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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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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 call from the Order Paper, Motion 5.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am speaking to the motion, and delighted to be standing today to highlight three individuals who we hope will receive unanimous assent by this Legislature to be appointed to the IAC. We're also looking to appoint a chair to the IAC. At the same time, we're thanking three commissioners that are leaving the IAC, who made the decision to retire. These three commissioners, Mr. Speaker, agreed to stay on while they looked for replacements; a bit of different situation where they, themselves, look for their own replacements, but under the IAC Act they set out to find replacements for themselves and did so.

In 2016, the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* was our inaugural legislation. It now makes this province the most open and accessible appointments process for agencies, boards and commissions in the country. The IAC is independent. It's non-partisan. It is a merit-based process.

In 2017, we made changes to the IAC Act to expand the roster of commissioners from a maximum of five, to a minimum of five and maximum of seven. This was at the request of the chair, Mr. Clyde Wells, who said that the amount of time these volunteers commit to the IAC process was, in fact, very demanding, and he made the recommendation to expand it to

seven so that they would have a quorum with a minimum of three and be able to conduct searches for qualified individuals with two committees as opposed to one.

We made two new appointments: Mr. Earl Ludlow and Ms. Cathy Duke. Mr. Speaker, I had a discussion with Mr. Clyde Wells who was a former premier, as most people in this Legislature would know, and the current chair of the IAC, regarding the fact that the three-year terms of the inaugural group of the commissioners had come to an end. Mr. Wells advised me that two of the commissioners were open to continuing on the Commission if we would consider reappointing them, but three of the commissioners had made the decision to retire.

We want to thank Mr. Clyde Wells for his dedication and service to the IAC, as well as Ms. Shannie Duff, former Mayor of the City of St. John's and Ms. Zita Cobb, a well-known and successful business person who we obviously know owns the Fogo Island Inn, Mr. Speaker.

These three individuals have been extremely dedicated. In fact, all five of the initial appointments were extremely dedicated to the process of looking for qualified individuals under the merit-based process. I believe their efforts have been crucial in getting this new Commission off the ground, in determining how the Commission would work and in providing names to government, as they've done with the three individuals we're about to appoint or, hopefully, will appoint today.

Their dedication to the IAC, Mr. Speaker, is unquestioned as proven by the fact that Mr. Wells, Ms. Cobb and Ms. Duff all agreed to accept reappointment in March of this year on an interim basis while they undertook the recruitment for their replacements.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all Members here today to thank these outgoing members for the extremely dedicated work that they've performed.

As I've indicated at the start of this, there are two orders of business, the recommendation with Mr. Earl Ludlow, who the House appointed

unanimously this part March to act as chair, the new chair of the IAC.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ludlow recently retired from his role as executive vice-president, Eastern Canadian and Caribbean Operations and operational advisor to the president and CEO of Fortis Inc. His career with Fortis spanned nearly 40 years. Mr. Ludlow has an extensive career as a community volunteer. He served two terms on Memorial University's Board of Regents and two terms as the honorary lieutenant colonel of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, First Battalion.

In 2018, through a recommendation of the IAC, Mr. Ludlow was appointed to The Rooms board as a director. He is a member of the Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Newfoundland and Labrador and a member of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. He has been inducted into the Atlantic provinces' CEO Business Hall of Fame by the *Atlantic Business Magazine*, was designated as Humanitarian of the Year by the Canadian Red Cross in 2010 and is a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering. Mr. Ludlow earned a Bachelor of Engineering, electrical, in 1980, and a Master of Business Administration from Memorial University in 1994. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ludlow is who we are recommending as chair of the IAC.

The second order of business is the recommendation of three candidates for the Commission. The recruitment of potential new commissioners was done by the IAC through the merit-based approach, and today we're recommending three of those candidates to join the ranks of the IAC. I'd like to provide the details on each of these three to all Members of the House of Assembly, and indeed anybody who may be watching the broadcast, so that all Members will be clear that we're recommending very highly qualified individuals.

For several years, we've received feedback from the public that they'd like to see a greater Indigenous representation on the province's agencies, boards and commissions. The IAC worked diligently to recruit individuals from the Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe that Mr. Gerald Anderson will bring significant experience to continuing with these efforts.

Mr. Anderson has over 30 years of experience working with the Marine Institute, most recently as director of Development and Engagement. Throughout his career with the Marine Institute, Mr. Anderson was designated lead for all work with Indigenous stakeholders in regions across Canada. In his role, he worked with Indigenous groups in Nunavut, Nunavik, Northern Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, PEI and the Northwest Territories.

From 2016 to 2018, Mr. Anderson was appointed as vice-president, Indigenous, with University of the Arctic, or UArctic, a network of universities with 180 members worldwide, including Memorial University. In this position, Mr. Anderson was responsible for ensuring Indigenous inclusion in all activities undertaken by UArctic.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Mr. Anderson is significantly qualified for the role of commissioner with the IAC and his career experience adds an additional area of expertise.

Our second proposed commissioner is Ms. Peggy Bartlett, a candidate from Central Newfoundland. Ms. Bartlett is a successful entrepreneur, has over 22 years as a successful owner-operator of five McDonald's restaurants in Central, with stores in Grand Falls-Windsor, Lewisporte and Gander. Prior to this, she spent 15 years as a community health nurse with the Janeway hospital.

In recent years, Ms. Bartlett has served as town councillor with the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor. She has significant volunteer and board experience including current membership on the board of the Gander International Airport Authority, the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society and the provincial government's Innovation and Business Investment Corporation, to name a few.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are recommending Mr. Ed Roberts to be the third new commissioner. Mr. Roberts is well-known to most Members of his hon. House. He has over 25 years of public service experience including 23 years as an elected member of this House, representing the Districts of White Bay North and Lake Melville.

During his time in government, Mr. Roberts held several Cabinet portfolios including minister of Public Welfare, minister of Health, minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Mr. Roberts retired from politics in 1996, and from 2002 to 2008 he served as the province's Lieutenant-Governor. In 2009, he was made a member of the Order of Canada. Mr. Roberts is a lawyer by trade. He was called to the bar in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1965.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all Members will agree that these three candidates are more than qualified for the roles they will undertake.

I look forward to the continued successes of the Independent Appointments Commission as they ensure positions that are filled with our agencies, boards and commissions are filled through the merit-based process by qualified candidates.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour to stand here today and talk about the appointments of the new members of the Independent Appointments Commission, but, particularly, to thank the outgoing members who have been members from its inception here and who've done a great job to ensure that the people who are put in positions, particularly in agencies and boards in Newfoundland and Labrador, are the best people to be able serve in those particular roles.

