and as we all are critics for different portfolios, we hold government to account and individual ministers. But it's all about making life better for residents of the province. I don't think we should ever lose sight of the fact of what we come here to do.

Mr. Speaker, on the budget document, the budget speech we can go any angle. I'd like to go back to some commentary I had when I debated Interim Supply the other day. And it comes down to the fact of the budget document that was introduced in April and the one that was reintroduced last week and we're now debating here today, an ask that we as a caucus, as an Opposition, entirety had put forth – but I know our caucus put forth a list of requests to the government opposite, the Premier and the

Minister of Finance, and all those asks are legitimate asks and we get the comeback that they're expensive.

Well, that's fine. Some of them may be a cost. Some may be more costly than others. We never did ask for the spending to increase, we asked for a reallocation of spending. Operate within the same budget, operate within the same monies. Because in 2015, when this government took office, spending has increased year over year over year, they'll say that it's because of borrowing costs, the financial costs or this cost or that cost, but their actually spending has actually increased every year. Their spending now is up by \$7 million or \$8 million, if I'm not mistaken, from 2015.

It's a gradual incline. They're not operating like a government that's watching their spending. The revenue side was meant to increase when they nailed everyone with 300 taxes and fees, but it's something – and we have economists in this House, but I'm not an economist, but I do talk to lots of people and I do have a common-sense approach. If people feel good about everything, they'll spend.

If you have more money in your pocket, if you feel you're getting a tax break here or you're not paying tax here, generally, it's an upbeat feeling. You'll spend more. You'll make that purchase. You'll buy that car. You'll go shopping. You'll go to the restaurant. It all works hand in hand.

It's simple economics. That's the basics of all economics. You talk about your economic indicators being up and down, forget all that. Forget all the technical jargon. The bottom line is whether you're a business, whether you're an individual, if you feel good about the economy in the future, you will spend. You will invest. It's a very common-sense approach, Mr. Speaker, and no one can dispute that.

We don't feel that way in this province. Little windows of bright light shines and someone say: B'y, the price of oil is going up. That's good, and everyone is saying maybe we're around the corner. Everything is brightening up. Then you see the price of gas go up and then you go and you're nailed with taxes here and taxes there and everyone goes: Well, why? It's a depressed economy. When people feel that way – and we

all heard it, my colleagues and Members in this House has said, we were on the heels of a provincial election, you listen to what people tell you at the door.

I've said it, I campaigned for my colleague in Topsail - Paradise, the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Mount Pearl North in by-elections in between 2015 and 2019, and in my own election, and what I heard at the doors was: taxes, taxes, taxes. What are we going do? How are we going to resolve this? I don't see a future. What about my children? I have teenagers; I have young adults. How are they going to live here? If they go, I'm going.

That's what I heard and I spoke with three other electoral districts, and the Members, I'm sure, can back up what I'm saying because I knocked on the doors with them and we all heard the same thing. I'm sure if you went you to anywhere in the province, you would have heard the same thing, Mr. Speaker. It's not a new complaint. It's not something new that just came up yesterday. It's not new. This happened in 2015.

People might say we were troubled, financially. I don't think anyone disputes that, but we're an oil-based economy. With oil, comes those fluctuations. You head out west in Alberta, Saskatchewan, they felt the same thing we felt, but they never folded the tent. They never said shut down everything, the gloom and doom, we're going bankrupt, we're on the verge of bankruptcy, tax everyone, tax, tax, tax – no, they never done that.

They actually increased spending because they wanted to instill confidence in the individuals that live in their respective provinces. They wanted people to say, you know what, we are going through hard times, but we're with you, we hear it, we know what we got to do, we got to weather this storm, that's what we're going to do and that's how we're going to weather this storm.

Here, it was the sky was falling. I've said this many times in this House and I'll say it again, the black cloud has not left. There's still a black cloud over this province, as much as the government opposite want to think life is good, we're on the verge and we're coming back.

It's interesting, in April, prior to the election being called, it was announcement after announcement after announcement. That doesn't work anymore. Again, that's insulting the intelligence of the electorate. It's their money, it's not our money. It's the public's money. We're instilled with the confidence of the people to come into this House, the 40 Members and vote – it's their money, it's not ours. I have no authority to anything outside of what I get paid. It's their money. And for anyone to come in on bended knee to a minister and say thank you so much for helping me out, Sir, or Ma'am, that's ludicrous. It's not their money, it's none of our money. It's the public's money.

So you spend \$350 million in three days prior to an election being called. Now, who's the fool? It's not the people, 'cause they see it, and they told me, and I'm sure they told others. It's the people opposite who decided that this was the strategy we'd use. It's insulting, Mr. Speaker. I still find it insulting. I'm not only the Member for Conception Bay South, I am a resident of this province, too. I'm a taxpayer, I'm like everyone else that walks these streets. I shop and I eat and I drive the same roads we all do. I'm a normal citizen like anyone else. It's our money. We care. So when I speak, I'm speaking for the residents but I'm also speaking for me, too. I found that insulting.

I remember going home after, I guess, day three, when we were up to \$350 million, and day three, Wednesday, wasn't over, I remember thinking these are the things I don't like about politics. And I was quoted as saying that; I remember saying that outright. I didn't like it. I never did like that. I with the former administration, they used to make these announcements and think that everything was wonderful and we all had rose-coloured glasses on, and I didn't like it then. So I'm not being partisan, I'm just generally saying that – and I said it back then and I'm saying it now – I didn't like that.

Like, who do you think you're fooling? First of all, it's not your money. It's the public's money, and the public are concerned but they want something to rise them, they want something to lift them up. They listened for four years: blame, blame, blame. That got old. The previous administration, that wore out. You crowd, that didn't have any legs. Believe it or not, I can't

believe it, but I've heard it a scattered time from the previous administration in this session. It astounds me.

When I look around, there are a lot of new faces on this side of the House – a lot of new faces, a lot of fresh ideas. Yeah, they're with the PC Party. A lot of the new faces on the other side that were never around when the Upper Churchill deal was signed, do I blame them because of that? It was done under a Liberal administration, or any other deals that went wrong with a Liberal or a Tory or whatever. You move on. Faces change, attitudes change, ideas change, faces change.

At the end of the day, all of us are put in here by the people we represent, to come in and make a difference, to do what's right, do what they think is right; but, not only that, to speak what people want you to speak about. They gave us a job to come in here and represent them. I got my marching orders. I not only get it from my wife, Mr. Speaker, but I get them from others as well. They wanted certain things. We all get them – most men do anyway, I know that.

I heard loud and clear what I heard at the doors. It was 1.6 busing, it was insulin pumps, it was levies, it was taxes and it was the condition of the roads. All of those things were there but most people, when I had a conversation with them, they were very realistic. They understood the financial situation the province is in. They didn't want me to recreate the wheel.

They wanted me to bring their voice in here, and I try to do that to the best of my ability every single time I get that opportunity because, really, that's what we're here for. We're not here for me. It's not about me or anyone else here. It's about the people we represent. Their concerns are very legitimate.

I know back in 2016, the infamous 2016 budget, that a lot of people in this province shook this Legislature. It was one of the worst, probably the worst budget ever. We were bombarded with email after email after email. Actually, in the filibuster we got up and read out those hundreds and hundreds of emails because, you know what, those people deserved to have their voices heard.



Do you know what that done? The people were happy. That was their voice; that wasn't my email. I used to pick up the emails and read them out. I used to make it clear, that's not me. That's this person, that's this person. That's what they wanted. Did it change anything? No, but at least they felt they had their voices heard. It's on record. It's in this *Hansard* here. Their concerns were brought to this House.

Election day is when you file your concerns, you file your complaints and you give your proper assessment. It's not polling, it's election day.

We seen what happened over there on May 16, very close. Now, they did pull it off. It's a minority but they're still in government and they have the right to govern. But I certainly hope after May 16 they listen better, because I hear it, I still hear it, people were surprised. People were shocked that they pulled it off, this Liberal government pulled it off.

Again, that's not my words, that's their words. I have reasons for that. I know a lot of Members opposite. There are a lot of good Members over there. There are a lot of good people. There are a lot of good representatives on that side who've done good work and deserve to be here. That's not the issue.

The issue is we submit seven, eight recommendations that we felt was important from the Members opposite here. We're in this House, the majority of the population as we sit here, and I've heard it said many times this week, 57 per cent of the province voted for this side of the House. So these concerns are very legitimate because you're getting them from, basically, a majority of the province. We submitted our letters and we got back that it was too costly and you're going to drive the deficit up. Like, there were black clouds over it.

Then we hear the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board telling everyone we're going to work together. We're going to do this together. We're in this together. We're all singing 'Kumbaya.' We're in this together. But what is he really saying? It's lip service, Mr. Speaker. Then you go and present the same budget. You're not willing – we got the letters back and forth. There's no movement.

Does the province want another election? No, they don't. I don't want another election. My residents, I represent, don't want another election. It just shows you the arrogance is still alive and well. That's what it shows me. How long this goes on, who knows. It's hard to convert from being a 31 seat majority and it's dwindled down to 27 to a minority. I get that, and your mindset. It's a job to switch that like the flick of a switch, but they'd better soon start listening. I'm speaking for the Official Opposition, and other Members on this side of the House are going to get frustrated eventually as well.

So that's my caution to the wind. You dodge bullets. You'll dodge this bullet because I don't think anyone wants another election. I'll tell you right now, we want our voices to be heard. We want our districts to be heard. We want the concerns that our residents have to be heard loud and clear, and we want them to be given the same consideration as any Liberal district in this province. Are they getting that right now? I don't know. I question it. I seriously question it.

I don't think it says for every district over there but I think there are some districts and there are lots of evidence could say – I could be corrected, but I think I'm pretty close to being right on that. I speak to a lot of people, and it's easier sometimes when you're in the right district. I get that too, but you're in a different climate now. We're in a different world. This is a new order now. It's the first time in 40 or 50 years we've been like this, and the last time it didn't last very long, but I think we all want to work together. I think the public wants us to work together.

We want to be respected. The residents we represent want to be respected. They don't want to listen to this – again, the general public, the residents of this province are smart people. They're intelligent. You can't fool them with their own money, you can't buy them with their own money. They're a very intelligent electorate. You hear it at the doors. These people are pretty wise. They catch on to stuff. This stuff don't fool them. They can't be fooled.

Mr. Speaker, when I went around – speaking of the electorate. When I went around and knocked on doors – again, this is probably another bit of caution to the wind, I'm sure. You may have

heard it yourselves when you knocked on your doors. When I went to the doors, one of the first things I'd hear was: Never give you much time. That's pretty rushed. You had Victoria Day weekend. You had Mother's Day.

What other event happened?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Easter.

**MR. PETTEN:** Easter. There you go – Easter weekend.

That benefits incumbents. I've said this before, that would benefit an incumbent. That was the plan. Get this done. Limit it. Get it out. Four week election, which really it's not four weeks. Get it done. Get it over with. Before people know what happened, it's done and over and we'll save our skin. That's why we had the May election, and listen, it worked. By the slimmest of margins it worked, but don't ever think the public didn't catch on and didn't know what was happening.

The sad reality is in probably another week they would have really caught on and registered, but I'll leave it at that. That's what I heard at the doors. They were insulted. They were absolutely insulted.

They were also insulted about the \$350 million that was spent in three days. None of that was lost on them, but they also still talked about what happened in 2016.

Do you know another issue that came up at the doors? The \$40 million. The minister opposite will always say: We never gave them nothing. See, Mr. Speaker, there's a pretty simple concept there, too. No, you're right. They never wrote a \$40 million cheque, but it's \$40 million in tax breaks. So we're getting \$40 million less. Whatever way you slice it, you're getting less.

So, yeah, indirectly, we're going to give them \$40 million, to a multi-billion company, I guess. This company is big. We didn't need to do that. We've argued that. We still argue it. We didn't need to do that. Why did we do that? There's never been a rational excuse given. All the while, though, there's scandal written all over it. It's been on the fringes of a scandal, but we've never been – well, the AG is at it now, so maybe

we'll get to the bottom of this. The general public can't get over that. I heard that. I was not surprised because different sections talk about different things. They were totally, totally, totally taken up with that issue. We challenged it; our Leader challenged it.

I had questions of the Minister of Transportation. We all kind of delved into it. There was something not right here. We couldn't get the answers, but hopefully the AG will. Those are the things. That's when I say sometimes you can look in the mirror or you don't have to look in the mirror, but you can live in this world, this fancy world where they don't see it. Unfortunately, a lot of them are still not seeing it, and that is very frustrating. Again, not to me, the people I represent.

I hear it, and I've said this, too. I think every Budget Speech I bring it up because I think it's important, too. Probably several times a week, depending when the House is open, I go to the local Tims. I'm a Tim Hortons coffee drinker. I go to the local Tims and I go in. I don't go to the drive through, I go in and I sit down at a table. This table is all retirees. They're retired engineers, teachers, there's a doctor in it, actually, it's former politicians. I sit down in the morning when I get an opportunity, and I have to tell you, there's no better input you'll get.

There are Liberals and there are NDPs and there are Tories, and there are people, I don't think, who likes anyone in government. They all give me their views. It's not only that, there are some people who can't stand anyone in this Legislature, but I found it very interesting. The dynamics – and they'll have their own debates while I'm at the table. It's not like they're all for and against me, it's very interesting.

Ironically, I've used that a lot of times. Some commentary I've had with those people in this House, and it's a lot of factual information. It takes you out of the bubble. I always say the bubble is a big problem in politics. It removes you – and what the public are really seeing, it's really eye opening.

Again, that's one thing I learned. I learned this from seasoned politicians who were in this House many years ago. They gave me some advice on the dos and the don't dos. That was

one of the big things they gave me: don't lose touch with your district; don't lose touch with the people on the ground. They're the people who put you there. They liked what they seen when they seen you the first time. They're going to like what they see if you don't change. Don't change, be true to yourself, be true to the residents you represent and you'll never go wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to hold that. I'm in my second term now and I'll continue to advocate for that. Every opportunity I get up to speak on a money bill or a budget bill, I will not resist to say that here again, over and over again. I thank you once again for the opportunity to get up and speak.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time I would adjourn debate on the budget motion.

And prior to recess, I would call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 1.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 1, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** One.

**MR. SPEAKER:** – 1 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 1)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 1)

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

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

We're about to recess until 2 p.m., but just a reminder to all Members, that I believe immediately following the recess there will be a recommencement of the Finance Department Estimates that – Executive Council, sorry. Executive Council Estimates that were paused as of yesterday. So I would remind all Members that this House will now sit for Estimates after the recess.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I seek direction from the Government House Leader.

So when might we reconvene, at the conclusion of those Estimates?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, we're recessing the House now until 2 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** In the interim, there will be a continuation of the Estimates that were paused yesterday.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I gotcha.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All right, thank you.

This House does stand in recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Thank you.

### Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

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

Order, please!

I'd like to welcome the Members back to this afternoon's sitting.

First of all, it gives me a great honour to welcome in the Speaker's gallery, to my right, Mr. Rod Deon. He is a navy veteran of the Second World War and he'll be recognized in a Member's statement this afternoon.