I do want to thank, on behalf of the Official Opposition, Mr. Wells, Ms. Cobb and Ms. Duff. I've had the opportunity over my career to have worked with all three in different capacities and found them to be extremely professional, extremely dedicated, but extremely committed to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know every time they sat in any meeting and had a discussion about anything relevant to improving Newfoundland and Labrador their hearts were in it, but no doubt they wanted to do the best job. I know they did the same when they

were looking at the appointments for the Commission itself; indeed, we've seen the fruits of their labour. We have some great people who are leading some of our great organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador doing some very important work to ensure the quality of life for people here is improved.

I also want to thank the new members, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Bartlett for putting their names forward. There's a commitment to make this work. It's a commitment to be part of any board. It's a commitment to put yourself out there to assess the value of other individuals when it comes to whether or not they're the best individual to put forward on a particular board or agency. It's a hard job because you've got to make some real decisions, but it's a rewarding job because at the end of the day you know you had an input into doing something that benefits the general population in a positive way.

So, I don't want to belabour the whole conversation here, but I do want to emphasize the fact that we've got a working system here now that if used exactly the way that it was intended to, we will have the most efficient ability to operate our boards and agencies and doing appointments in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the best people are at the helms of those organizations or a part of the decision-making process to ensure the dollars that are spent, the programs that are implemented and the outcomes are to the best benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I'll end by congratulating those new members and thanking them for putting their name forward, but, particularly, a sincere thank you to the outgoing three members for their dedication, their commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any further speakers to the motion?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm only going to take a second just to say that I will support the motion. Certainly, I know Mr. Roberts and his accomplishments. To be honest with you, I don't know the other two individuals but I put faith in the members of the IAC who have gone through the recruiting process and have given it the green light from their perspective and I will trust their judgment on it. I'm sure these are all qualified people and so I will be supporting it.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, too, would like to support this bill. I know several of these individuals personally, and I think they are stellar candidates and they will do an exceptional job.

This is a very important role. It is a very important thing to be able to have a non-partisan entity oversee the appointment of individuals who are in our agencies, boards and commissions. These are non-partisan roles, and it's absolutely vital to ensure that those roles be kept impeccable.

It would be wonderful to see the use of the Independent Appointments Commission for all appointments of senior executives within all agencies, boards and commissions. In particular, we'd like to see something like that in The Rooms. We'd like to see the criteria be expanded for the Independent Appointments Commission to include gender and diversity criteria. These things are very important and we'd like to see a greater representation of individuals with diverse backgrounds and positions in these roles. Yes, we would like to support this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further speakers to the motion?

Is the House ready for the question?

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time, I would call from the Order Paper, Motion 3, the Budget Speech.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm waiting for the clock so I see how much time I got to speak here.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to thank all Members of the Legislature for participating in the budget debate in the Estimates process in raising points, asking questions, and on this side in providing answers to those questions through the Estimates process. I wanted to thank all officials from the departments who participated in the Estimates process.

I know I have spoken to a number of Members on the other side about how they intend to vote on the budget, Mr. Speaker, so I'm looking forward to the vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government?

All those in favour of the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

I summon in all the Members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, Motion 3, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government?

All those in favour, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Reid, Mr. Davis, Ms. Haley, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Mitchelmore, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bennett, Ms. Pam Parsons, Ms. Stoodley, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Loveless, Ms. Coffin, Mr. James Dinn, Mr. Brown, Mr. Lane.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, Motion 3, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Petten, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Lester, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Evans, Ms. Conway Ottenheimer, Mr. Paul Dinn, Mr. Pardy, Mr. Parrott, Mr. O'Driscoll, Mr. Tibbs, Mr. Forsey.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 23; the nays: 14.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the motion carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

At this time, with leave of my colleagues, I would ask that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Estimates of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Estimates of the Legislature.

All those in favour of the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

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 considering the Estimates of the Legislature.

CLERK: 1.1.01 through 7.1.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 through 7.1.01 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 7.1.01 carried.

CLERK: The totals.

CHAIR: Shall the totals carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Legislature, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Legislature carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Legislature carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, I would move that the Committee rise and report the Estimates of the Legislature.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

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 Chair of the Committee of the Whole and the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have passed, without amendment, the Estimates of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that they have passed without amendment the Estimates of the Legislature.

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: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I would ask leave for a motion to be brought forward regarding the Social Services Concurrence committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Government House Leader have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

The Social Service 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 Justice and Public Safety; the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment; the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development; the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation; and the Department of Health and Community Services.

At this time, I certainly would like to thank all ministers and their officials and all Committee Members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

With leave of my colleagues, I would ask that we call the Concurrence Motion just entered by my colleague from Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Leave has been granted.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

It's a pleasure, again, to stand in this House and to discuss the budget. We have dealt with a lot of substantive policy issues during the Estimate Committees and it's always a refreshing exercise, even though it's often later in the evening than I would have liked some nights. We had a very engaged and engaging discussion at the Estimates for my own department in Health and Community Services.

I think, again, for the benefits of the Members of the House, to repeat the main themes of the budget from the point of view of Health and Community Services, it is one of the biggest, if not the biggest expense government has. Second only – well, it's not second only to anything, quite frankly, it's ahead of debt servicing by about a factor of three. It is in common with a lot of other jurisdictions, the single largest expenditure that governments of this country incur.

One of the things I am very pleased with over the course of this tenure and the previous mandate is that we have managed to increase services and to reboot and reinvigorate significant portions of the health care delivery system in this province. We have done it whilst maintaining fiscal responsibility and keeping our costs constant within the limits of inflation.

We are only one of three jurisdictions in the last CIHI report to have achieved a rate of growth of health care expenditure that is less than inflation. Currently, our is, depending on whether you look at accrual or cash flow, of the order of 0.8 per cent, at a time when inflation is 2.6-plus per cent.

One of the instructions I was given in my original mandate letter back in 2015 was to address the issue of our high per capita costs of health care expenditure. Again, using third party data, not our own, if you look at the CIHI figures, you can see the trend line is remarkably different now for this province than it was prior to 2016. Our rate of rise of health care expenditure is minimal, to the point where, given the rate of rise of other provincial jurisdictions in this country, our two lines will cross sometime around 2025-26.

For those who are trying to imagine what that graph might look like in their heads, essentially, what it will mean is that we will have held expenditure per capita constant, whilst everywhere else in the country expenditure per capita has risen and risen to the point where it will now exceed ours in dollar values. I think that is a tribute to the hard work of the staff within the Department of Health and Community Services under a series of deputy ministers and a very vigorous and enthused executive team.