Welcome to you, Sir.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Some other special guests to my left, also in the Speaker's gallery, joining us today are members of the Premier's Youth Council. The Premier's Youth Council was created in 2017 with a mandate to provide advice to the Premier and the provincial government, bringing a youth perspective to select topics important to youth and the government's agenda.

The Premier's Youth Council members are appointed through a merit-based process led by the public service commission. There are currently 24 members from all regions of the province. Joining us today, we have: McAuley Bellows, Lauren Carter, Frankie Leonard, Radhika Verma, Katie Wells and Will White.

Welcome to all of you.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today, we will hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Lewisporte - Twillingate, Fogo

Island - Cape Freels, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, Harbour Main, and St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

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

I rise in this hon. House to recognize the Kinsmen Club of Bridgeport and area. On Saturday evening, I had the privilege to join members and guests for the 36th Annual Installation of Officers and year-end banquet.

I would like to extend congratulations to Kin Randy White for winning the distinguished Kinsmen of the Year Award.

Mr. Speaker, the Kinsmen motto is: Serving the Communities Greatest Needs, and this chapter has truly lived up to that motto.

During the 36-year history of the Kinsmen Club of Bridgeport and area, the dedicated service of current and past members have contributed to over \$750,000 being donated back to the community and region. In addition to donating to local residents, schools, sports and youth groups, the club also donates to the Janeway, Notre Dame Bay Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, the Children's Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House, Kids Eat Smart Foundation, Dr. H. Bliss Cancer Centre, and CF and MS just to name a few.

I ask all Members to join me in celebrating the contributions and success of the Kinsmen Club of Bridgeport and area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to visit the local service district of Stoneville and enjoy the company of the great volunteers there. This

past Saturday they celebrated Stoneville days, their annual community festival. The day was enjoyed by everyone who took part.

The day started with a parade of the brand new fire truck through town. This might not sound like a big parade, but this was the first new fire truck for the community. The sense of pride from the chief and volunteers was overwhelming. The firemen were so excited that they took their own ride in the truck before taking the kids. As a former chief, I was as happy as they were.

Over the past year and a half, these volunteers fundraised over \$45,000 towards the cost of this truck. Mr. Speaker, that amounts to a lot of cold plates, moose burgers, ticket sales and other various collections. I would like to extend thanks to these volunteers for their hard work and commitment to their town and surrounding area.

I wish them well, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to acknowledge two amazing women from my district. I speak of Ms. Kerry Churchill and Ms. Dana Metcalfe, who are the architects behind such endeavours like WINK, Women Into Networking Kindness, and the Breastless and Beautiful calendar project.

WINK is an organization that supports and motivates our community through active participation by volunteerism, fundraising and acts of kindness for persons in need.

The Breastless and Beautiful project not only raises money for the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre, Patient and Family Support Fund, but serves as a beacon of inspiration for the individuals and their families who are battling breast cancer. Mr. Speaker, each month's photo is very artistically and creatively taken and tells the amazing story of the physical,

mental and emotional obstacles they have overcome. To date, the project has raised over \$100,000 for support to breast cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, another project that was driven by these women was the Chain of Bras project that saw a chain of bras stretch two kilometres along Signal Hill to raise awareness and money for support of breast cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, these are only a few of the things these women have done to support our residents. I ask all Members to join me in congratulating and thanking Kerry and Dana for their leadership and courage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to stand and recognize one of the largest communities in my District of Harbour Main, the Town of Holyrood, which was incorporated in 1969, and this year celebrates its 50th year anniversary and Come Home Year. Much of the month of July has been dedicated to the recognition of the incorporation of this historic town. Numerous events for young and old alike are being held.

Holyrood is a town that continues to grow rapidly and boasts both its historical past and its growth as it attracts many newcomers. With its vibrant municipal council, Holyrood continues to expand and offers many opportunities to its residents. For example, Holyrood has continuously found a way to evolve from a proud history to building an ocean innovation ecosystem creating a sustainable and progressive future.

I would ask all hon. Members to join with me in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Holyrood and Come Home Year 2019. Holyrood is a true example of a place that demonstrates continuous

growth and vitality and exemplifies what it means to be a town of distinction in our great Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to recognize Mr. Rod Deon, a World War II navy veteran and outstanding community volunteer.

One of the surviving veterans dispatched to the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, Mr. Deon recently travelled to France for the 75th anniversary of this event, one of 45 people who took part in a special commemoration ceremony with Veterans Affairs Canada.

Born in Nova Scotia in 1921, Mr. Deon worked as a hull technician, or shipwright, before enlisting in the navy. During D-Day, Deon was aboard the *HMCS Ottawa*.

Mr. Deon is also a celebrated artist and was honoured with a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 for a wood carving he did of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 for her coronation.

A dedicated volunteer with the Royal Canadian Legion, many people recognize Mr. Deon from selling poppies every year. He has spent a half a century working on the annual poppy campaign. Mr. Deon proudly states he served so we could be here today.

We are humbled by your actions.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Greg Roberts, Barb Genge and Christopher Hickman on recently being

inducted into the 2019 Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame.

Greg Roberts is chairman and president of P. I. Enterprises Group; however, this native of Triton is known more as the owner and CEO of Mary Brown's incorporated. Today, there are over 150 Mary Brown's restaurants from coast to coast, and the number keeps growing each year. Mr. Roberts credits his father as the most influential figure in his life, and his most valued mentor.

Mr. Speaker, through her entrepreneurial spirit and community involvement, Barb Genge is a pillar of the tourism industry on the Great Northern Peninsula. For over 30 years, Ms. Genge has owned and operated the world famous Tuckamore Lodge. She is a member of the Canadian Tourism Hall of Fame, and has received awards in sustainable development from Parks Canada and Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, I have known Barb Genge my entire life, and I could not think of a more deserving individual to be inducted into the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame.

The third inductee used the entrepreneurial skills he learned from his father to become a member of the Atlantic Business Magazine's Top 50 CEO Hall of Fame. Christopher Hickman, chair and CEO of the Marco Group of Companies, has developed one of the fastest growing companies in Atlantic Canada, and as a result, his company is the largest locally-based general contractor in Eastern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals deserve to be acknowledged for their excellence in business leadership, professional achievement and contributions to society.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Greg Roberts, Barb Genge and Christopher Hickman on being named 2019 inductees to the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

We join with government in celebrating these truly worthwhile inductions into the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame. The entrepreneurial spirit of our province is a wonder to behold.

I'm sure that Members of this House can think of hundreds, if not thousands, of hard-working entrepreneurial individuals across our province who equally would be worthy of being inducted into this Hall of Fame for their creation of businesses that have made their mark both here at home and on the world stage.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition caucus congratulates Mr. Roberts, Ms. Genge and Mr. Hickman on their achievements and, undoubtedly, long years of hard work that have led up to it. Newfoundland and Labrador is a better place for having the contributions of Marco Group, Tuckamore Lodge and, of course, Mary Brown's in it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I also congratulate Greg Roberts, Barb Genge and Christopher Hickman on recently being inducted into the 2019 Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame. These business leaders serve as an inspiration to the many entrepreneurs in our province and I commend them on the many successes they have had in their respective industries.

Small businesses are the heart of our communities and I appreciate their contribution to our communities in hopes of helping create more success stories like this in the future. I encourage government to do more to support small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs

through measures such as lowering or eliminating the corporate income tax on small businesses.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to provide an update on how the Department of Transportation and Works is increasing the use of technology to help people make more informed decisions before travelling.

Since 2018, new highway cameras have been installed by the department at Heart's Content Barrens, Black Duck Siding, Lumsden, St. George's and Terrenceville, and cameras will be added to the Viking Trail and Argentinia Access Road this year.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, approximately 890,000 people visited our highway cameras home page. The number of visits to each of our individual cameras combined for more than 1.6 million. Each of these cameras costs approximately \$6,600 a year to operate, but the value they provide is immeasurable.

In addition, in December 2017, we introduced a Provincial Plow Tracker on our busiest routes, which was later expanded to the rest of the province in Labrador this winter. In the six-month period between November 2018 and the end of April, our plow tracker received more than 28,000 visits, and we look forward to building on this usage this coming winter.

We have also been using digital display signs on some of our highways, which has proven to be an effective method in reducing driver speed.

Next month, Mr. Speaker, we will launch a 511 NL mobile app and website. This will create a single point of contact service to provide information such as highway conditions, construction reports, highway cameras, the Provincial Plow Tracker and ferry schedules.

Mr. Speaker, while we use more modern technology to promote highway safety, we encourage all motorists to use this information before they drive and remind them to put their phones away before they sit behind a wheel.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement, and I hope he can find some new technologies to get the air conditioning working in the House of Assembly while he's fixing the roads. I couldn't resist.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome all initiatives that increase safety for the motoring and general public. Highway cameras and digital display speed signs can be very useful tools. It is important that we take advantage of all opportunities, including new technologies that are available to make our roads safer.

Mr. Speaker, we must all play a role in improving road safety. I, too, would like to encourage all those who use our roadways – drivers, construction crews, pedestrians and cyclists – to stay safe, particularly during the busy summer season.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I am glad to see more modern technology being used as a means to improve highway safety. The safety of the people using our highways is paramount and I commend those undertaking the work to make these

improvements; however, technology can only do so much to improve highway safety.

I urge the minister to consider increasing snow clearing and police presence on our highways, as technology alone cannot replace proper maintenance and enforcement.

Thank you very much.

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

The Atlantic Accord has enabled our provincial government revenues of \$22 billion and is our foundation for jobs and prosperity into the future.

Is the government willing to support a motion of the House to affirm the principles of the Atlantic Accord and, in particular, the principle of joint management of offshore oil and gas resources off Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

Well, first of all, I want to recognize Mr. Deon in the gallery and thank him for joining us here today.

Back to the question of the Atlantic Accord; of course, Mr. Speaker, I would expect all Members of this House of Assembly would agree that joint management within our offshore resources is important to all of us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Yesterday, in the House of Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition said that we on this side of the House are very fond of talking about



2012, and one of the most drastic changes that we seen in joint management off our coast in our offshore was, indeed, by the Conservative Party of Canada. That is when CEAA 2012 came in and really stripped the whole idea of joint management from Newfoundland and Labrador. So we're more than happy to stand with every Member of this House around joint management.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Just for total clarity on that, I take it that the Premier is willing to give favourable consideration to a motion to affirm the principles of the Atlantic Accord.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, like I said, we would stand with every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian. We do not need a resolution in this House of Assembly. If it comes to that, we have written letters. The minister and I have done quite a bit of work and engagement with both the federal government, with industry, with association protecting our environment.

Everyone realizes that the protection of the environment is paramount, but, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering why it is today – we do not want to make this political. This is not a political discussion because, as I said, in 2012 it was CEAA 2012 that actually stripped the idea of joint management away from the Atlantic Accord and from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

So, today, this is not about one specific federal government. This is about an initiative and a conversation. I will tell you, we will defend the principles of the Atlantic Accord, whether those in the Opposition are standing with us or not.

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

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** The Premier need not fear about standing together if he's taking a stance in defence of the principles of the Atlantic Accord, in particular joint management.

The Accord cannot be changed without mutual consent. Will the Premier state definitively that he will not consent to any change to the Atlantic Accord which infringes the principles of the Accord, including the principle of joint management?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, as I stand here today, and I've been in this House long enough to know where I've seen amendments to the Atlantic Accord. As an example, if the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that we should not stand here and amend the Accord when it comes to worker safety, well, I will guarantee you, I will stand for enhanced worker safety, Mr. Speaker.

From time to time we see amendments to the Atlantic Accord on things like worker safety. It could be on things like how we do land tenure, but when it comes to joint management, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, we will not be making amendments unless we see benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. CROSBIE:** It sounds like the Premier is leaving the door open.

Yesterday at Noia, the Premier referred to an arbitration clause in the federal-provincial agreement signed this year and stated that if joint management were being impaired, you better believe we would be prepared to use it.

How can an arbitration clause in a Hibernia dividend agreement be used to resolve disputes over changes to the 1985 Accord?

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

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

Leaving the door open, as the Leader of the Opposition just made mention, I will definitely leave the door open if it comes to enhancement of worker safety. I am shocked today to be in this House and suggest that the Leader of the Opposition, if it meant amending the Atlantic Accord, would not do so for worker safety. That is what I just said.

So let's be very careful, for anyone in this House, not to put words in my mouth. I have clearly said that when it comes to joint management we would only make amendments where we see benefits for the people of this province that are in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when closing out debate on Bill 1, the minister indicated his desire to collaborate with Opposition Members and even invited anyone to come to his office.

I ask the minister: Will he table information on how he will achieve the \$617 million reduction in expenditure outlined in his plan to surplus by '22-'23?

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

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

Yes, I am absolutely – my door is open. I'm looking forward to any Member of the Opposition, in addition to the eight items that they demanded, Mr. Speaker, when they sent a letter to the Premier and copied myself, which would be hundreds of millions of dollars, to put forward ideas where they see a savings in the provincial public service and the delivery of services to the people of the province as well.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing process. Our deputy ministers and our ADMs work very hard in trying to identify efficiencies. We brought legislation in in December to work with our agencies, boards and commissions to try and find efficiencies and work on attrition planning.

Thank you, I'll get a chance to further answer.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 13, I asked the minister to table a detailed breakdown of his fiscal forecast by department, but the Minister of Finance responded that budgeting only happens on an annual basis.

I ask the minister: How do you know that you can reduce expenditures by \$617 million if you only budget on an annual basis?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'll put up with a lot but I won't put up with people putting words in my mouth or trying to say that my words mean a certain thing.

Budgets come out on an annual basis. Yes, absolutely, Mr. Speaker, I certainly said that. Deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, directors, managers, the heads of our agencies, boards and commissions work every month of every year, Mr. Speaker, to try and find efficiencies, to try and find better ways of delivering services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I won't have the Member try to paint a picture other than that.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, I know there is a fiscal framework for future years.

I ask the minister once again: Will he table the departmental details of his fiscal framework to return to surplus by '22-'23?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, in case the Member didn't get a copy, I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, budgets come out on an annual basis. This is the budget for this year. We will be working towards next year's budget. The officials in every department work towards next year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue working towards next year's budget with a focus on finding efficiencies while delivering the services that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

I remind the Members about chirping. I don't want any interruptions.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister one more time: Do you have a departmental breakdown of where you will find \$617 million in savings, yes or no?

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, this is ongoing work. As I said, this year's budget is this year's budget. Our officials will work towards next year's budget, which will help find efficiencies.

The Member opposite asked why our spending was up. I indicated to him in Estimates, Mr. Speaker, and now for anybody who is sitting in the gallery or watching this at home who didn't see Estimates, we've got \$130 million, 100 per cent fully recoverable funding in this year's budget; 125 of that is because of the work that our government has done with the federal

government – something the Members opposite haven't been good at when they were in government – \$125 million of fully, 100 per cent, federally-funded initiatives in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, in Estimates on Tuesday, the minister indicated that he would be looking to ABCs to find efficiencies as part of his plan to reduce expenditures by \$617 million.

Health is about 40 per cent of the total budget. Using a straight line calculation, health share of this target is about \$246 million.