We have very able staff who have brought forth innovative policies and enabled us to do what very few jurisdictions have done. I have said in this House on other occasions that while we compare ourselves with other provinces, once you actually leave the Avalon Peninsula, our population density is not much different than that of Nunavut's. We are, in actual fact, essentially a territory. Were one to use that as a comparator on costs per capita of health care, we are well below the national average; well below indeed.

I think, again, we are one of the provinces that are very bad at telling others what we actually do very well. Within that costing envelope, we have seen huge changes in, for example, the organization and delivery of mental health and addiction services following the Action Plan we released from Towards Recovery. That

landmark All-Party Committee, triggered by all the parties of the House of the day and that was prior to the election in 2015, deserve our recognition for the amount of effort that they put in in generating that process. The results of that process, however, have become a beacon on the Atlantic seaboard of what Canada and what Canadian jurisdictions can actually achieve.

We have gone from being a passive participant in the provincial and territorial meetings to, in the realm of mental health and addictions, becoming leaders. There are two jurisdictions in this country that other provinces and territories come to, to seek advice on mental health and addictions issues. One is British Columbia because of the numbers and the significant burden of opioid deaths that have resulted. The other is Newfoundland and Labrador and that is because of the thoughtful and constructive policies that we have generated and implemented over the course of the last 3½ years.

This budget, to focus on one area, for example, deals specifically in capital with a replacement for our oldest piece of infrastructure, which is the Waterford Hospital. In 1855, when it opened its doors first, Queen Victoria sat on the throne and the Crimean War was the news of the day. The Victoria Cross had not yet been invented or described as a decoration for valour in the Commonwealth. It is that old.

We have now enacted a plan, not just an approach, but there will be site work on the new site this construction season to put there what will be the final piece, when it is opened, of the reorganization of mental health and addictions services in this province. Mental health and addictions, however, will not be delivered solely through a building on the Health Sciences Centre complex. It is an approach that takes mental wellness and puts it into people's hands before they become ill. It is an approach that takes mental health and brings it into the communities.

Through programs such as Doorways, you'll see on the Burin Peninsula, you'll see in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, in Labrador in general, we have abolished – abolished completely – wait times for cancelling services. People who once had barriers and prolonged waits – and going

back two years, I think, the figures for Goose Bay were people of the number of 250 waiting in excess of 300 days for cancelling. Within a year, those have completely disappeared.

We have Doorways in over 52 communities, no barrier. We know from data and from satisfaction surveys that of the people who go through those doors without an appointment, 50 per cent of them will have their issues addressed fully and completely by that one visit. That is a stunning testament to their efficacy.

It is also a portal of entry which, again, requires no referral. They walk in. If there are issues that cannot be resolved, we have a suite of things that we can offer for people with problems and families with difficulties. Because we've learned that, for example, with childhood anxiety, treating the entire family is as important as treating the individual child.

Through that, and through the use of technology where, again, we lead the country in online support services, online cancelling and we're moving into the virtual health arena in partnership and in conjunction and at the same time as the Canadian Medical Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association.

These are examples of what we have done with the budget. We have spent our money more wisely. The approach that we adopted in 2015 and we've carried through is the triple aim of better individual outcomes, better population health and better value for the health care dollar we have invested.

I would argue, Mr. Speaker, this budget builds on that success and actually demonstrates the validity and the utility of that approach. I would encourage all Members of this House to just sit there and reflect on what we have been able to achieve by thinking differently and looking at the way we do business rather than simply throwing money at the problem as had been the remedy for a succession of previous provincial and federal governments, regardless of the stripe.

With that acknowledgement of the hard work of, not only staff in my department but health care providers across the province who daily go

above and beyond, I will take my seat and commend this budget to the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Any further speakers to the motion?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise and address the House of Assembly on behalf of the people of the District of Harbour Main. Serving the people you represent comes with many duties, many responsibilities and many expectations, of course. This I'm quickly discovering during my first two weeks as a newly elected MHA. Reflecting on the past two weeks, Mr. Speaker, has been a very eye-opening experience for me.

First of all, I'd like to say that our PC caucus, Members of the Official Opposition, have been duly elected by the people from all across this great province. They represent talented, diverse, experienced and a strong team of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Together, we represent the interests, Mr. Speaker, of 42 per cent of the popular vote in our province. The Liberal government itself attained approximately 44 per cent of the popular vote of the electorate.

Why are these numbers important, Mr. Speaker? These figures reflect the will of the people, and I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal government can no longer rule. The government can no longer govern as it pleases. The government can no longer dismiss the important role of the Official Opposition.

Like one of the hon. ministers last week, I observed, described us as – quote – that crowd. Well, Mr. Speaker, that crowd represents a significant proportion of the electorate and like it or not, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has to accept that fact. The fact that the people, in their collective wisdom, have spoken. The people have voted for change, not for the status quo, Mr. Speaker. The status quo is not okay anymore. In fact, the people have put the government on notice that if you fail to provide

good and responsible government, you will be held accountable.

What exactly does it mean to provide good and responsible government? It means consensus-oriented. It means being equitable, being responsive. It means having a spirit of participatory involvement. It means accountability. It means efficiency and effectiveness. They want us to work together.

The people have spoken, but it also means we have to do things differently. We have to do things better. It means a new approach. It means the people want us to try new strategies, new priorities. It means our thinking has to be innovative, progressive, thinking outside the box, if you will, approaching problems in novel ways. This is imperative if we are to stop the decline that is happening in our province.

Although the past two weeks as a newly elected MHA have been a wonderful experience in terms of observing the process in the House of Assembly, the past two weeks in the House of Assembly have also been very disappointing. We, the Official Opposition, are disappointed. The people of the province are also disappointed.

People, unequivocally, voted for change. We see the new MHAs who have been elected, who represent the progressive voices in our province, and with 56 per cent of the electorate not supporting the government and its approach, we see that the people have given us the opportunity and the obligation to try new methods, but, sadly, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government opted – they chose not to try and not to listen.

We brought forward priorities. The Official Opposition presented opportunities and priorities to the government because we heard these priorities at the doorstep, but yet the government still ignored these suggestions.

What priorities did we present? We presented several; for example, immediate end of the levy. Our people are struggling. I've heard that in my District of Harbour Main. They are struggling with over taxation. They are taxed to death, Mr. Speaker.

According to the government's own committee, the levy is a regressive tax as well, yet there was no leverage, there was no response, there was no collaboration, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals talk the talk about the collaboration but when it comes to providing us, for example, with the information we need to meaningfully collaborate, that's where the talking ends.