Is it the minister's intent to cut health care expenditures by \$246 million over the next three years?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite was the head of one of our health care organizations, and it's absolutely shocking some of the initiatives he put forward to try and find savings. I can go through those, but it's quite embarrassing to do so. If he's suggesting that we take some of his ideas, some of the ideas that he put forward would be very unfortunate to the residents of Labrador, and we weren't prepared to do some of the things that he put forward, I can assure you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, once again I'll clarify for the record. Health authorities are asked to remove millions of dollars from their

budget every single year. They are given options. We put forward options, as we would do, as any good public servant would do. We put forward options with pros and cons. It then goes into government. At the end of the day, government decides which options are chosen and which are not, not the health authority.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is there a question?

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Finding efficiencies means reducing expenditures, and for health care that's about \$246 million of his \$617 million target.

I ask the minister: Will he table the expenditure reduction initiatives that he plans to implement to find efficiencies in health care?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, you're absolutely right. Government makes the final decision, which is why we didn't impose some of the draconian measures that that individual put forward. It was his recommendations, not ours.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Member opposite is suggesting that we have multi-year budgets in this province, that's something that I wouldn't impose on our public servants. Government is a moving machine, and different departments encounter different initiatives where we can find savings. They encounter different challenges on a month-to-month and a year-to-year basis, but I have absolute confidence in the CEOs that are in place in all of our health authorities, and I'm glad the Member is no longer putting forward the draconian measures that he suggested.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying his attrition plan is working. We have heard in multiple Estimates committees that departments are holding positions vacant to achieve attrition targets. This is really just delayed recruitment and not a permanent reduction in the workforce.

I ask the minister: Will he table his attrition plan?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the attrition plan that was put forward by the former administration was very rigid. It was an absolute reduction in the number of individuals working in government. For every 10 that retired, they were only going to hire eight back. We wouldn't impose that, Mr. Speaker, in areas such as nursing, in areas such as correctional officers because it is too rigid.

What we put in place, Mr. Speaker, was a financial target. Departments are meeting those financial targets. In some cases, where somebody retires with a higher salary, they're able to hire two people at a lower salary to do the work, or maybe sometimes one person at a lower salary to do the work. Our departments have met the targets that were put in place.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, how can the minister say his attrition plan is working when his own salary details show a decrease in positions by two? Even if this is just a point in time, as he will probably say, it is the number of people on payroll.

How can he say his attrition plan is working?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, we've reduced the number of positions in core government by

hundreds since we became government in December of 2015. To say that the number of positions has been reduced by two last year, any time you take a picture of a point in time – sometimes we have snowplow operators that have to work extended seasons, sometimes we have other temporary staff that have to work extended seasons.

To take a snapshot in time is not a true reflection, Mr. Speaker, but we have reduced the number of positions in government by a significant number since we've taken office. Financial targets still save money for the taxpayers of this province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Monday in Question Period, regarding the release of the Goss Gilroy report, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour said: "It's been given to the Opposition."

Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister's statement, that he knows the office of the Official Opposition received a copy. I do ask the minister, however: How did he know the office received a copy of the expat survey?

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

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

I would have to say by the questioning that the Member gave to me during that day. He questioned with the information of the report. So I would assume he had a copy of it at the time. I have not received any information that he would have had a copy, other than from what he has said in the House of Assembly.

We put forward – I knew a request had come in for information, but I didn't know who of which had requested the information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the Members, I will not tolerate interruptions. Final warning.

The hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

There were two ATIPPA requests completed concerning the expat survey report. One that we filed, and another that was filed by someone unknown to the Opposition office. The minister said quite clearly to me in response, and I quote: "He has a copy of the report. It was sent to him, I don't know, a month ... ago."

This lines up with the time frame when our office received a copy of the documents. If the minister did not know we received the report, this could be very well be a privacy breach under the ATIPPA legislation.

I ask the minister: How did he know our office received a copy of the expat survey?

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

**MR. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question.

The Member, if he reads further into *Hansard*, I'm sure he'll say that he said he received an ATIPPA request. Then I responded to say: yes, of course, he must have received one based on the questioning.

At the end of the day, I may have misspoke from what he's saying but that's not the case from – I would not have known he had an ATIPPA request in, other than that an ATIPPA request has come in. And, as the Member said, there were two that came in. I had no idea which one of those ATIPPA requests would have been from either party or anyone in particular, other than the fact that the gentleman brought it up in Question Period and said he received it from ATIPPA himself.

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

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

**MR. P. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, I will correct the Member. The initial reference to me receiving the report was made by the Member opposite. It was after that fact that I indicated I received it through ATIPPA.

I took it on the presumption that the minister in saying he had sent it – we had received a copy. I presumed he directed his staff to send it to me, of which I said I hadn't received it; clarified it with the ATIPPA. I would never, never presume that a Minister of the Crown would jeopardize the privacy of individuals by breaching the privacy act. So I would not assume that.

Again, I ask the minister: How did he know I had received a copy, or the Opposition office had received a copy of the report?

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

**MR. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, all I can reiterate is the same point I said before. I have no idea who requests ATIPPA requests when they come forward. I do, however, know that one was received on the website and sent to the website.

The Member spoke about ATIPPA in his questioning on Monday, I think it was. At that point I would have assumed, just like any right-minded person would have assumed, that he would have had a copy from the ATIPPA side. I still to this day don't know for sure if he had one, other than he said it to me himself.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland – no, I'm sorry, for Placentia West - Bellevue.

**MR. DWYER:** I'm better looking than him, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

My question is concerning Grieg aquaculture project in Marystown.

Mr. Speaker, there have been multiple protests from concerned residents in Marystown who

feel shut out of the hiring process. Can the minister responsible update this House on the project and its hiring status?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for a question about growing aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador and making sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the people who are benefiting from this, in particular for this project on the Burin Peninsula.

I am delighted to be able to report to this House that all the employees employed by Grieg in the facilities in the Marystown area are from the Burin Peninsula. I do recognize there are those that have taken the position that they might want to consider employing only from Marystown. I'm sure the hon. Member representing communities such as Lawn and other communities, he would not be asking for those employees to be fired, unless he would like to report that to the House.

With that said, what is very clear to each and every one of us, there are 72 people working on site, plus subcontractors. They're all from the Burin Peninsula.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

**MR. DWYER:** Mr. Speaker, qualified local individuals have submitted applications to Grieg but have been unable to get a status reply or even acknowledgement of their application. Worse still, local residents are frustrated that jobs do not seem to be advertised publicly, and community leaders have been unable to get a meeting or any explanations from the company.

Can the minister explain what is happening?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Very easily, Mr. Speaker.

There is a project that is underway. While there are 72 jobs that are now working in Marystown from the Burin Peninsula, that will grow significantly in the days and weeks and months ahead.

What I'd like to hear from the hon. Member, is he saying, is he supporting this particular initiative, that the only work that should occur in the Marystown facility should be exclusively to workers from Marystown? I'd like for the hon. Member to be able to inform the House of what his position – to consult with me, in the context and spirit of consultation and co-operation, is he saying he would endorse that the only people to work on this project should be from one community? We'd all like to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, I can report to the House that all come from the Burin Peninsula (inaudible).

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

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

**MR. DWYER:** I guess to that, Mr. Speaker, all I can is we would expect anybody that has a significant investment from government to advertise publicly their availability of employment.

Mr. Speaker, area residents have not been able to get any answers and are becoming upset.

How long is the minister going to sit idly by before he will let the people of Marystown know what is happening to the province's \$30-million investment?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for that question.

Because as the Member highlighted, he may recall, he may not, but it was the PC government, the PC administration that offered \$45 million, which we were able to accomplish to lever that investment, to lever this project. While they had \$45 million on the table, we were able to produce a better result from a \$30-million investment. However, with that said, Mr.

Speaker, I will report, there is not one penny of government money that has been disbursed to this company. We are acting on a performance basis first and foremost as per our conditions.

What I have heard – and he will have to take it back to the Members, to his constituents – is he is calling for the employees from Lawn to be fired.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister has been made aware that the RCMP rental property in Postville has been sold and currently there's no place for their officers to stay.

What is the minister doing to ensure a police presence is being maintained in Postville?

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

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

Certainly, when it comes to RCMP presence, it's an issue all over this province. I've heard about issues when it comes to police presence in Labrador.

What I can say as it relates to the specific question, I have not been made aware of the RCMP disposition of any assets, but what I can promise is that I'll certainly look into it today and be able to report back to the Member as soon as possible with whatever information I get.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Thank you very much, Minister.

I also ask the minister: Is this government committed to ensuring that there will be no cuts to the current RCMP service to the Northern Labrador Indigenous communities?

RCMP presence in isolated communities with no road access is crucial to public safety, Mr. Speaker. The only way in and out is by plane or by boat.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety for a quick response, please.

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

What I can say is that I'm happy to report that in this year's budget there's been absolutely no change when it comes to the RCMP budget. And I empathize with the Member, as the Member for Burgeo - La Poile, I have numerous areas that have no access unless it's by boat or by plane, and I understand the concern the Member is putting forward.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

Mr. Speaker, in a recent letter to the Minister of Transportation and Works, the Mayor of St. John's commended him on the replacement of the Waterford Hospital but also noted the historical flooding of the Leary's Brook system. The deputy mayor has also publicly expressed concern about building a new facility on a flood plain.

I ask the minister: Given these and other concerns, how is the proposed site for the new mental health facility chosen, what criteria were used and what analysis was done? And can we get a copy of the relevant assessment reports and documents?

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

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

The process for the review of mental health and addictions service in this province began under

the previous administration and was a truly collaboratively thing generated by a previous leader of the NDP.

The results of that deliberation were very clear from all stakeholders and all users of the mental health and addictions system that the new facility had to be co-located with the tertiary care centre in the province to integrate fully that physical and mental wellness in a holistic approach and go a long way towards removing the stigma that some people feel is associated with mental health and addictions issues. That is why it is co-located on the Health Sciences site.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Speaker, there are many concerns about the location of the new Waterford facility. Concerns about vulnerable people housed there being put in harm's way, concerns that flooding could damage the hospital, MUN facilities like the new core science building, city infrastructure such as the Parkway, homes in the area and the new facility itself.

I ask the minister: Will he revisit the current planned location and consider moving the facility to the north side of the Health Sciences Centre?

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

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

And I thank the hon. Member for the question. In the evaluations of the site, Mr. Speaker, it was noted that in 2014 after Hurricane Igor, water actually came very close to the building, and if you think about the Health Sciences complex, the operating rooms are actually in the basement of that building, along with other critical, critical infrastructure.

So back in 2014, Eastern Health decided to build a berm on the north side of the water issue, and after further investigation, after we heard the



report from Eastern Health and the Department of Health of how they wanted to co-locate this facility, we were able to work with engineers, an extension of the berm on the north side and also right now, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be putting in place a berm on the south side.

As I said to the hon. Member in Estimates, I welcome you to come by and have a view of the presentation as soon as we can (inaudible).

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The Member's time has expired.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party for a quick question, please.

**MS. COFFIN:** Considering historical flooding and the increasing prevalence of 100-year storms, of which we have had two in the last 10 years, what contingency plans and compensation measures does the government have in place should the berms fail and cause the flooding of and damage to hospital facilities, Memorial's facilities, city infrastructure and private homes?

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

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

And I thank the hon. Member. The reality here, Mr. Speaker, is what we're doing is actually protecting every one of those things the Member opposite just mentioned. We're protecting the Health Sciences Centre. The new berms will help protect the core science centre. It'll help protect the assets to the south, on the south side, whether it's the CBC building or residents over around the University Avenue area.

We've been assured that there's no upstream or downstream impacts from the berms, and I welcome further questions from the Member.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

There were major floods in the Bay of Islands in early 2018. The major portion of the work has not been completed due to early winter conditions last year, but the work has started this year. There has been other damage on Route 450 from Mount Moriah to Lark Harbour, which needs to be addressed because of safety concerns.

I ask the minister: Will you ask your staff to have Route 450 reviewed and offer any assistance available to correct these safety concerns?

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, damages from the flood in early 2018 were enormous and it's taking some time to get the work actually done. I think last fall we were able to put a lot of that infrastructure back.

One of the challenges that we have seen, Mr. Speaker, is we're still seeing some failures in infrastructure, underlying infrastructure, subgrade that is still shifting. We're not sure if that's a result of the flood, but it's certainly something we're assessing on a regular basis.

I think just about a week or so ago we saw another slip in an area. It's something that we're monitoring, and our engineering staff is fully aware of the problems.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

Selective memories, no note taking, missing documentation, lowballing of project cost estimates, withholding of risk reports and complete mismanagement has been the ongoing theme of the Muskrat Falls inquiry; yet, a number of the very same individuals involved at the senior levels of this organization are still employed at Nalcor.

I ask the hon. the Minister of Natural Resources: When will you exercise your power as minister, insist on some accountability and instruct the CEO of Nalcor to show these individuals the door?

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

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

I welcome the question from the hon. Member. I'm certainly happy to have independent Members now able to ask questions.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the province have been overwhelmingly concerned and very frustrated about what they're hearing coming out of the Muskrat Falls Project and what they're hearing coming out of the inquiry. Of course, the inquiry is looking at why we are where we are and how did we get here.

This government is very diligent and methodical of trying to get this project under control. We've hired a utility expert in Mr. Marshall; we have a very knowledgeable board of directors. It is Mr. Marshall, the CEO, and the board of directors that determine the team that is required to get this project finished.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, we're at 96 per cent or close on 97 per cent complete. We are finishing stronger and within the budget of June of 2017.

Thank you.

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

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

The Oral Questions time is expended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

### Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

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

The Government Services Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have passed, without amendment, the Estimates of the Department of Transportation and Works, the Department of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, the Public Procurement Agency, Department of Finance, Consolidated Funds Services, Public Service Commission and the Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all committee Members and substitutes for their support and co-operation throughout the process and also all staff members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further reports by standing and select committees?

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** In accordance with the *Auditor General Act* of Newfoundland and Labrador, I hereby table the Atlantic provinces joint follow-up of recommendations to the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

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

WHEREAS many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school-aged children throughout our province who live outside the eastern school district's 1.6 kilometre zone, therefore do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS policy cannot override the safety of our children.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to eliminate the 1.6 kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and in junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

Mr. Speaker, this has been brought forward by a number of Members on this side of the House. It's certainly a critical issue for parents of school-aged children. We've talked about safety, and I think that point has been out there quite a lot. Some of the responses we get talk about courtesy seating on the buses.

So, just from the site here, I want to quote so people know what we're talking about when we talk about courtesy seating. That is "to provide school transportation services to students who reside less than 1.6 kilometers from their zoned neighbourhood school" to use a courtesy seat. "A courtesy seat is defined as any vacant seat which is available after all eligible riders are accommodated, whether or not those eligible students are travelling on the ... bus."

The problem with this – it does help, but very minimally. "Students who are not entitled to busing but who are permitted to occupy vacant seats by these guidelines should be removed from the bus if seats are required for students who are entitled to busing." That's the policy.

You have students there who day to day don't know if they are on the bus or not, in terms of a courtesy seat, and they're removed off the bus according to grade level. You could have two kids on the bus, one can't get on the bus and one is left on the bus.

This is a band-aid – in fact, it's probably not even a band-aid to this problem. People in our districts are crying out for this policy to be eliminated, the 1.6 kilometres, and I think we need to start addressing that. It is a safety concern, and it'll be a sad day in this House if some student should die as a result of this not being implemented.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for a response, please.