Other priorities that we presented to the government: affordable home insurance. The taxes that we see on home insurance, Mr. Speaker, we suggested and proposed that we eliminate the sales tax on homeowner insurance. We need to give relief on these taxes. The people of the District of Harbour Main were very clear about that.

We also recognize, Mr. Speaker, that lowering these taxes will drive the local spending and facilitate job growth, generate revenue, yet they did not listen. Affordable insulin pumps, another issue that I was presented with at the door by the constituents of the District of Harbour Main. The removal of the age cap to ensure Medicare covers the cost of insulin pumps for all persons with Type 1 diabetes. They didn't listen, Mr. Speaker. Their intention was not to collaborate with us.

If we endorse their agenda, and that is what we cannot do, they would then have blamed us for all the things we opposed. Like high taxes and the deprivation of services and continuing deterioration of our economy. Mr. Speaker, we could not adopt their agenda. It could have been a collaborative approach to reflect the people's agenda, an agenda that all of us could have supported. Instead, we get the same old, stale agenda that cost the Liberals their majority, an agenda the majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians just voted against.

The government ignored these suggestions; the government brought back the same budget. We were not asking for an increase in spending. We were asking, simply, for a reprioritization of spending. We were calling upon them to find efficiency but, again, the budget does not reflect that. The government had an opportunity to line up their priorities with what the people wanted and they didn't do that.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that in view of what I've observed in the last two weeks as Member for the District of Harbour Main, the government remains entrenched in the blame game. The government had an opportunity to do the right thing but failed. In the spirit of co-operation we came here and presented these suggestions for change to the government and they were ignored. The government is not listening to the people. The government brought back the same budget, Mr. Speaker. The government had the opportunity to do the right thing in the budget and did not do so. If the government, Mr. Speaker, could find \$40 million for Canopy Growth, surely they could have found funding in other areas.

Our people in the District of Harbour Main spoke loudly and clearly. They did not want any more of the negative blame game, the finger pointing; rather, the people are tired of that pessimistic, cynical attitude. Certainly there is nothing wrong with reflecting on history. History is important, history teaches us lessons and history will allow us to ensure that mistakes don't happen again, to avoid the repeat of errors.

Mr. Speaker, we, in the Official Opposition, represents that change. The people voted for change. The people have put the government on notice that if you fail to provide good and reasonable government, you will be held accountable. They want us to work together, Mr. Speaker. They want us to do things differently, a better approach.

Mr. Speaker, the budget was delivered but was never voted on prior to the election. The election was called and the Liberal Party campaigned on their budget. We saw the numbers that they received in terms of popular vote, their inability to attain a majority government. So, arguably the people also voted against the budget, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious the people did not agree. Why, therefore, was the government not interested in listening and collaborating and working with us? Why was the government not interested in incorporating any of our proposals or changes to this budget? This budget lacked legitimacy because of that.

The government had two options with respect to the budget: one, it could've reintroduced the budget that was introduced back in April but

never debated or passed; or two, it could've introduced a revised budget to address some of the concerns and constructive solutions raised during the election campaign. The government opted for the first of these approaches, sadly, to bring back the same budget as before without changes. We think they should have chosen the other option. The result of the election is that the people of this province mandated a different set of priorities from those embodied in the unpassed budget.

We urged the government to reconsider. We presented a reasonable alternative to consider as outlined in our policy *Blue Book*. We cautioned them that if they did not change the budget, the tax burden on the people will be too high, that the level of the public expenditures will be too high and that certain vital services that ought to be covered will be neglected.

I stand here as a disappointed MHA. I presented myself as an MHA with optimism to support the people of my district and their interests. Instead, we get the same old agenda. We are siding with the people in voting against this budget, against it because it is not reflective of the will of the people of our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, I'm going back to a theme that I started out with, and I'm going to go back to some of the terms I've heard from both sides of this House with regard to budget making. Rightsizing, zero-based budgeting, attrition, finding efficiencies and so on and so forth. I'm going to focus a little bit about education because I think that, from both sides of the House, we both have to change how we look at the budget.

I'm hearing efficiencies, and at the same time I'm saying, well, we need to support this. We all seem to have our pet project but I'm going to look at education for a minute from the point of view of budgeting, and the Education Action

Plan. Of course, it's about an investment in education but the devil is in the details.

I always ask a question about any plan: Is it budget based or needs based? Because as an educator I believe in needs based, but as an educator I haven't seen needs based. I've seen more budget based, more finding of efficiencies, more so-called rightsizing and so on and so forth, and it's always someone else other than the educator, people in the field who make that decision.

It's interesting, in 2008 the allocation model there was actually decreasing the number of students in class size in multigrade classrooms. It actually put a lower cap on classrooms.

In 2016, in that budget, we saw the introduction of full-day kindergarten; 142 new teachers for the position – and I'm going back to this because, again, it's history repeating itself in many ways. We saw the introduction of full-day kindergarten, 142 teachers added, but we saw 200 teachers taken out of the system. Basically, full-day kindergarten was brought in on the back of the rest of the system.

We had the introduction of combined grades, which are not multigrade classrooms. Multigrade classrooms actually increased in size. Combined grades was a creation to find efficiencies. If it was such an educational novelty and advancement then we would have been doing combined grades for every school in the province, but we don't. It was done out of a budgetary need, not an educational need.

We saw the increase in class size, class caps. So they increased by two – really, they increased by four from 2008. I'm going to come back to what that class size means in terms of education, but the soft cap allowed for the addition of students to a class without really putting any resources in place.

We also saw the novel educational initiative of the French immersion lottery for intensive core French, because since the allocations were cut, schools decided by lottery who got to go into intensive core French. It wasn't merit based. It was pulling it out of a hat.

I go back to combining grades. That put an enormous amount of pressure on the school system because it was up to the school, the administrator, to decide who goes into that combined grade. That's what a budget does.

Do you put a group of academically, self-motivated, self-directed students in this class – there goes the notion of inclusive education right out the door – or do you combine them? What do you do with – and I coined the term – the leftover students that *Budget 2016* created? Because it wasn't needs based. It wasn't even zero based, because if I understand zero-based budgeting you look at what are the needs and you build a budget to match the needs. It wasn't. It was about finding efficiencies, finding cuts.

Then, of course, we had the minister at that time, the novel idea of resourcing classrooms through scrounging. Now, teachers already did that. God knows, we've spent enough of our own money, but then to have it come out from the department at that time to scrounge for supplies, and some of the supplies were quite significant.