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

I appreciate the concerns of the Member and his petition.

Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday from the Member for Mount Pearl North advising this House how much he appreciated jurisdictional scans and he believed in jurisdictional scans. Mr. Speaker, we've done the scan. Obviously, the scan will prove that we are offering the third best policy in the country – the third best policy in the country, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to address any concerns.

I've invited the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island – in their election platform they used a figure of \$3.5 million to address the 1.6 busing policy. I've asked for him to engage with me and bring that over so we can sit down and have a look at it. To date, Mr. Speaker, I have not received that.

I will continue to address any of the concerns that the Members have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Mr. Speaker, the Witless Bay Line, Route 13, is a significant piece of transportation infrastructure.

It's a shorter access from the Trans-Canada Highway to Witless Bay and surrounding region. This roadway plays a major role in the commercial and residential growth of our region.

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to perform upgrades and provide maintenance to this significant piece of infrastructure to ensure safety of drivers and improve flow of traffic on other main roadways to the Southern Shore.

Just in speaking to that, the Witless Bay Line, obviously, is a big area to fix so we can get the tourism. People say they have to come around St. John's to come across the way to go to Bay Bulls, to go as far as Trepassey, go to the UNESCO site in Portugal Cove South. So it's a very big piece of infrastructure.

I'm sure the minister – we've had that discussion in our Estimates – is working on that, and we hope we can bring that forward to our area.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the value of the Witless Bay Line, and I think the Member and I have had conversations about it. We actually recognize the Witless Bay Line potentially as a trade route for international trade, when you look at the assets that have been built, the harbour assets in Bay Bulls. Right now we're pursuing some upgrades or some support from the federal government on Witless Bay Line just to that measure in recognizing the trade benefits

that this highway, or this road will play in the future.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for his petition.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

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

I stand again on a petition on behalf of the people on the West Coast of the province about the hospital in Corner Brook, and I'll just read it again.

WHEREAS the successful proponents for the new hospital in Corner Brook are scheduled to be announced this spring with construction anticipated to begin in the fall and, as this is estimated to be a four-year construction period, and as there are experienced local tradespeople and labourers in the area;

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, petition the hon. House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to encourage companies that are awarded the contracts for the new hospital to hire local tradespeople and labourers, at no extra cost to the taxpayers, so that they can work in their own area, support the local economy and be able to return home to their families every evening.

Mr. Speaker, I present this again today. There are people here from all over Curling, Corner Brook, Mount Moriah, and all over the Humber - Bay of Islands area. This is one from the Bay of Islands. We're urging government to work with the local contractors and whoever the main contractor is to try to get some local people. If you go through the union hall, in the union contract they have a local preference in that. There will be people from all over the province working on that, and that's fine, but we have to try to make sure that we work with the main contractor, the local contractors to hire local where we can for the skilled labour that's available.

I was speaking to the minister a few days ago and the minister mentioned that I made a comment that they're going to get 90 per cent. What I meant to say, if I did make the statement, was that the minister was trying to urge to work up to 90 per cent as they do in the long-term care. So I just want to clarify that for the minister. That the minister didn't say there will be 90 per cent, but that he'd be working towards 90 per cent for that.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important to me, it's very important to the workers. I made a commitment during the last provincial election that I would raise this in the House of Assembly at every opportunity that I can, and I'm fulfilling that commitment. I'm willing to work with the government, work with the companies themselves and the unions to ensure that we do what we can to hire local people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday I had the opportunity, along with my parliamentary secretary for the department, to sit down with Trades NL and have a discussion around this very subject. I can assure the Member opposite, and I can assure anybody in this province, that when we look at what will actually be the largest public infrastructure project ever on the West Coast of this province, we will make sure and we will do our utmost to encourage contractors, subcontractors to be hiring Newfoundland and Labrador workers.

We're going to see tremendous benefit from this, more than a half-a-billion-dollar project to the West Coast of our province; workers, restaurants, retail business. This is going to bring enormous opportunities to the West Coast of this province, and we look forward to working with contractors and employees alike to make sure that we maximize our benefit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

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

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

WHEREAS many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school-aged children throughout our province who live inside the eastern school district's 1.6 kilometre zone, therefore not qualified for busing; and

WHEREAS the policy cannot override the safety of our children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to eliminate the 1.6 kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and in junior and senior highs where school safety is a primary concern.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second time today this has been presented, and the minister, who I have ultimate respect for, no doubt got up and read back the bureaucratic answer is that we've done a jurisdictional scan – which is the norm, to look at it. It says we're doing the third best in the country, but in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to the safety of our children, we should strive to be the best and then beyond the best.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** No other geographical makeup in this country has what we have in Newfoundland and Labrador with the winding roads, with the isolated areas, with the dramatic increase in traffic because of our economy over the last decade, because of that. The fact that we have such a vast and spread out geographic location here. The fact that we have many kilometres that people must travel on. The fact that in Newfoundland and Labrador schools in some areas are overpopulated in growth areas, and it becomes a challenge just even getting on parking lots.

In other areas, in rural areas, there are issues around no shoulders. There are issues around adequate snow clearing, and that all has an impact. The McKinsey report had noted a number of years ago when it looked at the busing policy here that we should strive to be the best when it's about providing safe access to and from schools for the students of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, as we talk about this, we need to strive to get to a point where we've already talked to administrators and providers and it would be a minimal cost, and I know we're not talking about increasing the budget. We're talking about reassigning monies that are already allocated.

The \$75 million for busing in this province, a part of that be reassigned in a better approach to ensuring that all students get to school and back from school in a safe manner. That also helps, from an economic point of view that mothers or fathers can ensure themselves at work and that grandparents are not stressed by having to be on the roads in times when they don't need to be because we know their kids will be safely getting to and from school because we provide proper busing.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll have an opportunity to speak to this again, but jurisdictional scans mean nothing. Safety of our children in Newfoundland and Labrador should be the primary objective here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I say kudos to the Opposition House Leader for his timing there. That was superb.

Mr. Speaker, normally today we would be calling a private Member's resolution, but with leave of the House we are able to dispense with that and move ahead with regular business.

At this time, I would ask leave of Members opposite to proceed with regular business on the Order Paper.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Leave has been granted.

Please proceed.

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

At this time, I would call from the Order Paper, Motion 6, the Loan Act.

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader, that the Loan Act be now read a second time.

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

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

I give notice that I will on tomorrow move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole – sorry, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It's okay.

**MR. OSBORNE:** You'd think I'd know this job, wouldn't you.

Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider certain resolutions and a bill relating to the raising of money by way of loan by the province.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried without enthusiasm.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now debating the related resolution to Bill 3.

### Resolution

*“Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

*“That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the Province a sum of money not exceeding \$1,200,000,000.”*

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

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

Mr. Chair, this legislation, if passed, will give government the authority to borrow – I hate to say it's an annual occurrence because it's not. In fact, Members of the House who were here in

2017 would recall that we did not bring a loan act forward in 2017. We do not always need one, and the reason for that can vary. There are a number of different reasons why in certain years we need to borrow and in certain years we don't need to borrow.

In the case of 2017, government had borrowing authority remaining from 2016 from the \$3.4 billion that was approved with the *Loan Act, 2016*, and felt that would be sufficient to cover borrowing needs. So there was no need for a loan act in 2017. However, if we look at previous years, for example, 2014 we had a loan act and borrowed – 2015, 2016, '17 and again in '19.

Mr. Chair, the point that I'm making is this is routine legislation; however, it's one that we wish we didn't have to do. Hopefully, if government, and through all Members of the House of Assembly through collaboration, are able to stay on target and return to surplus in 2022-23, we won't need to borrow in the subsequent year.

Mr. Chair, the loan act is required when borrowing as it gives us the needed permission to borrow. In all of the years that I listed above, we had to borrow to cover portions of the cost of operating services that we provide to the people of the province.

In 2014, the loan act was for \$600 million. A year later, by 2015 the loan act was \$2 billion. Mr. Chair, not only did government borrow the \$2 billion in 2015, but we had to amend the *Loan Act, 2015* for an additional \$400 million, and in 2016 the borrowing capacity had to increase to \$3.4 billion. Just to give some indication as to the position government was in in 2015, that was – I believe, Mr. Chair, to my recollection – the largest borrowing authority this province had ever undertaken.

Mr. Chair, there's a lot I could say about our borrowing and how it's increased during the period from 2014 to 2016, but I believe the numbers speak for themselves. So instead, we'll look at the future.

*Budget 2018*, we forecasted gross borrowing of \$1.45 billion. We didn't actually need to borrow that amount. Borrowing in 2018-19 was actually

only \$1.425 billion. I say only, Mr. Chair, it's still considerably larger than we'd like to see. Obviously, we, as Members of the Legislature, need to focus on returning to surplus.

Mr. Chair, our borrowing needs for 2018-19 were lower than anticipated. We were able to pre-borrow \$175 million to go against the 2019-20 spending needs. For 2019, borrowing will be at \$1.2 billion which is lower than we projected a year ago that we would need to borrow, and that is in large part due to the cash we're receiving from the Atlantic Accord. We put ourselves in a position where net new borrowing is projected to decrease each year from now until 2022-23.

Mr. Chair, this loan act is to provide the government with long-term borrowing authority of \$1.2 billion to meet the 2019-2020 requirements as identified in *Budget 2019*. This amount covers our borrowing needs with an adequate margin of flexibility. A portion of this borrowing authority could also be used to meet the 2020-21 Interim Supply requirements, provided there are no adverse changes to our financial outlook.

Mr. Chair, we continue to strive toward our return to surplus so that we can continue to reduce our borrowing needs. Our focus is on stability and discipline and fiscal management as we remain focused on this goal. Addressing the debt remains a significant area of focus so that we can divert money back to where it should be spent, on health care, education and other services.

Mr. Chair, I did point out when I spoke a couple of days ago, that in the '70s education was the highest spend in the province. That was replaced by health care, and education was the second highest. In 2015-16, the debt had gotten to such a range that servicing the debt became the second highest spend in the province.

Sometimes Members opposite ask why spending seems like it's increasing in the province. There are a number of reasons. As I've pointed out previously, one of them is the payout of severance, which last year was approximately \$250 million. One of it is 100 per cent fully recoverable funds from the federal government, but one of the largest reasons is the cost of

servicing our debt; the fact that this province, because of the fiscal crisis we found the province in in late 2015-2016 and the fact we had to borrow over \$3 billion, the fact that we have Muskrat Falls and Nalcor.

We've had to continuously borrow money for Nalcor, Mr. Chair. The cost of servicing the debt continues to increase. The cost of servicing the debt is the second highest spend in the province.

Mr. Chair, unlike in the private sector, in the public sector severance is an earned benefit that continues to accrue each year, or continued to accrue each year, leading to a significant and growing financial liability. Through collective agreements that we've reached with NAPE, CUPE, the NLTA and the Registered Nurses' Union to pay out severance to employees that had accrued to the point of the collective agreement, we were able to eliminate that long-term liability from government's books.

We had to borrow last year to pay out severance. We had to borrow again this year to pay out severance. This ensures that these employees receive what they have earned and it also ensures that we end the ongoing severance liability in future years. To date, Mr. Chair, we have over \$250 million paid out in severance payments. Severance payments will continue in 2019-20 with CUPE, the NLTA and the Registered Nurses' Union.

The elimination of this severance is something that past governments had tried to achieve. It's something the federal government have undertaken and recognized, and it's something that was so important that in other provinces they've done the same thing. In fact, in Nova Scotia they've actually put legislation in place in order to eliminate severance.

Mr. Chair, borrowing isn't only about severance. It's also about giving us the ability to support programs and program delivery, such as infrastructure across all departments. I hope that I've laid out today why we need to borrow and why we hope that in the near future we can continue – by continuing to reduce our borrowing requirements, that we won't have to borrow in 2023.



We've committed to the public to right the ship and to get the province's finances back on track. It remains my primary focus as the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board. It remains the primary focus of all Members on this side of the Legislature.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will welcome debate.

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

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

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

A little bit of a rush, I was speaking to my colleague there.

Mr. Chair, it is indeed a privilege to get up here again today, and as I always say, to represent the District of Cape St. Francis and the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

Mr. Chair, we're after having an interesting debate here the last number of days, and it's interesting to talk to the general public. I believe this election this time was – when we were knocking on doors and we had conversations, and people are after looking at what's after happening, I think people are a little bit excited and maybe saying this may be a good thing. That's what people are looking at, it's a good thing that everybody is going to have a voice and everybody is going to have a say, because that's what it seems like.

To get to the point that we had an election, people were very disappointed. They were disappointed, and I'm not going to blame one side, I'm not going to blame the other side, but I guess they were disappointed in the whole process. They were disappointed that there was a budget called and it never got a chance to get debated. They were disappointed that it was a snap election called. They were disappointed in the way the economy is running. They were disappointed in a lot of different ways.

The people of the province had a chance to speak, and they spoke. They gave us all a speech, really. They told us what they wanted. They wanted co-operation. They wanted the

people – and listen, you can say what you want. I'm sure that every Member here in this Legislature, we're all here for the right reasons. I hope we are. I hope we're here to represent our province, and hopefully we're here to make sure that the future of this province is bright and we're here for people that are vulnerable in our society and people that really need our help.

So I'm not here this day to criticize government. I'm here to say, listen, we got a job to do and we got to do it. The people of the province have spoken. They looked for a new approach, and they expect us to be in here and look for a new approach. We have an obligation to them to show a new approach.

Mr. Chair, they want Opposition to work with government, but they want government to listen to the Opposition also. They want to listen to our ideas, and not only the Official Opposition, I'm sure the Third Party and the independents behind, everybody. When you talk minority government to people, people say that means that everybody's got a voice. So that's the voice we're hoping that people are going to listen to.

I know the Minister of Finance got up and he's talking about cost and added cost. I think yesterday he said something like a couple of hundred million dollars they've added to government, and his door is open and everything else and that we can go over. Well, we made some suggestions, and the suggestions we made were from people that we – when I knocked on doors. People talked to me about these eight things that we mentioned too, and I'm going to go over them now. I'm going to say, yes, sometimes there is a cost to it.

I'm sure if we went – and we're all doing Estimates right now. If you looked at the line to line items in Estimates, I'm sure government and government officials – government has the ability to make changes because they know the numbers. They have officials working in their departments who can look at these numbers and say, well, we can adjust this. We've got money in for that, maybe we can let that go. That's the way a budget works, and that's how things work in the province.

We talked about what we heard at the doorsteps, what we heard people tell us. I'm going to go

through these now in a brief little way. People talked about the levy. They talked to me about: Kevin, it's absolutely crazy that we have to pay a tax just to live in this province. That's what they thought and that's what they said. Why are we paying a tax to live here? Sure, it's just as well – let's move away and not pay that tax. But I tell them, listen, I'm never going to move away. I think it's the greatest province in Canada and I think it's a great place to live. People said this levy is a tax for us just to live here.

Even the government committee that they set up said it's really aggressive. People don't want it. If you talk to somebody who's coming here and they look at taxes, they look at recreation areas, they look at education, they look at health care, but the cost of living here, to pay a tax just to live here in this province. So we suggested that maybe that would be a good way to encourage people to come. Maybe that would be a good way for people to stay. If we can encourage people to come and we can encourage people to stay, we'll get more money from taxes and that will build on our revenues. So that's the reason for saying eliminate this.

We just put a bill through the House here now and we talked about tax on insurance, and insurance on cars and vehicles and we're going to eliminate that. We also need tax on our homes. Again, we talked about a lot of people yesterday. I know I got up yesterday and I spoke about my neighbour who is 82 years old and on a fixed income and what that tax did to him.

The removal of a tax on a home. The worst thing you can hear if you're in a small community in Newfoundland and Labrador is about a fire in a home. The very first question that a person will ask – do you know the first question they'll ask? Do they have insurance? If they got insurance, it's a relief. Oh my God, good, I'm glad they got insurance. Do you know what? If they don't have insurance, what do you think? That poor individual. How are they going to survive? How are they going to get by?

Now, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I can tell you right now, in my district over the years, and my father was a big part of this, we had two real disasters. There were lives lost. My dad went and he fundraised. He did everything

he could and built them new homes. They never had insurance, but that happens.

Like I said, just think about it. When you have a fire in a community, it's the first thing you ask. So home insurance is important. If we take the tax off and that means that 20 per cent or 15 per cent more people insure their homes, that's a great thing. That's not a bad thing, and it will help down the road.

I look at this, and I look at the families in Newfoundland and Labrador. I grew up in a community and it always amazed me. I remember going around with one of the former members before me, Mr. Jack Byrne, and we were knocking on doors one day. We went to Mr. and Mrs. Houlihan's house in Flatrock, and we were there too long and I got mad with Jack. I said: Jack, b'y, we're in here too long. He said: Kevin, don't worry about it, they got 18 children. The missus, she'll be talking to everyone of them today, so we don't need to go to any of their houses.

Back then, people had – a regular house, I'd say, it was five or six children. Today, families can't afford no more than one. We have to do something in this province to – my son and my daughter have one. I have one grandchild from each one of them. I'd like to have 10 from each one of them, but I know that's not possible.

We have to encourage our young people to stay in this province. An affordable child care program, maybe this will encourage people to stay in our province, maybe it will encourage our workforce – we need people in our workforce, and maybe we'll increase our population. I say to the Minister of Finance, that's not \$200 million. Down the road, we need to increase the people living here.

Someone said here the other day in a report that we could be as low as 470,000 people by 2030. These are options we brought, and these are not options that we said: Put it in your budget today; put it in your budget. But consider these.

We looked at medical transportation, another thing. We look all around this province – again, I tell you, I always say it and I'll keep on saying it, we're so fortunate to live with people who are so caring. I told you a week earlier about a

fundraiser we did for a young guy down here and raised \$14,000. In a lot of cases, when it comes to medical transportation and stuff, it's the people of the province who come together to help with the cost to a family.

It could be a child going away, it could be anyone. It could be a loved one. It could be a grandparent. It could be anyone who needs it, but medical transportation – we want people to stay happy. We want people to stay healthy. We don't want them to miss their appointments. That's a savings, again, to the health care system.

I tell you, I was really surprised by the next one I'm going to talk a little bit about, is insulin pumps. Now, I am a type 2 diabetic. I only found out about it five or six years ago, and I didn't realize how important insulin pumps are until you talk to a person who's on insulin.

Going around knocking on doors, I didn't realize how important this was until you talk to the mom, you talk to the grandmother and you talk to the aunt who has a member in their family who needs an insulin pump. The cost of these insulin pumps are high. You're looking at about \$7,000.

I applaud government. I applaud you. You did the first step, there's no doubt about it. The first step is a great step that anybody who is, right now, getting an insulin pump up to 25, they can continue and they will be paid for, but I think it's important that we get everybody on insulin pumps. Again, I say to the Minister of Finance, it's a savings.

We had four young doctors come into our caucus, they were at your caucus and they were at the NDP's caucus also. They showed us that this investment will save millions and millions and millions of dollars down the road. We'll have a healthier society. Less amputations, less people with strokes.

A big thing with diabetes is your eyesight. Less operations to keep your eyesight and less hospital visits. So it's an investment, and that's why we put that in there on the insulin pumps.

I listened to the Minister of Education today talk about the 1.6, and I'll say to him – I've been

around for 11 years and I was on that side of the House, I'm on this side of the House now and the petition was always put back and forth on that, okay. I seriously believe this a policy – perhaps we could bring it in as a pilot. Bring it in as a pilot in some areas and just pick a couple of areas where it's really hard, like, with roads.

My colleague from Conception Bay East - Bell Island today got up and said all the reasons why, like, the winding roads. The one reason I look at, the biggest thing is probably our climate. We don't know what's happening from one day to the other.

If you go down in Torbay, for example, they have to walk 1.6 kilometres and go up over the north side hill on a slippery day. I can't do it, so how do we expect children in grade kindergarten to grade six take that walk to Juniper Ridge every day? I just think it's something we really have to look at.

As time has changed over the years, I think safety has to be number one. Now, maybe there'll be areas where there are sidewalks, where we won't need to – let's look at the whole thing. I'm sure if we work together we can find a solution for areas that are really in desperate need for this, and that's something we should be doing.

Mr. Chair, my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor brought up the other day and talked about the dignity of dying and how important it is to have a place for a family, and not only the family, for that individual to die with dignity. I'll go back to when my mom was passing away, the one thing she said to me was: let me die with my dignity. And that's all we're asking for here.

I applaud government for going to Grand Falls. They went to Grand Falls during the election and made a promise. Let me tell you something right now, that's a promise I'm hoping you're going to keep, because our loved ones, everyone in this House, everyone in Newfoundland should be able to die with dignity. I'm not sure what the cost was on that; I'm not sure. Again, I'll say to the Minister of Finance, you can't put a cost on that either. That's not increasing the budget. I'm sure if we look at the line items again, you'll be able to find something on this.

Mr. Chair, the people of the province spoke to us as we knocked on their doors. They gave us what they were looking for. I could stand here today and I could talk to the Minister of Transportation and get up here and tell him all the needs that I need in my District of Cape St. Francis, all the needs with roadwork down in my district, and I'm sure there would be millions of dollars to spend. I could talk to the Minister of Health and tell him about all the needs that everybody wants. I'd like to see some kind of an intake or something down in Torbay. I'd like to see that, but I'm realistic.

These asks that we ask for, we thought about it. This wasn't just thrown on a piece of paper and say here, look, give it to the Premier and let him have a look at this. These were thought out. This is what we heard from the people at the door.

When I talk about child care, I'm serious about child care. I want to see our population grow. I want to see families, in particular young people, be able to work. In a lot of cases, if you have two or three children and your job is \$12 an hour or \$13 an hour, guess what? It's better off for you and your family if you stay home. We can't have young people staying home, we need them in the workforce. So that's the reason why we put that in there.

I ask government to have a look at it, and I hope you will.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It's great to have the opportunity this afternoon to stand and take a few minutes and talk about today's bill. Then, in particular, we'll take some time to talk about *Budget 2019* and its impact on the province and some of the great things that are coming out of this year's budget.

First and foremost, Mr. Chair, like any time you stand here, I want to thank the people of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde for the

opportunity to actually be here and represent them.

Mr. Chair, this afternoon I'm going to take a few minutes to focus on the infrastructure plan and the infrastructure budget as it's presented in this year's budget related to Transportation and Works. I look forward in the coming weeks to having more opportunities to talk about the budget and its effect on my district, but also on the Department of Transportation and Works.

In *Budget 2019*, we're allocating some \$561 million in this province for existing schools, health care facilities, roads and bridges, and justice facilities. These are public infrastructure projects that are extremely important to everybody in the province, no matter where you live, and it's something that we see year after year, a growing need for public infrastructure.

Mr. Chair, this year, for example, we're going to see – we've seen, actually. We've seen the first concrete being poured at Coley's Point Elementary. We're going to see construction on a new school in Gander, Paradise and St. Alban's; new 60-bed, long-term care homes in Gander and Grand Falls; a 20-bed protective care unit at the Hugh Twomey Healthy Centre in Botwood.

Mr. Chair, one of the greatest accomplishments or one of the greatest things we're going to see come out of this year's budget, and it's been a long time coming, a decade, is the new Western Memorial Hospital, or the new Corner Brook hospital. This has been talked about for far too long.

We're just weeks away from an announcement that's going to see this piece of infrastructure – I think I said earlier today – what will be the largest, single, public infrastructure build in the history of the West Coast of this province, approaching some \$600 million. During construction we're going to see, combined with the new long-term care centre in Corner Brook, approximately 4,300 person-years of employment and impacts in the economy of some \$500 million.

One of the things we've talked about a lot here in this House recently and in our department is making sure that we get all of the benefits, or as

many benefits as possible out of this project for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Whether it's our subcontractors, whether it's our workers and local businesses. We're going to see tremendous impact on the West Coast of the province. Everything from retail to restaurants, to all of the above when you look at the opportunities, the infusion of some \$500 million, \$600 million is going to have on that region.

We talk about encouraging companies, or contractors and subcontractors to hire Newfoundland and Labrador workers, and that's something we've been doing. We've been working with Trades NL. Just this past Monday, I had the opportunity to sit down with Trades NL and have a conversation about how we create an environment where companies look to Newfoundland and Labrador workers first. This benefits all of us.

Every single time that we can keep a Newfoundlander or a Labradorian home working in this province, we all benefit. We benefit from the tax dollars that are derived from their income, and, Mr. Chair, we also benefit from their impact on the economy and where they're spending their money, because we all know people spend their money primarily at home.

One of the things we did very early in this project, last fall, when we selected the two proponents that would actually be competing for the new Corner Brook hospital is we hosted a business-to-business session in Corner Brook, and it was extremely successful. Over 80 companies, 80 subcontractors from this province actually showed up in Corner Brook that day to have an opportunity to meet the main contractors that will be building this \$600-million facility. We gave them the opportunity to introduce themselves to the companies building this building so that these companies could know what's available here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, if our subcontractors and contractors are working, that means their employees, who are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, are working. That's very important to us, Mr. Chair. As we get closer to the announcement of the successful proponent for the new Corner Brook hospital, we will make sure that we make every

effort to ensure that it's Newfoundland and Labrador workers on these jobs.

The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands has made this a mission of his, and I applaud him for that and the work he's done around this file. I can assure him, and every other Member of this House, that one thing we will do is make sure that every opportunity that we can help afford to Newfoundland and Labrador workers will happen.

At the end of these projects, it's also important as well, Mr. Chair, because we talk about the construction phase of hospitals and long-term care centres, after the construction is the asset. Let's not lose sight of the valuable asset that will be in Corner Brook when this new acute care hospital is complete.

We're going to see cancer care on the West Coast of this province for the first time. I know it's something the MHAs for the West Coast have been fighting for, for a long time, and it's very important that these assets are going to be there for the people of the West Coast. We're going to see new jobs in Corner Brook. Because one thing our Premier has been very clear on, even though we're using a different method of building this building through design, finance, build and maintain, the employees inside these doors, the employees inside the walls will be public sector employees, Mr. Chair, which is a very important part of how we move forward with these type of projects.

Mr. Chair, something we were able to announce just a short few weeks ago was the replacement of Her Majesty's Penitentiary. When you think about that facility and the impact it has on our province, it is long, long overdue, but it's a very important piece of infrastructure.

There is money allocated this year in the budget to get the planning for that facility started. We're about 30 to 36 months out from actual construction. If you look at the projects we've done, whether it's the Corner Brook acute care facility or the Central long-term care, it takes about 30 to 36 months for planning. This is a very important part as we move forward, a new penitentiary.

I think the other achievement that we've seen in infrastructure, and it's in this year's budget, is the replacement of the Victoria era, the Waterford, the mental health facility. Mr. Chair, this has been talked about far, far too long. We've now found a way to actually do that, and by doing it, we're listening. We're listening to the community, we're listening to the people who are affected most by this.

Remember, people with mental health and addictions issues are known to all of us. They're our families, they're our friends. For somebody to think that mental health and addictions issues aren't something that affects them, well, they better look around quite quickly because one in four people in this province are, at some point in time, affected by these issues.

We heard quite clearly that that community wanted their facility attached to the Health Sciences Centre, and we've found a way to do this. People stand up and ask questions around how we're going to do it, building berms and why we're doing it in that manner. We saw back in 2014, there were challenges at the Health Sciences Centre around Hurricane Igor. Back then, long before there was ever any conversation about building a new mental health facility at that site, there were conversations for a need for a berm to hold back the circumstance we find ourselves in in today's climate.

If you think about the Health Sciences Centre just for a minute, all the operating rooms, the very, very expensive equipment and importance of that section in that hospital is located in the basement, along with many other services. We see the construction of a new \$300-million core sciences building at Memorial.

We see the footprint of the Health Sciences Centre continuously growing, Mr. Chair. That's planned for many more years to come to see growth there, and we found a way to do it. First, with the north berm. Now we're going to add an extra layer of protection with the south berm.

We're not only protecting the new mental health and addictions facility, we're also protecting the operating rooms and the valuable infrastructure that's already existing on that site and the infrastructure that's being built on that site today. There's construction on that site. There's

expansion happening as we speak. It also helps protect assets, like I mentioned a moment ago, the new core sciences building.

Mr. Chair, I notice my time is running out, but before I conclude, I just want to take a minute to talk about the investments this year we're making in road infrastructure. Last year, we invested \$152 million into road infrastructure in this province. This year, we'll be even investing a little bit more. This year, we'll be investing \$165 million into road infrastructure in this province; significant investment.

We realize there are many challenges with road infrastructure in this province, some 10,000 kilometres; by far the most kilometres per capita of any province in Canada. There are many challenges when it comes to that. We're addressing them as efficiently and as quickly as we can and getting the best value for money.

Mr. Chair, I notice my time is expired. So I look forward to having an opportunity further in debate to have some more remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

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

I'll just stand for a few minutes to have a few words on that. I'm encouraged by the minister's remarks that they'll work and do whatever they can for the local people of the province at the hospital in Corner Brook.

Mr. Chair, I just want to go back a nice ways on the hospital. We're going back, probably, to about to 2007 when the first announcement was made on the hospital but never materialized. We were in Opposition, and the premier at the time was meeting the Opposition and myself, and we raised a lot of questions. I know the Member for Corner Brook was helping us a lot also in bringing this to attention for the hospital in Corner Brook.

Mr. Chair, we stood up day after day after day to fight for the hospital and the long-term care in Corner Brook. We went through many, many, many stumbling blocks for the hospital in

Corner Brook. With the radiation unit, that was one of the commitments we wanted in Corner Brook. So people from the West Coast now had an option to stay in Corner Brook so they wouldn't have to drive to St. John's.

We encountered many obstacles, and it wasn't just me, but I know I was their frontrunner because I asked many questions in the House. I was on *Open Line*. I disputed every, single, negative remark about it from the government at the time. I still remember, one of them was you couldn't have a single bunker alone. You couldn't have a single bunker.

So, Mr. Chair, we went off and we found places with single bunkers, like Sydney, Nova Scotia and PEI. Sudbury has a satellite – Sudbury, Ontario. We went all around the globe and we found single bunkers. So we eliminated that excuse.