I say this because it's interesting, how important is education to parties on both sides of the House? You see, the NLTA had a leader's forum on education during the election and neither the Leader of the Liberals or the Conservatives showed up, Mr. Speaker. They showed up to the other major forums but not to education. That sends a very clear message to teachers, to students, just how important education is despite the protestations to otherwise.

It's the second time that the Liberal Leader was not going to show up. The first time was when I was president of the Teachers' Association. This time, though, both did not show up. That's a slap in the face. That tells me and teachers, in many cases, of this province just how important education is when it comes to making a budget. It wasn't a stunt, as some people on both sides – it's a debate that's been ongoing, a forum that's there so that teachers and parents and students can hear what's important.

I go back to the Education Action Plan, and here's the other thing. It seems that, depending on what government comes in, one of the ways of getting elected is to put into the budget that we're going to change education wholesale.

We've got to reform the education system. We've got to make our students better prepared. The education system is failing our students, failing our societies and so on and so forth. We've got to change that, and we're going to fix it. How many times in my career as a teacher have I heard that one?

So you barely get used to an education initiative before the next government comes in with a new shiny approach and teachers are put into a tailspin of trying to make sure that they can get used to a brand new policy. So, I would say this to whoever forms power: For God's sake, talk to the people who are in the classroom when you're making a budget, when you're bringing up a plan.

The Education Action Plan introduces teacher learning assistants. By the way, we still haven't really come up with a clear definition as to what teacher learning assistants do and how they're going to fit in. It's sort of an ongoing process. We have the introduction of reading specialists. We have the introduction of learning resource teachers and teacher librarians in this budget, and it sounds great.

There's a big difference between what the policy is and what reality is. Because, you see, schools with less than 50 don't get those. What they do get is an increase in the IRT, or the instructional resource teacher allocations, and a fraction at that, to make up for that.

That's the budget. Is it needs based or is it budget based? It's not even zero based. It's certainly not needs based. I wish I could say that parties on both sides of the House take a different – they don't.

There's nothing for the small schools. Student assistant time, needs based, budget based, zero based; again, if it was zero based you're going to be looking at the needs of the students in the system and we're going to resource it appropriately. Yet, in 2018, the NLESD received 418 hours a day less than what their own program specialists and experts recommended. Think about that.

In the NLESD we need about 4,002 hours of student assistant time per day to meet the needs of the students in our system. They didn't pull

that number out of the air. They looked at the needs. They had their specialists look at it and said here's what we need. Yet, they were budgeted 418 hours less a day. That's not even zero based. It's not needs based. I don't know what it is, but it's budget based.

Responsive teaching is the new buzz word, which I consider is good teaching. Universal design, shiny new words, and one thing I learned in education, everything old is new again. It's just the same philosophy repackaged in a different way.

As I've talked to a few principals, I've said: How's it going with this? It's going well if the schools make it work. So the schools have to make it work. They have to find the time for teachers to get together and meet, or the teachers have to do these meetings after school.

Now, I'll tell you something, I came into this job and I would say most – I have a constituency assistant. We have researchers in the office. We have staff. I would suggest that even that is a little bit less than what we need to meet needs in the district, but I can tell you a teacher in the school system, they don't get a constituency assistant. They don't get their own personal secretary. They have a secretary who is there for the whole school, but if the teacher who is dealing with something along – I know a teacher in high school, 160 or 140 students that I'm responsible for, the marking, the grading, the meeting with them and so on and so forth. So you bring in these policies, if you're not putting the resources there to make it work, it will fail.

An allocation review was asked for in 2008 and it still has not been done. So we're putting in educational reform, we haven't even determined how many teachers do we really need to carry this out. We're going to do the allocation review after we've done the reform, after we've made things better. Somewhere along the line, I think we need to look at what are the needs because an allocation would look at not only the class size but the composition of that class.

My colleague to the left has referred to the size of this House and the space we have and you put that into a classroom situation. I would go one step further. Put 30 or 35 kids into a room where 13, 14 or 15 of them have needs, diagnosed

exceptionalities that aren't being met, try teaching that. You have to put the resources there.

Our responses to students who can't self-regulate, basically it's social and emotional learning, that's great, we're going to put it across the curriculum. It's not going to solve the problem totally until the class size reflects the needs in that classroom. You know how I would, when I was president, push to get the resources, make both the English School District and the Department of Education listen?

The teacher would come in, just been attacked by a student, sometimes violently, you need to file a right to refuse to work. That's what it took to get the resources in the classroom. That's what it took to, okay, we'll find someone. In all cases, the principal, the teachers had already filed request upon request for the extra resources; it fell on deaf ears. Again, that's not zero-based budgeting, that's not needs-based budgeting, that's about dollars and cents.

So emotional, social learning will help if you're going to put the resources there, but if this is about a course across the curriculum and say there, that's done, wash their hands of that, then I'm afraid it's not going to work. The last round of collective bargaining made it quite clear where we stood because that last round of the collective bargaining is going to make it very difficult to attract highly qualified, highly motivated and the best and brightest to the teaching profession.

I'll talk briefly about some of the measures around the environment. I still haven't looked at in the department as to who is totally responsible for monitoring industries like aquaculture. I still haven't come away from any of the Estimates meetings feeling confident that these companies will be monitored, will be held accountable. Again, are we going to be responding to the needs or is this going to be about budget.

So, for me, and I will speak for the NDP, as I've heard here about the budget, it's not about finding efficiencies. This budget was not of our creation, we had no say in it as individuals here. We're not interested in the blame game, who's responsible for what. We've heard that going on both sides here. What we are interested in is

looking at the long game, setting new priorities for the next budget, the budget after that and the budget after that.

I'll be upfront what we're after. We want to see measures of a budget that actually reduces poverty. We want to see a budget that actually is going to better help the people of our province to get better health care. We want to see better housing opportunities for those who are most vulnerable. We want to see a decent living wage. There are workers in this building who are making a little over \$11 an hour for cleaning. Folks, if you can make a living on that, let me know because I don't think you can.

We also want to see labour relations and labour standards set so that people who are working and exercise their legitimate right for contract negotiations are going to be respected. We want to see most of all legislation that protects the environment.

So, as we go forward, I can tell you when it comes to budgeting, it will not be zero based for me unless that is actually truly about needs based. It will be about needs-based budgeting, what we need. Not zero-based budgeting, not finding efficiencies, not nickel-and-diming.

My late brother used to say to me: Poor people like us can't afford to buy cheap. In some cases, I think that's what we're about here and it's got to stop. We're all inclined to buy cheap and in the long run it's going to cost us. For him it was always buy good quality gear now, or buy it four or five times over down the road.