Then they were talking about the isotopes couldn't be transferred. They were too dangerous to bring across the Island, and we disputed that. I think, if I remember correctly, in London, Ontario they were sending it 1,500 kilometres to the University of Saskatchewan. If I remember correctly, 1,500 kilometres, three times a week, flying them out. So we disputed that false information that was put out there.

I know with the long-term care beds – we're going to have the rehabilitation unit in the long-term care also. It's going to make major improvements for the seniors in the area, and all of Western Newfoundland.

Also, I remember back in the time when we were in the Opposition there was a major union rally outside when they were talking about P3s, that it was going to be privatized and there'd be people coming in just for profit. We, as the Opposition then, made a commitment that we're going to have unionized workers, public sector workers at the long-term care in the hospital.

I remember walking out on the steps of Confederation Building in front of 300 to 400 union workers, and I stood up and I made that comment. Some people didn't believe me; a lot did. We walked out on behalf of the Opposition – the Premier was the Leader of the Opposition at the time – and we stated we would hire public

sector workers, and public sector workers will be working in the hospital in long-term care. The government has kept that commitment, and I have no doubt that with the expertise of the public sector workers, that the patients will receive excellent care in the long-term care and the hospital.

I always said, the happiest day I'm going to have as a politician in my term is the first patient from Western Newfoundland, whoever it may be, when they can stay in Corner Brook and have radiation treatment in Corner Brook instead of having to come to St. John's with that dreaded disease and not have family around and not be home to at least have a bit of comfort through that disease. That's going to be a proud moment for me as a person from the West Coast.

I know at the time, the person who really pushed for the radiation unit, and I got to give him credit, was the former premier and Minister of Finance, Tom Marshall. I said it before and I'll say it again, I remember disputing all the information that was being put out by the government at the time and meeting Tom Marshall many times behind the curtain.

I remember this time when they were talking about single bunker units. I gave Tom Marshall, behind that curtain, two names. One was a person from PEI and one person from Sydney, Nova Scotia, who ran the single bunker units. To that man's credit – and I always said this, it took a long while to get him there, but when he got there – Tom Marshall, on a Saturday or Sunday morning, phoned those people. They were shocked that the premier of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador would call them. He called them. They told him, yes, they started off with a single bunker unit and now they're up to two because of the demand.

Tom Marshall, to his credit, came back with his government, the PC government at the time, and put out a \$500,000 study which proved that a radiation unit can be put in Corner Brook. I just wanted to recognize that, because he stood against a lot of information that his own party had and gave out. I got to give Tom Marshall credit for that and I just want to recognize him, and I always did. Then when the current Premier took over, he committed to follow through with

the radiation unit, as he did in the Opposition, and follow through with public sector workers.

So, all in all, when people think we don't cooperate, we do. We may not always show it in this House sometimes, we do have a to and fro, but I can assure you many times when it comes to the health of people, we always do work together, and that was a prime example of how we did it.

I also want to talk about Corner Brook Pulp and Paper; the stability at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper with the pensioners and the workers themselves, having their pensions now tied in to the power plant in Deer Lake. A lot of the pensions at the time, some were down to 78 per cent, up to 80, going back and forth. Now it's 100 per cent fully funded.

Once we tied into the power plant, it gave the companies some room to manoeuvre their own funds to make improvements to the mill. The mill is operating now, Mr. Chair, and has a great future. That was a lot of work, and I know the Premier was involved with that. I was involved with that, and I know the Member for Corner Brook was involved with that and a few others were involved. So that's how we all work together, and we do work together.

I just want to speak on Humber - Bay of Islands for a second. I asked a question to the minister today about some roadwork that needs to be done. There was one slip there in Copper Mine Brook. I made the minister aware of it and he's having his staff look at it, that it's dangerous. It is dangerous. It has dropped. It is very, very dangerous. The minister has committed his engineers to go out and have a look to see what we can do. I know it will be done and I know they will have a look at it and I thank the minister for that.

In other areas, there is work being done – that work from 2011, as I said earlier, wasn't completed last year. It wasn't because the contract wasn't let. It wasn't because the department was holding it up, it was because we had an early winter. It was unsafe with the grade and the slide. It was unsafe to even continue to work with the houses below. So on that alone, I explained that to the residents out there, that was just weather conditions.

There is some other work that we're looking at in the John's Beach area. The minister has committed that his staff will look at it and see what they can do. Because a lot of that, I still feel, is part of the flood itself. When you have a small area of less than a kilometre, and you have eight, 10 tractors and the road gets torn up, obviously, when they had to release a lot of ice and clear a lot of culverts and dig up part of the road, that's all part and parcel. I thank the Minister of Transportation and Works for looking at that and seeing what can be done.

Also, and I know a lot of people in this House don't realize it, but one of the major employment opportunities in Humber - Bay of Islands is the fisheries. I'm sure people don't even realize it. Down in Benoit's Cove, in Curling and in Cox's Cove, and all the fishermen on both sides of the bay, it's a major employer.

The fisheries is very important to Humber - Bay of Islands. When you're seeing three plants operating and you see so many fisherpeople working in the district, you realize how important it is to the economy, not just to Humber - Bay of Islands but the whole Corner Brook area. We have to, and I know that everybody is very vigilant of the fisheries and we must work with Ottawa to see what we can do to keep improving the fisheries; great employment opportunities, great secondary opportunities in the fish plant. That is very important to a lot of people in the District of Humber - Bay of Islands.

I see I have 40 seconds left, Mr. Chair. I just want to close and thank the people of Humber - Bay of Islands for their continued support. Like I always said, you don't win an election in 30 days. You win it three or four years prior.

When the people in the District of Humber - Bay of Islands told that to me, as a person who's been around, be yourself, be out on the basketball court coaching and still being – sometimes getting frustrated, hauling your hair out with grades four, five and sixes and we're all having a laugh, I appreciate that. When you can walk your dogs in the morning with your shorts and T-shirt on, everybody expects it. You don't have to put on your suit and tie, they expect it.



Mr. Chair, I just want to thank all the people from the Humber - Bay of Islands. I will have another opportunity to speak again.

Thank you.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess part of my discussion here is about, how do we reframe the discussion around taxation and government spending? I think we need to look at that in that discussion.

It's interesting that Nordic countries have been ranked consistently as the world's best countries to live in. They're fair societies with both high economic productivity and an unequalled quality of life. They also pay a considerable amount on taxes as well.

I'm going to say something now that maybe we don't always think about, but paying taxes is the price I pay, and we pay, for living in a democratic society.

We talk about, and I've heard it here several times, the notion of reducing taxes to put it back into the pockets of people so they can spend. I would agree with that, except in the end – and I've heard here in the same breath, discussions where people: we've got to reduce taxes, we've got to find efficiencies. At the same time, we all need government investment in certain – whether it's health care, roads, busing, you name it.

I like to look at with regard to businesses, anyone setting up shop here. Let's look at it from this point of view. When a person is hiring, we pay for roads. I want a road. I want to be able to drive from one end of the province to the other. I want an airport that I can go to. I want hospitals. I want schools for my children and for my grandchildren. I want these services.

Really, when you look at it, they are incentives for any business or any corporation to come here because it means that's one less thing that should be factored into their business plan. Those incentives, as such, are things that companies will not have to pay for.

We've got a health care plan that's universal. We have hospitals. We have a water system for clean drinking water. We have all those things. That's what taxes pay for.

So it's great to talk about efficiencies and reducing the tax burden, but somewhere along the line the question you have to ask is: What is it that we want, and what are we prepared to cut? I see taxes as an investment in society and, as I said, it's the price I pay for living in this society.

I heard earlier the Minister of Finance talk about the cutting of severance and how other jurisdictions are doing it. This is a good thing when we start looking at numbers, and from a purely numbers point of view. But, in the end, what's the long-term effect on that if we reduce the benefits of the profession to the point where it's no longer an incentive to become a teacher. What's the long-term consequences? What are the costs/ Have we factored that into it?

Teaching is a high pressure profession. There are a lot of intrinsic rewards that come from teaching, from getting feedback from your students and seeing them succeed, but teachers still need to leave. I'll give you a few stats of what we're seeing, and this can be tied directly to spending cuts.

Employee Assistance Program stats indicate a significant increase in the number of teachers accessing counselling supports, from 10 per cent of the total teaching population in 2015-2016 to almost 13 per cent in 2017-2018, and it continues to increase. That's accessing our own Employee Assistance Program.

We also know that personal work stress accounted for 51 per cent of the EAP cases in 2015-2016. That increased to almost 56 per cent in 2017-2018, and 43 per cent of those teachers are off on extended leave or long-term disability due to mental health issues. The average age of people accessing EAP for these reasons is 41, that's lower than last year. So we're seeing an epidemic.

We've had report after report that shows that class size affects the quality of education, but it's also having a detrimental effect on the teachers in the school system; yet, we continue to strip away whatever benefits there are to the

profession. If we're looking at attracting the brightest and the best to professions, we're doing the very opposite in our budget, and our chickens will come home to roost.

It's interesting that a story came out yesterday, it's on several news feeds: "Canadian corporations dodged up to \$11B in taxes in a year." We're talking about making efficiencies; yet, corporations and wealthy Canadians are getting out of paying their fair share. What are we doing about that? Bigger companies seem to be responsible for a bigger chunk of the amount. Small companies, not so much.

To me, when I hear talk about taxes and about the – no one wants to pay taxes. I want to keep money in my pockets but I also want to keep the services that I depend on available. That's road services. That's ferry services. That's education. That's health, you name it. If we want them, we have to be willing to pay for them.

Thank you.

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

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

It's a pleasure to get up again to speak today. Last Wednesday, when I got an opportunity to stand in my place to speak to the budget, I had the opportunity to talk about my position as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and all the good things that are happening within that department. I never really took the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to talk about my district because I ran out of time, unfortunately.

I'd like to take the opportunity today to just stand and give an indication of how the budget has affected my district and, again, to take the opportunity to thank the many people of the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay; a district that I've had the pleasure of growing up in and I've had the opportunity now for a term to represent.

In saying that, Mr. Chair, for those of us in this House of Assembly that are representing constituents in urban districts, it's a lot different when you come from a district like Baie Verte - Green Bay. You take 40 communities that are in

my district – and I think the Minister of TCII had mentioned today in his delivery that he represents a district with over 50 communities. That's a big district, and I'm sure it's a busy district. I have the kilometres on my vehicle which states that I, too, have a large district. Certainly, a great place to live, a great place to work, a great place to raise children, but we have our issues with infrastructure that I deal with on a continued basis.

It's never easy when the province is in the fiscal situation that we are in today. While people are continuing to demand the services, a lot of it today has been patchwork, basically because that's the position that we're in. While that's unfortunate, Mr. Chair, we have to make the best of what we have.

One of the things I am most proud of, Mr. Chair, is the long-awaited Springdale hospital. The Minister of Transportation and Works alluded to it today in his delivery. We've been since, maybe in the early '50s – actually, Springdale has one of two cottage hospitals left in the province. I think the other one is in Fogo Island - Cape Freels. I think they still have a cottage hospital in their district in –

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

**MR. WARR:** Maybe in Brookfield? Certainly, the long-awaited hospital is being replaced. In *Budget 2019*, should it pass, there's \$9.1 million that's been allocated to finish that project. It's a welcomed addition, not only to the community but to the district; and, in particular, the Green Bay side of the district.

I just want to speak briefly to the rural cellular projects. Again, the Minister of TCII alluded to that today and I have to say thank you very much because I've had two communities within my district and a third that's on the fence right now of investing community funds into that project. That was the community of King's Point and the community of Middle Arm, and Burlington has been making phone calls to me lately, Mr. Chair, and they want in on that project as well.

While we've enjoyed the benefits of communication within most of the district, or most of the province, there are a lot of

communities in my district that have absolutely – actually, we have it on the Trans-Canada Highway as well – no way of communication. Certainly, it's not up to par compared to some other places in the province. So I'm happy, and so are the people in my district, to see that rural cellular project come to fruition.

Mr. Chair, I want to talk about fire and emergency services. I had the opportunity last weekend to be joined by my federal counterpart, Scott Simms, who's the MP for my district. We travelled to the community of Coachman's Cove and had the opportunity to share an evening with the wonderful people from Coachman's Cove.

That's a community, Mr. Chair, that I had the opportunity to bring the Minister of Municipal Affairs, fire and emergency services, to that community just before the writ was dropped, to have a look at exactly what condition their department was in. We had expertise from Fire Chief Lorne Head, who is with the Baie Verte fire department.

Mr. Chair, I just wanted to briefly say how disgusting the equipment is. That department is full of mould, it's outdated. These wonderful people, wonderful volunteers who are providing a service, a vital service, Mr. Chair, to our communities, how that was able to get to the condition that it is, I'm not so sure, but I know we're starting to get that rolled out and have a commitment as well from that department to make sure we get suitable equipment put in that community.

While I'm talking about that, Mr. Chair, I have to talk about the community of Little Bay as well. Again, another community within my district and a community that's representing – that fire department is representing four communities. The community of Little Bay, Coffee Cove, St. Patrick's and Beachside.

Mr. Chair, they've taken the opportunity as a fire department – again, under the leadership of Fire Chief Steve Walker – to build, totally on their own, a new fire hall. Right now, an absolutely fabulous piece of work that they've created, only to have a truck that's a, I think, maybe 1980 or '81. We've committed to putting a decently used vehicle into that fire department and we hope that that will alleviate some of their

concerns for the short time in hopes that their application will progress through the system.

Mr. Chair, I want to, again, talk about the fishery. My colleague across the way is always taking the opportunity, as the Fisheries critic, to get up and talk about the fishery. I want to say that we have engagement from time to time on the fishery and we share the same concerns, Mr. Chair. They are concerns about a vital piece of our economy here in Newfoundland, and that is the fishery.

It's great to see crab in my district this year. There's been an abundance of crab, very little soft shell. While the price was up, the price got reduced but brought back up again, Mr. Chair, and we're certainly happy to see that.

Again, my colleague had talked about the mackerel fishery, and I want to talk about the importance of that fishery to my district as well.

As well, Mr. Chair, I want to talk about sealing. We talk about the devastation that the seal population has on our fishery. I have a seal plant actually in my district, in the beautiful community of Fleur de Lys. Right now, Mr. Chair, that seal plant is not operating; or, if it is, in a very small capacity. We had 15 to 20, to 25 people working in that plant last year. Obviously, that's not happening this year. I have it on my radar to again have my discussions with the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources to see what we can do to help out the community of Fleur de Lys.

Mr. Chair, again, I'm not going to get through my notes but I certainly want to take the opportunity to thank the wonderful people from Baie Verte - Green Bay. It's been a pleasure being their MHA and I look forward to serving them in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**MR. PARDY:** Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity.

I, too, would like to thank the wonderful the wonderful people of the District of Bonavista. They've been very supportive, and I'll make every attempt to serve them to the best of my ability.

Starting today, I'd like to focus on the District of Bonavista. Tuesday, it was great to see the repeal of the retail sales tax. I would say to you, if our second biggest expenditure in our provincial budget in 2019 is servicing the debt that is gross. We need to get a handle on that and we need to all work together on making sure to knock that down below education, which we will hold so dear, and probably below every other one that would be there.