The same thing here: invest now in our people, eliminate poverty, increase health outcomes, take care of those with dental health problems and make sure that those who need housing are looked after. I think it's investing in society. It's not investing in a multi-national corporation but investing in our society. I think that's what we'll be pushing for over the next couple of years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any further speakers to this motion?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure to have the opportunity to stand and speak to Concurrence. I guess this will be, likely, the last time I'll have an opportunity to speak before the House closes.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to, I guess, have a few more words about Nalcor and the Muskrat Falls inquiry, but before I do, I just want to have a few words about the budget because a few things have come to mind and some points I want to reiterate here.

First of all, I want to say that while I just voted for the budget, that doesn't mean that I don't have concerns. It doesn't mean that the eight points that were raised by the Official Opposition were not legitimate points, that they weren't things that we'd all like to see.

This issue on insulin pumps. I met with the university students on their advocacy day when they were advocating for the insulin pumps just like the other caucuses did as well, and I absolutely support it. I think we have to recognize that, up until this budget, there was no coverage; there was zero. Once you reach 25 you got nothing. At least now we're making a start.

Now, would I like to be able to say that someone who turned 25 last year or three or four years ago should be covered? Do I think they should be covered? Absolutely, I do. Would I like to see it happen right now? Absolutely, I would, and I hope that it will happen, but I don't think it's a big enough issue to vote down the entire budget and, potentially, vote down the government and bring us into another provincial election. Ultimately, if everyone on this side, all collectively decide to vote against the budget, that is what would happen. So, we have to ask ourselves: Do the people want another election? Is this a big enough issue?

Now, there are other things that have been asked for like the 1.6 kilometre. I have that issue in my district, absolutely. I've had many discussions with the Department of Education. They're tired of listening to me. I got their numbers on speed-

dial over issues around the 1.6 and the courtesy stops and so on. I'd love to see more changes. I've been advocating for a long time that the 1.6 for elementary-age children, there should be no zone. They should all get a bus if they need one, if they're elementary-age children.

I can remember presenting petitions in this House and lobbying. Again, it's not about dumping on anybody or going and blaming anybody, but I can specifically remember presenting petitions to two former Members from the PC Party, two ministers. They were both from the Burin Peninsula and they were both ministers of Education, they had a switchover at some point in time. I can remember meeting with them. I can remember presenting numerous petitions on the 1.6. This is an issue that's been ongoing. Would I like to see it change? Absolutely, I would.

There are other things that the Official Opposition put forward in their eight proposals and so on that I'm sure we would all love to see, but the issue that we have, and I think it kind of ties into as well, my colleague for St. John's Centre and some of the issues he's been raising as well, I agree a lot with what he's saying, too, on education and investment in education. I absolutely agree but, but – and there is a but – we are billions of dollars in the hole – billions.

We're going to spend \$1.3 billion this year on servicing the debt – \$1.3 billion. It's the second largest expenditure next to health care, more than what we put in education, in just servicing the debt alone. That's not counting Muskrat Falls, that's over and above that – \$1.3 billion.

Would I love to see all these things that was asked for by the Official Opposition? Absolutely. I'm sure that everyone over there would too. Why wouldn't you, there're all good things. I'd love to see some of the things that the Member for St. John's Centre is talking about as well. I agree with him. I got plenty of schools in my district that are overflowing. I know many teachers and administrators, I've had the conversations. I've had the conversations with parents. I understand the challenges of jamming children into a classroom with this cap and this soft cap and the combining of grades. I had the combining of grades happen in my district.

Everything that the Member talked about and those challenges, I've had all those conversations in my district, so I know what he's saying. I know what he's saying is true. I absolutely agree with him that there are things that have to be addressed, but, by the same token, we have to be cognizant of where we're financially. We're literally on the edge of a financial cliff.

We're told, I don't know, I never did see concrete numbers to show that we would have been \$2.7 billion in the hole. No one ever told me up until like a year later, I think, when it came out that we couldn't meet payroll or that's what the government said, after the fact. I don't know if it's true or not. I'm taking the minister's word for it. I'm not saying that he's not telling the truth, I don't know but I never saw it. No one told me until after the fact. Assuming what he's saying is right, and I take him on his word for it, b'ys, we're in a mess, we really are financially in a mess. So, all of these asks, and they're all important asks, we got to bare it in mind where we're to financially.

I support the budget, I do support the budget because, at least, the insurance tax is going to be rolled back on automobile insurance. That's a good thing. The levy, which is what landed me on this side of the House, as everybody knows, was the levy; that was the big one for me. It'll be gone after this year.

Would I like to see it eliminated right now? Absolutely, I would. Everybody in my district would love to see the levy gone immediately, but I also understand that this is tied to the federal government, the income tax system and so on. It's not just a matter of just picking up the phone and say end the levy right now. So, even if the government wanted to, there's time associated to making that happen. After this year it'll be gone.

The gas tax that we had in 2016, most of that has been rolled back. Albeit we have a carbon tax, which I personally don't support. I think it's a tax grab. That's just my opinion, but, nonetheless, 12 cents of the 16½ cents that was put on the gas tax is gone. Now, the insurance tax on automobiles will be gone and, at the end of this year, the levy will be gone. Bearing in mind where we're to financially, I think that's

reasonable. Would I like to see more done? Absolutely, but I think it's reasonable.

I support the budget from the perspective of what I feel is reasonable, what I feel is balanced and also bearing in mind that for everybody on this side – I say again – to vote this budget down means we're going to the polls again and the people quite clearly don't want that to happen at this stage of the game, unless there's something serious.

Now, this doesn't mean the government does whatever it wants, makes any crazy decisions and comes out tomorrow and say we're going to introduce the levy for another five years, because if that were to happen, I would absolutely bring the government down, my vote would. Absolutely, if it was something that I thought was totally egregious, irrational and not reasonable at all, I would.

What we see here now is on the balance of things. Are there things I like? Yes. Are there things I don't like? Some things I'd like to see improved. Do I agree with a lot of the things that the Official Opposition has brought forward? Do I agree with what my colleague for St. John's Centre has said about the education system and about poverty? Absolutely, I do. Should we be working towards those things? Absolutely, we should, but we have to live in the reality of where we're to fiscally, financially, we really do.

I understand my colleagues now in the Official Opposition, they can stand and say: We voted against the budget so we stood up for the 1.6 and we stood up for insulin pumps and so on, and the other guys didn't.

Well, I'm just saying for the record, I support the things that they were pushing for, and I'm sure everybody does, but we can all play this little game of – because they all know that, ultimately, as long as somebody else on this side supports the budget, it's going through anyway, so you get the best of both worlds.

They don't have the election that nobody wants and you get to be able to say, politically, oh, I stood up for this and that and I voted against this and I voted against the budget. I understand the politics around that, but at the end of the day,

from the perspective of the budget, it is fair, balanced, reasonable in my view, based on where we're to financially, and I will support the budget.

Now, I have lots of time left, but in the interest of time and the agreement that we had to try to get through this this morning, I'll just take a minute just to talk about Nalcor, just for a minute. I got to, just got to. I cannot sit down. The closing of this House of Assembly after today, I cannot give up the opportunity to have a couple of words about Nalcor.

What we have seen come out in this inquiry has been absolutely shocking, disturbing, disgusting –

AN HON. MEMBER: Shameful.

MR. LANE: – shameful, I don't know what else I can put on it. There are so many things.

I say to the minister, and I mean this figuratively speaking, of course, heads need to roll, changes are required, and that organization needs to be purged of those who may have been deliberately involved in lowballing of numbers and withholding information and reports and so on. That needs to happen.

I would also say that once the inquiry is over – and I realize the inquiry has a mandate, and that mandate is just basically to look at what went wrong, what could we do to improve things in the future and so on. I would certainly hope and urge the government that as all the information's coming forward, once that report is out, if there is anything at all that warrants in any way an investigation by the authorities, I certainly hope that it will be initiated.

If there is anything at all that warrants civil litigation, I hope it will be initiated. There has to be accountability for what went on and the information or the misinformation that went out to the public, that went out to Members of this House of Assembly, people who voted to sanction this project based on information they were given that turned out to be erroneous information.

That has to be addressed, there has to be accountability, and I certainly call upon the

government, before this is all said and done, to hold those responsible accountable to this House and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I start my remarks, I'm going to say I am a little disappointed with the politics. Now I enjoy politics as much as anybody else, Mr. Speaker. I'm a career politician. I've been at this for more than two decades. I enjoy a political scrap. I enjoy debate.

I'll go on to my next thought, Mr. Speaker, before I get into some of the comments that I'm going to make. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands just spoke, and I'm going to commend him. In addition to commending him, I'm going to commend the NDP because they put politics aside and looked at a balanced approach. I know the Member for St. John's Centre just spoke and made some constructive criticism of government, and I accept that because when you see constructive criticism, you can work with that.

I've spoken to Members of the NDP, and they also provide possible solutions. They look at both sides. I may not always agree with everything they say, Mr. Speaker, but if it's an approach that's constructive criticism and thoughts about alternatives or better ways of doing things, that is what this place is about. That is good debate. So, I commend the Member for St. John's Centre.

The Leader of his party is an economist and I've had several conversations with her, and I think she understands how you need to balance both sides and a balanced approach. I look forward to working with her. I always pay a great deal of attention when she's on her feet, and I enjoy what she's saying. Again, I may not always agree with what she's saying, but I enjoy the words she speaks and the argument she puts

forward because I think she understands how the budget works.

I'll go back again for a moment to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, Mr. Speaker. Again, I may not always agree with what he says, but I think he voted with a great deal of thought on this budget when he spoke as to why he voted. Yes, I like the eight ideas that were put forward by the Opposition as well. In fact, we've talked about them in our caucus long before the election, in fact going back a couple of years. We talked about these ideas and how we'd like to see them implemented. They're not new ideas.

Obviously, we'd like to reduce taxes, Mr. Speaker, and we've been doing it with a balanced approach. Obviously, we'd like to provide more services to the people of the province and we've been doing that but with a balanced approach. If you see the reckless spending that took place in 2015 or 2014, 2013, that's what got the province in the situation that the province is in. That's what created the fiscal crisis the province was dealing with and that's why taxes had to be increased.

If you're going to talk about a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, real leadership means that you just don't toss – we'd like to see taxes reduced because we'd all like to see taxes reduced. Everybody in the province would like to see taxes reduced. You don't just toss out we'd like to see taxes reduced, now that's our idea and shame on government because they didn't reduce them enough. That's not real leadership. I'll talk about real leadership again in a moment.

Saying that we'd like to see extra services provided to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, we'd all like to see more services provided, but doing it without giving us ideas as to how you do it is not real leadership. Now, the Leader of the Official Opposition provided us with eight demands. They voted against the budget because we didn't implement the eight demands.

The Member for Harbour Main stood in her place and spoke. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will say that each Member of this Legislature is here because we deserve to be here because the

people chose us to represent them. But she stood in her place and said it's a minority government so the people of the province spoke and they want these eight ideas. Well, I knocked on doors as well, Mr. Speaker, something I enjoy very much, listening to the people in my district. It's the best way to represent your people. I'll say to all Members, the new Members elected, no matter what you say or do in this Legislature, it's how you represent your constituents that will keep you coming back and keep you getting elected.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. OSBORNE: But I represent every one of my constituents, Mr. Speaker. Almost 70 per cent of them voted for me but even the other 30 per cent, I don't say, when somebody calls, which way did you vote. I represent every one of my constituents. But I'll tell you, it was very balanced when I went to the doors. Yeah, absolutely, there were people who had concerns about the taxes that were put in place in 2016, make no mistake about it. But just as many people – and that's the thing, Mr. Speaker, when you have a balanced approach, you look at both sides of the ledger.

I haven't heard anybody on the other side talk about the fact that people were concerned about the fiscal crisis that the province faced in 2015 or '16, or why we got to that position. I didn't hear anybody on the other side, Mr. Speaker, because I heard just as many people at the door. In fact, the province was pretty much equally divided in this election if you want to look at how they voted on party lines. And it's not just party lines. I would say that there are Members on the other side of the House, just as well as there are Members here, just as well as the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands got elected as an independent. I would say he could've run for us and got elected, he could've run for the PCs and got elected, and he got elected as an independent. There are Members on the other side of the Legislature that because of who they are and what they've contributed to their communities, and their reputation, they would've got elected whether they were on this side of the House or that side of the House. Same for many Members in this Legislature. So just because somebody got elected for one stripe or another doesn't necessarily mean that they

wouldn't have got elected had they run for a different political party.

People in the province were equally divided. They were just as concerned about the taxes that were put in place in 2016 as they were about why those taxes were put in place. Now let's be honest, because that's the truth. If we implemented the eight items that were demanded by the other side or they wouldn't vote for the budget, it would be hundreds of millions of dollars. Now, those hundreds of millions of dollars, you got to come up with that somewhere because there's no magic solution that we want to lower taxes, we want to spend more money, these are our ideas, now you guys figure out how you're going to come up with the money. That's not real leadership.