I commend the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board. Yesterday he said his door is always open and he asked for efficiencies. I would like to present some efficiencies, and they're from me representing the District of Bonavista – some efficiencies. He would like to have efficiencies from every side. At least I'll do my part representing the District of Bonavista.

The good minister stated yesterday that the taxation rate in 2016, the personal income tax rate was 12 per cent. Nothing different than what the 12 per cent personal income tax rate is for 2016. And I guess he was saying, what's all the noise? I would say to you, there's a much bigger factor than just the personal income tax rate of 12 per cent being the same.

The levy, he said, was ugly. The people of the District of Bonavista were telling me they agree with the Minister of Finance, it is ugly, and I know it wasn't received well at either door, regardless of the need. I would challenge that while the personal income tax rate may remain the same, I would say that it may be, the current government may be responsible for the biggest difference between 2006 and 2016, and I'll share with you my thinking.

While the personal income tax stays the same, if we add 300 new taxes to the residents of the District of Bonavista and expect that they don't see a difference between their personal income tax rate, I would say that would be incorrect. The amount of taxation the people of the District

of Bonavista have undertaken since 2016, it is significant.

Let me add a couple of other things that I would say to you. 2006-2016, I remember the minister of Fisheries and Land Resources on TV at that time, I'm not sure if he was in the same portfolio, but he mentioned that if MUN fees were increased there would be issues. I commend him for that, because as the children left the Bonavista Peninsula to go to university, their tuition fees did not increase, but at the door you will find that the cost of housing on university rose significantly. It was a difference between 2006 and 2016.

The campus renewal fees increased by a significant amount. It seemed like every year they were going up, but the tuition fees did not change. Those two items made a significant difference for the residents who had children going to the university in St. John's.

The personal income tax rate remains the same. I would say to you, the playing field was different.

The challenge of finding some efficiencies. I would say to you in *The Packet* on May 29, a school in Clarendville in an area of which the real estate is fairly good, probably the best on – not probably, I would say the strongest on the Bonavista Peninsula, that school remained vacant for 10 years.

I would say to you, for 10 years on the Bonavista Peninsula in Clarendville, we saw a building, an asset from the government, depreciate before our eyes. In 2019, now they're talking about demolition. They didn't talk about demolition 10 years ago because everyone speculated as to what the property was worth.

I know it's not smooth. There are probably complications with the denomination system, but if somebody said under the guise of efficiency that it takes 10 years to have an agreement with the denominational system to make sure that you have clear title to that property to sell it, they would say that it doesn't take that long.

I remember the news when I. J. Samson became available. I think *The Telegram* might have said

\$2 million for that property. That was in 2016. I think it sold for \$189,000. I would say to you, to qualify that, there might have been some hazardous material that was in there that had a dollar figure that might have complicated it, too.

If we're looking at efficiencies, look at school buildings that become vacated in high-valued areas and maybe we've missed a few million there. I just present two, I'm sure there are more. The school board office in Clarenville would fall under that. So add three that would be there.

I would say in Education that we have thousands of buses that run in our province. With our northern climate, I would say that while those buses run, there are a significant number of days during the winter where the buses do not run. We, as residents of the District of Bonavista, would think that we as taxpayers don't pay for those buses when there are snowstorms and they don't run. Maybe we only pay for 20 per cent of them, the days lost where the buses don't run. Maybe it's 60 per cent we pay for. There may be efficiencies there. If we're talking about looking at the 1.6 busing issue, maybe there might be enough value there within those school days where the buses don't run, that there may be actual savings in that time.

In 2016, the Advanced Education, Skills and Labour office closed. I was in George's Brook - Milton at the time, but I know there was a resident who parked her trailer at the time in front of the doors to try to barricade closing of the office. If we're centralizing offices, sometimes it makes sense.

In Bonavista, we lost seven employees. They report that four of them conducted their work via the Internet, electronically. They didn't need to move from Bonavista to Clarenville in order to do their work if it were electronically. Seven of them; one moved out of Bonavista to Clarenville. I would say to you, four or five of them still travel daily to and from, 2½ hours drive a day to work. I know if we looked at all that travel and the quality of your work, if some said that wasn't some kind of small impact, then I would say it certainly is.

The biggest issue may be the people they served. If they served the most vulnerable population that would be in the District of Bonavista, now

they see one person from that office that travels once every two weeks to come down, with their day full, to conduct a service for the residents of the Bonavista Peninsula. If those people wish to get service outside of that one day every two weeks, they now have to travel the 2½ hours to Clarenville to get to see somebody for a service.

I would say to you, the difference between 2006 and 2016 is different. I didn't do a whole lot of research on efficiencies. I just stated what we would think would be efficiencies on the District of Bonavista.

The office ought not to have closed. There ought to be maybe nothing paid, if the buses do not run, for that expense with taxpayers' money. If a school becomes vacant, I would hope that within one year while the property has its highest value, that we can move that for the betterment of the residents of the province.

So I would say those are some efficiencies, and I would hope that at least they can be noted. If there are inaccuracies in what I stated, I would love to know where the inaccuracies were.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It's certainly a pleasure to stand and speak once again on this bill.

Mr. Chair, it's not often that I stand and speak to Transportation and Works or looking for anything for my area of the woods. Primarily, that's because, of course, I represent Mount Pearl and St. John's, and all the roads in there are taken care of by the municipalities. They do receive multi-year capital, as do all the urban municipalities, for roads, water and sewer that they do receive. When it comes to roads that would be taken care of by Transportation and Works, really, there's not a whole lot that applies to my district, other than the ramps going on and going into and out of Mount Pearl and Southlands. The department does look after those ramps, and on occasion I will have

conversations with the department when it relates to getting the ramps snow cleared or lines painted, or potholes patched and so on.

Actually, I had dealings recently with the department as it relates to the roundabout, which is what I want to really talk about here for a minute. There are two roundabouts, as people may be familiar with, at the top of Ruth Avenue. There's one off Ruth Avenue, you cross over Pitts Memorial. There's a second roundabout going into Galway.

Of course, I've had people raising concern about the fact that the lines haven't been painted in those roundabouts. While it can be confusing to a lot of people at the best of times, we all know that Costco is going to be opening up in Galway in the next week or so and when that happens, look out, it's going to be absolutely crazy.

That's what I want to talk about is the development in Galway and the impact that's going to have for, not just people now in Galway itself, which Galway is part of my district, of course, but also the residents of Mount Pearl and residents throughout the region. The reason for that, Mr. Chair, is when you think about it – and, again, I know there is a lot more to Galway than just Costco, but we all know that when Costco opens in Galway it is going to be absolutely crazy, just the way it is in the east end right now.

Currently, there's only one way to get in there. Well, actually, there are two ways. If you're someone who's commuting, say, from Bay Roberts or whatever, and you decide I want to come into town and I want to go into Costco, you can get into Galway right directly off the Trans-Canada Highway. However, if you're someone who is living in Mount Pearl or any part of St. John's, or Paradise or Conception Bay South and so on, and you want to get into Galway, to Costco or anything else that's going to be built there, the only way you're going to have to get in there, really, is to go up Pitts Memorial Drive and on to those roundabouts to get into Galway.

Now, just think about it for a second. What's going to happen when Costco opens and all we have is that little roundabout and you're going to have people, like I said, from Paradise, CBS and all over St. John's trying to get into Galway on

that one little roundabout? Think about what's going to happen in the roundabout. Think about what's going to happen on those ramps going in there. Think about what's going to happen on Pitts Memorial Drive. I can picture cars now coming down over that ramp and halfway to CBS, blocking off lanes and everything going in there. That's just with Costco alone, not to mention everything else.

The bottom line is, and this is not just about Galway and it's not just about Costco, but the reality of it is, is that Galway itself is going to be a town the size of Gander. It's a town the size of Gander. It's going to be commercial. It's going to be residential. There is residential there now. There's retail there now. There are a couple of buildings in there, and there's going to be industrial and everything. Like I said, it's going to be the size of Gander. We need another way to connect people to get in and out of there.

Really, what is required is going to be some sort of an overpass or probably an underpass, I would suggest, an underpass on the Trans-Canada Highway, somewhere close to where the current entrance is on the other side. As I said, if you're heading eastbound on the Trans-Canada you can go right in, but if you're heading westbound there's no way to get in. Unless you're going to drive all the way to Paddy's Pond and take the ramp and go across the overpass down by Cochrane Pond and come around again, which that's not going to work.

So we need an underpass constructed somewhere on the Trans-Canada Highway to get people in and out of Galway. Not just because of Costco, but for that whole area that's going to be the size of Gander. Again, it's not just about Galway. It's about Mount Pearl, it's about CBS, it's about St. John's and it's about the entire region. So I just want to throw that out there.

I have discussed it briefly with the Minister of Transportation and Works. I'll certainly be discussing it with our federal MP, Seamus O'Regan, as well, to see if there's any opportunity with any federal funding. Certainly, I know government has a five-year Roads Plan. I don't know if that was ever considered to be part of that plan. Probably not.

I don't know if they planned for it or thought about it, but I can tell you it's going to be an issue, and it's not just going to be an issue for me. It's going to be an issue for Members all throughout the region. The Member for Mount Pearl North, the Member for Conception Bay South, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, the Member for Topsail - Paradise, and all the St. John's MHAs are all going to be impacted by this, or their constituents are going to be impacted by it. Whether it be people that are trying to access it, whether it be people that are going to be working in the area. I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works, we really need to look at constructing some sort of an underpass or something on the Trans-Canada to get another way in and out of that area. So I throw that out there.

As I said, it's not often I would be speaking to something like that, or asking for something like that, because for the most part my district is taken care of by the municipalities, but this is a case of, that's something that's going to be needed. I can say for all the people that are going to be using it in the region and the economic benefit it's going to have for the province, and certainly for all the people that are going to be living there, going to be working there, and people are going to be impacted by the traffic who are all paying a lot of taxes to the government, then I don't think it's a big ask. So it's certainly something I would like for the government to consider and it's something that I will be continuing to raise.

I only got a couple of minutes left, Mr. Chair, on the clock. So I'm just going to very quickly – something I've raised a number of times in the House as well, and that's around accessibility for persons with disabilities. I will give full credit to the Minister of Service NL and the Minister of Transportation and Works, I've seen improvements made in a number of the schools. There was a pilot project done to make schools on the Avalon accessible. I've seen some good work done at the hospitals, at St. Clare's and at the Health Sciences. You wouldn't think you would even need to advocate for that to be done, but it wasn't done – only recently, the last two or three years. They did make improvements there. I know there's been a lot of work done, but certainly much more has to be done.

We have lots of public facilities, whether they be schools, health care facilities, AESL offices or motor registration offices and so on all throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. When we're talking about public facilities in particular – it absolutely applies to private facilities as well. They're not getting off the hook, but when we're talking about public facilities, we must ensure they are accessible to all of our citizens.

That doesn't just include having blue zones and signage and so on, it also includes once you park and you get to the door, you need to have the proper mechanisms for opening the door. The doors have to be the proper width; they're going to have washroom facilities there. The doors have to be the proper width, as do the bathroom stalls and everything else.

So I encourage the government to continue the good work they've done to date on improving accessibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse au Clair – L'Anse aux Meadows, sorry.

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It's a beautiful district.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Certainly, my friend across the way, L'Anse au Clair, I get to see it almost from my window on the Great Northern Peninsula, Labrador, the Big Land.

I wanted to follow up from the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, because in Estimates last night he asked a number of questions on accessibility. I'm happy to report that our department is committed to enhancing inclusion for persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.

We've been working with the Disability Policy Office to improve accessibility features in our facilities. Our Visitor Information Centres, those buildings, washrooms and counters are accessible, and ongoing accessibility is a top priority. All our VICs have designated parking

and are accessible from the parking lot with push-button activated doors, and counsellors have been trained.

Our parks in 2018 undertook an accessibility audit tool completed by the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities. The three, year-round park managers have reviewed the audit tool and have all come back with positive feedback. There are initiatives we can work towards completing this season, and the audit tool will help with future planning initiatives.

Our Provincial Historic Sites make every attempt to facilitate the visitor experiences for all travellers to enjoy. Provincial Historic Sites offer several sites and programs that are accessible: the Beothuk Interpretation Centre in Boyd's Cove in the beautiful District of Lewisporte - Twillingate; the Cape Bonavista interpretation centre; Heart's Content Cable Station; and the Newman Wine Vaults are all equipped with accessibility features to aid the visitor experience for travellers requiring those services.

Over the past five years, in partnership with Transportation and Works, the Arts and Culture Centres have undertaken extensive accessibility improvements, St. John's, Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor. Recently, we completed renovation to construct an alternative entry point to the Barbara Barrett Basement Theatre in St. John's, and improvements are ongoing and are considered in future planned works as well.

So it's very important and a very relevant point that the Member opposite had raised.

I want to go back to the Member for Bonavista, when he talked about schools and properties. I want to highlight some areas of success that have happened on the Great Northern Peninsula. We have repurposed a school. It's now the town centre, the former Roncalli high school in Port Saunders. They have basically moved their town hall and their recreation centre, and their fire department all under one roof. They also brought in the Family Resource Centre, the 50-plus club organization there. They've added a youth centre. They're looking to add a Status of Women council there, and other services for the community. This has had a great level of success.

Additionally, when the White Hills Academy was built, there were three former schools that basically came together to create the K to 12 school. One had to be demolished to create the green space, and that was done under our government, for the youth. The other school, the HCC, has just been in partnership with St. Anthony Basin Resources to see that demolished so the land space there would be able to make more affordable housing units, which is right adjacent to the hospital. The pharmacy is just down the road. We have various services in and around that area. So we could look at growing capacity in and around that region. It's through partnerships where we can really make things work and make things happen.

When it comes to supporting small business, because the Leader of the NDP has talked about the importance of supporting small business. Well, I can say that our government has been very supportive of small business in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have the third-lowest small business tax in the country at 3 per cent – something we're very proud of.

When it comes to building capacity, we work with the Minister of Education in particular to make sure that we're adding challenging and educational and innovative supports in schools. We partner with Brilliant Labs so that youth in high schools and elementary schools can participate in coding activity. That's really important, because not every youth that participates in coding will become a software or computer engineer or developer, but they will be challenged to be a problem solver, to look for solutions, to be innovative, to be creative, and it'll help them in their career path as they move forward to capitalize on all the opportunities that Newfoundland and Labrador certainly has.

We have opportunities in all sectors of the economy and all areas of this province. You only have to look at the beautiful District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune and see the incredible and dynamic investment that's taking place in aquaculture and the supply and service. That spinoff is being felt in districts like Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans, Exploits and also Terra Nova and in other areas.

Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune has a tremendous potential for tourism. I've driven down there,



and to see – coming from the Great Northern Peninsula and having gems like Gros Morne National Park, L'Anse aux Meadows UNESCO World Heritage Site and going into Labrador and having Red Bay – three UNESCOs all pocketed in an area – and seeing investment in a new ferry service that also has accessibility improvements and will improve the experience for the visitors for transportation services, for business and for tourism in that area.

I want to highlight that Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, going down to Wreck Cove, they have the fjords that are so beautiful. They are comparable to Gros Morne National Park. We have various areas down there from a bus tour point of view. The communities like François or Rencontre East, these are places that you would want to see – Harbour Breton, and their connection to – I talked about the Newman Wine Vaults and our Provincial Historic Site, they are part of that port story and that history in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Provincial Historic Sites last year had a record-breaking year – or the first time ever, more than 100,000 visitors on site.

If we go around and we look at areas like the beautiful District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, we see a lot of business activity taking place here in this area. We talk about a church that is being converted to make a hotel and beer spa with the craft brewing industry that's taking place.

We also see what's happening in Bay Roberts with new retail outlets, like Pipers being relocated there, festivals and activities. There's a lot happening in that area. I think we're going to be up on a new celebration around Amelia Earhart and its place in history, because Harbour Grace does have a key part in aviation history in this province as well.

We look at the craft brewing industry, like the Baccalieu Brewing Company, and I look forward to having an opportunity to get out there with the Member and talk to the owners because there's so much opportunity all around this province. As the province's Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation Minister, I think it's very important to be engaged and connected and

talk to industry partners, stakeholders, small business, and look for those opportunities.

Our staff are, throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, ready to be connected and help small business grow and take on new innovative opportunities that are out there, and watch our Tourism sector continue to be active and proactive and make sure that we're capitalizing on all those opportunities. That when people come here, they have the best possible visitor experience. That we're making sure we have good wayfinding and touchpoints.

We've done a big investment with the City of St. John's to partner with new signage and wayfinding to help people navigate the city and the key attractions and areas, but not just the city. This is done in partnership with all the suburban towns. So places like Portugal Cove - St. Philip's and Bell Island, I say to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, will benefit from this. They will be able to promote their great tourism assets in the area and also connect people to St. John's. So people are doing more day trips. People will be spending more in the economy.

These are the types of things we're doing. We're also seeing where there would be investment in Torbay and Conception Bay South, because all around the metropolitan area of St. John's – and Mount Pearl as well, we have Admiralty House Museum, which I've been a proud former board member of that museum and their point in telecommunications history, and the *SS Florizel* and what they're doing for the Centre of the Arts and The Annex. It's a great location.

There's lots of opportunity that we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador. As Members, the onus is on us to highlight those opportunities, to work with stakeholders, to work with academia, small business and with our residents to find solutions and move forward.

Budget 2019-20 certainly moves us forward. It takes us onward, and it brings us in a direction that is positive and will lead to new prosperity here in Newfoundland and Labrador. As the youngest Member in this House, I'm very excited to be able to say that.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers, shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province." (Bill 3)

**CLERK (Barnes):** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 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 6 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 6 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 6 inclusive, 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 Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province.

**CHAIR:** Does the long 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 Bill 3 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that 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 the resolution and Bill 3.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 3.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber and Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means.

**MR. REID:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the Province a sum of money not exceeding \$1,200,000,000."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

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

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province, Bill 3, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall

have leave to introduce Bill 3, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province," carried. (Bill 3)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 3)

On motion, Bill 3 read a first time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 3 be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 3)

On motion, Bill 3 read a second time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 3 be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 3 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 3)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 3)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 4, the Budget Speech.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development and the MHA for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

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

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

The Member for Cape St. Francis thinks he represents a beautiful district, and he reminds us every other day, but I'll tell you, I have had the tremendous privilege over the last – on the 25th,

I'm not sure what the date is today, but it'll soon be six years of representing Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

I'm going to talk about some of the changes we've seen in Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair since I was elected on the 25th of June in 2013. I didn't take my seat in the House until November of that year because the House was closed. As a matter of fact, we're finding it kind of warm in here because we don't normally sit in June, Mr. Speaker. I was elected in June and I had to wait until November to take my seat.

When I look around the Legislature, I see a lot of changes in less than six years. I think I see maybe four people, max, on the other side that were here when I came, and there are only three or four on this side. I remind myself all the time of who I work for and who hired me. Yes, you have to be a team player. Yes, those of us who are in departments have to take that responsibility very, very serious and do the best job we can, but, ultimately, we're hired and fired by the people we work for, Mr. Speaker.

It is very humbling, and I talked about that a little bit the other day, when people give of their time to be involved on your campaign, but more humbling when people go behind that ballot box and put their X for you. That's not something you take lightly. I would venture to say that if you did, your career here as a Member of the House of Assembly would not be very long.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have an economics background, but I have a friend that often talks about the first principle of economics is that you allocate money based on need. In Labrador, a land so rich, we're steeped in culture, a land that has contributed to this province so much through Voisey's Bay and continuing to do so, as we see Voisey's going underground now, in Lab West through our iron ore, work happening in my district with Search Minerals, Mr. Speaker, I often say we were weighed in the balance and we were found wanting.

When I put my name on a ballot there were many, many things we didn't have in the district. I spent every weekend driving on gravel roads in the spring and in the fall. That was pretty mucky. If I was flying into Goose Bay, I had 420 kilometres of road that I would stand here

on petitions day after day and talk about my husband telling me to stick to the high points with my vehicle on the road. Some people here probably wouldn't have understood what he meant. That's how 'trenchy' it was. If I flew into Blanc-Sablon after I left the 40-year-old pavement in Red Bay, I was driving the other 200-plus kilometres on very bad road.

Mr. Speaker, when we formed government in 2015, we were not in good shape. We had all of these needs in the district in Labrador, but we thought we had a \$1 billion deficit and it turned out to be \$2.7 billion. We were coming off 12 years of a government – and I'm going to mostly focus on the future but I'm going to glance back.

Some people say stop talking about the past, you're now in government, govern and move forward. Yes, that's true. There's a reason why our windshield, as I often say, is bigger than our rear-view mirror because we are moving ahead but sometimes you have to glance back in that rear-view mirror. You have to look to the past and you have to learn from it.

We had 12 years of rule by a PC administration, Mr. Speaker, where we really didn't see any benefit of that in Labrador; \$25 billion in oil, the most ever in our history.

We don't hear as much about Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, but *Hansard* is a wonderful thing. *Hansard* records every word that comes out of our mouth. It's a sobering thing. It's a responsible thing that comes out of our mouth, Mr. Speaker, forever, I guess, that's recorded somewhere.

*Hansard* will show that I was on my feet many, many, many times in this House opposing Muskrat Falls. I had big concern that the Joint Review Panel, who was put together to see if this was the least-cost option for the province, didn't get to finish their review. I had concerns that the UARB in Nova Scotia was sizing things up to see if it was the best deal for them. We had that billion-dollar cable going to Nova Scotia; yet, our own PUB did not have that luxury, Mr. Speaker.

We had a lot of concerns as a province of 500,000 people in how we would pay for this \$6.6 billion, which turned out to be more than

double, Mr. Speaker. I represented a district – this was in our backyard practically. I had people who were trying to get work there, that couldn't get work. We were seeing no benefits and we had a lot of concerns.

The Liberal Opposition at that time, Mr. Speaker, led the longest filibuster in history. We were not happy with that. So all of a sudden we formed government, and the Minister of Natural Resources will know that myself and my colleague, Randy Edmunds, and others at the time, we thought we could stop that. We thought the province can't afford it, and how are we going to pay for this? There are so many things we need.

Mr. Speaker, by the time we did form government – and I've had to answer those questions many times to people that I represent in Labrador. We had passed the point of no return, Mr. Speaker. We had the \$5-billion loan guarantee in Ottawa, that if we defaulted, any benefits from the project would have accrued to the Government of Canada.

We had, I think it was, five large pieces being customized, built around the world for the lower generating station. The cable I talked about for Nova Scotia was already built. The subsea cable across the Strait of Belle Isle was already done. So all we had to do was try to find a way to manage our way through that and, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, 10 years down the road or so we'll see some benefit from that.

The only reason I reference Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, is day after day after day I sit here, and I guess I am one of the handful that was around the longest right now in this Legislature, and people talk about the things we did as a government. People will never forget *Budget 2016*, talking about the bills, talking about the taxes. Did we want to do that, Mr. Speaker? Of course not.

We went around and we knocked on people's doors, give me your support. I want to help make my little corner of the world better, and people put their trust in us. But, Mr. Speaker, when we found ourselves facing a \$2.7 billion deficit when we thought it was \$1 billion, we had to make responsible choices.

I have a daughter here in university. I'm concerned about her future. She loves this place that we call home. She loves Labrador in particular, Mr. Speaker, and she's back every chance she gets.

So when people talk about the seniors and they're worried about their light bill, good reason, Mr. Speaker, they're worried about their light bill. The previous administration left an affordability legacy that's not soon going to be forgotten in this province. So tough choices had to be made.

I grew up, Mr. Speaker, I was raised by my grandparents. There were 12 in the family. Pretty much everyone else who went through the little community of Charlottetown where I lived, it seemed they overnighted there, too. There was always a lot of people in our house. From the youngest age, I saw my grandmother – she called it making do – I saw her doing more with less all of the time.

I thought about that a lot, Mr. Speaker, after we formed government. The list of the programs and services that we needed to provide in this province, and the list of needs in the districts around the province was long, but the money that was available to address those needs was not long. So, Mr. Speaker, from the very first budget we brought in we had to figure out, how do we do more with less?

Mr. Speaker, when I was going through the budget, *Working towards a brighter future* over the last couple of days, I thought this government, the Liberal government, has done a pretty good job of doing more with less, given the fiscal situation we were in.

It's easy, Mr. Speaker, to get up and talk about the taxes and the things that were implemented. What do you do, Mr. Speaker? Think about your own household. If you have your own household and you have lots of money rolling in, you really don't have to worry when you go to the grocery store if you're going to buy a no-name or if you're going to buy something else. If you go out and you like a little bit of retail therapy like I do sometimes, you don't have to worry about if it's a designer brand or if it's something else, but when the rubber meets the road and you have no

money or you have very little money, you have to make tough choices.

Despite that, there's been some wonderful things in this budget for my district. Work continues on the Trans-Labrador Highway. We're absolutely pleased to be opening up Labrador to the outside world. There are 122.5 kilometres of pavement in the last year going down through the District of Cartwright L'Anse au Clair toward your district, Mr. Speaker, up in Lake Melville. There are lots of people from all parts of the world that want to come.

Just today, myself and the Minister of Tourism were talking about the tourism numbers in Battle Harbour, which is a little gem in my district, up 45 per cent. It's an island in the middle of the ocean. It takes you back in time, lots of history there to a time when cod was king; yet, you have all the amenities of your 9,000 thread count sheets. You're going to sit in a little dining area with sealskin chairs and things like that.

When you go there for a meal, and I encourage all of my colleagues, if you get an opportunity to visit Battle Harbour, you will eat dinner with people from all around the world, and the numbers are continuing to grow. We have Red Bay, World Heritage UNESCO site. We have the second tallest lighthouse in Atlantic Canada in Point Amour – the second tallest in the country, sorry, the tallest in Atlantic Canada, and the numbers are growing. We have Cartwright in the northern part of my district that is now a gateway to the Mealy Mountains Park.

So much potential; yet, Mr. Speaker, whether it was broadband, whether it was cellular, whether it was the roads, we were seriously lacking with infrastructure needs in Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair and in Labrador. I'm proud to say, when I travel around the province and when I'm in Labrador, there has never been a government since 1949 that has invested money in Labrador like this. Never has there been a government that has invested, that saw the merit, which saw that Labrador has given her fair share to this province and wanted to give something back.

We have a number of Indigenous groups in Labrador. As the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, child welfare is housed

in that department. I've worked very closely with the Indigenous groups in particular over the last two years. I, myself, am of Inuit descent, and I am a member of the NunatuKavut Community Council, a proud member of the NunatuKavut Community Council, where I've heard that president say he has never, since he's been president, had an open door with the premier, any premier before, like he's had now with this current Premier of the day, Mr. Speaker.

It's about building relationships. It's about building partnerships. If there's one thing that we have gotten good at in 2015 since we formed government and having very little money to work with, is building partnerships. We may not have – either it could be a good idea, there could be a project that's going to boost an area economically, it's going to improve things socially, but we may not have all the money to bring it to the table.

In Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, in particular, we have done a tremendous amount of work by partnering with NunatuKavut Community Council. By partnering with Nunacor, the economic arm of NunatuKavut.

The Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company – and I mention them every time I'm on my feet – they keep the lights on in my district. Over 700 people, I believe, employed in the five processing facilities that are in my district. The only shrimp processing facility in Labrador happens to be in my community, and I live rather close to it. The smell's not great on a good day, but the money sure is clean and goes a long way, Mr. Speaker, and we appreciate the work they do, not only with the processing facilities but in the way they give back to the communities. So we've done a lot with partnerships.

A couple of things – and I want to mention the fishery, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes when I'm back in my district, and it happened again this weekend, I had an elderly gentleman in L'Anse-au-Loup and he said: I think you're doing a good job, but we don't hear much about the fishery. We don't hear you guys talking enough about the fishery. And maybe we don't; that great renewable resource that keeps so many of our rural communities alive.

We're so pleased we have \$10 million in the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to support the fishery, to look at ways that fisherpeople can be innovative. Money that we're all concerned these days about the environment, as we should be. New technology; there's money available to support fishermen so that when they're pulling their nets they're not destroying the ocean bottom maybe like years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on a couple of things that are not district related. They're provincial, and it certainly benefits my district. Mental health, what we have done as a government to improve services and access to mental health. I have said it many, many times when I've been speaking, I represented a district where we needed municipal infrastructure. We're still working on the amount of water and sewer we need. We still have communities that don't have community centres, and the list goes on, but you can have all of that you want. You can have your millions of dollars of investment in infrastructure and roadwork, if your people aren't well, if your families aren't healthy, your communities will not be strong and the rest of it doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker.

I was a member of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and that's an experience I won't soon forget. Mental health is something that touches every single family, Mr. Speaker. You have a family member who breaks their arm, you race off and you get them a cast and you fix their arm, but with mental health, you sit there and you feel pretty helpless a lot of the time. You want to fix it but the brain is very complex and sometimes it takes some time to get them on the road to recovery, and then it's not uncommon, perhaps, that they slip back.

Mental health, mental illness, Mr. Speaker, is no respecter of persons. They come from all walks of life. They come from all levels of income. While I was travelling the province as a member of the all-party committee, we had groups that presented to us and we had physicians that presented to us, but it was the people with the lived experience, it was their stories that stay with you forever and that drive you to want to make a difference.

Our Premier, if it was one thing he wanted to leave as his legacy, as a Premier, it was to improve access to mental health services.

I can look in my very own district and I can see opening doorways and all the little clinics in my various communities now. People can walk in without appointments and get that very important help they need because, as I said, while we need all the other things to advance our communities, Mr. Speaker, you have to be well to be able to appreciate them.

I want to acknowledge my colleague, the Minister of Health, who has done some tremendous work in that area as well.

Another area I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, is *The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes* and the wonderful work that is happening around that. Mr. Speaker, some here would know that back in 2012, with the support of my community, I led the charge on us getting a new school in that community. I felt pretty strongly that our children, no matter where they live, deserved an equal opportunity for an education, and there are some wonderful things coming.

I had so much more to say, Mr. Speaker, but I see my time on the clock is expired. It always goes very fast when you're up. I'm sure I'll get another opportunity to continue to talk about why I'm very happy to support *Budget 2019* because it is taking us toward a brighter future.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

This being Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.