So the eight items that were put forward by the other side, yeah, I'd like to see those eight items as well. In fact, there are two or three of those items that we're currently working with and currently trying to implement. But if you want to have a truly balanced approach, how do you pay for those eight items? Well, you've either got to cut services – but hang on now, they want to increase services, part of the eight items – or you've got to increase taxes – but hang on now, they want to lower taxes. So you can't have it all ways. Lower taxes, increase services, and you guys figure out how you're going to implement it.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you want to talk about being truly honest and a balanced approach – I've heard the Finance critic and the Member for Harbour Main and the Leader of the Opposition say, oh, the Independent Tax Review Committee said eliminate the levy. Well, the levy is going by the end of this calendar year. We've also eliminated, January 1 of this year, the remaining gas tax. We've also eliminated in this year's budget sales tax on automobile insurance. But they point to the one thing in the Independent Tax Review Committee, without pointing to everything else that's in there.

Because the Independent Tax Review Committee report, which is 28 pages, in two places I think it references eliminate the levy; the other 28 pages they ignore, because they don't talk about the people that they knocked on doors – like I said, I heard both sides of it,

concerned about the taxes, but also concerned about why we got in the situation and don't let it happen again. If we implemented the eight items, without a plan on how we're able to afford it, guess what? Three or four years from now, you're going to have to put taxes back in place, 'cause it got to be paid for.

Now, what they ignore in the Independent Tax Review Committee report is, in general, Newfoundland and Labrador's tax system is in line with other Canadian provinces. No, they won't say that. They'll say we're taxed to death. They won't talk about the fact that nothing about our brackets or rates or credits or personal exemptions stands out good or bad, because we are generally in line. Now, those words were spoken and they're spoken in many places in the Independent Tax Review. It's repeated again and again and again that we're not out of whack with the rest of Canada, but they won't preach that because they want people to think we're taxed to death.

Well, why were we taxed to death, Mr. Speaker? I'm going to clue up in the next half a minute or a minute – but why were we taxed to death? Because the province faced a fiscal crisis. We couldn't make payroll. They were continuing to tell people of the province there was a \$1.1-billion deficit when it was actually closer to \$2.7 billion.

The Member for Mount Pearl North, and I'm going to be very quick about this, but last week he took a crack at I voted for – well, actually I didn't for it. You can go back and look at the two bills. I didn't vote for them because they were voted on about 3 o'clock in the morning and I was home asleep. I did speak to them and said I had concerns about Muskrat Falls, but in general I was voting with my constituents because the surveys that were done at the time, the vast majority of people in the province thought it was a good project.

MR. LESTER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Now the Member for Mount Pearl North is yapping at me. If you want to get into a political scrap again, I can do it. He actually used the words last week, Mr. Speaker,

I was duped. It wouldn't be the first time that Member duped me. Do you want to get into those details?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. LESTER: You're easily duped.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Let's be honest. He's easily duped, he said. I guess when you're good at duping, people are easily duped.

The reality of the fact is the vast majority of people in the province supported Muskrat Falls based on what they were promised. Based on what was delivered, if you do the numbers at \$2.9 billion and 520,000 people in the province, the cost of Muskrat Falls is about \$25,000 per person – man, woman, child, working, not working, on income support, taxpayer, not taxpayer. So if you've got an average household of three people, it's about \$75,000 per household. That's not what was promised.

But anyway, I'm going to clue up now, because I know we've got an arrangement in the House to limit our time. I just wanted to say, I commend those who put politics aside and looked at this as a balanced approach –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: – Mr. Speaker, and I'm disappointed that politics played a role in this budget debate here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any further speakers to the motion?

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to get here and to represent the people of Exploits. I don't need to go any further than my district of the people of Exploits to make my decision on why I don't agree with the budget.

Mr. Speaker, while I was going door to door in my district – and I said this in my previous first speech on the budget, in our area in Exploits the economy has really dropped. People are really looking for resources. They're looking for ways that they need employment and need jobs. They need affordable living, and they have the taxes and the levies. The levy is still there, home insurance is still there and they can't afford to live.

The economy there, again, was one of the big issues in the district. Right now there's nothing there that's going to increase the economy in the Exploits District. They did have a pellet plant that was supposed to be there in the past couple of years. That got taken away from them. It did go to the Northern Peninsula, it's still in this province, and God love it for that that it's still in this province. The Northern Peninsula and other areas in this province need the employment as well.

The Exploits District – and I spoke to every council in the district from Bishop's Falls, Grand Falls-Windsor, Leading Tickles, Botwood – all the councillors – and they were highly disappointed that there was nothing replaced when that was taken away from the Exploits District. Again, yes, they were disappointed in losing the pellet plant, but there was nothing there to replace that, nothing to help them, no agreement there to replace what they lost. And that was upwards of 300 workers in that district.

Also, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, I was down to the Goodwill centre in Botwood. I spoke to some of the churches that bring in the clothes and donate the clothes and that kind of stuff, food banks in Grand Falls-Windsor. When the people in that district have to start relaying on those resources because the economy is so poor, it will tell you what's happening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The big one again, Mr. Speaker, that I saw was seniors in the district. They were looking to get into some of the homes; they can't afford it. They feel neglected that they can't get into those homes and they really want to avail of it but they can't afford it. They're living in their own homes and they're depressed. They just don't want to be there.

In regard to the health part of it, Mr. Speaker, again, I spoke on the Botwood hospital – and I know the Premier stood there yesterday and said we were going to get 20 beds in 2019, but 20 beds is not what they wanted. They want the 24-hour emergency service put back. They really spoke to me on that and I didn't see that in this budget. Mr. Speaker, that was closed by the previous administration. That word keeps coming up, but now I guess they're in the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, those are just some of the issues that I got going to the door, and those are the people who helped me make up my mind, listening to the people of my district. They really want that service because the 24-hour service, I can't preach it enough that in Leading Tickles and Fortune Harbour, when you have to drive 1½ hours away to get to a hospital and in the wintertime that turns into two hours, maybe 2½ hours to get there – especially if it's heart trouble, and that is the big one that everybody is concerned about. They need to be assessed at the 24-hour emergency service, to be assessed or treated, and that's what they really want, especially on the health part of it.

Mr. Speaker, just before that there was work done on that hospital. There was a new roof put on there. There was some X-ray equipment put in there. There was state-of-the-art lab and X-ray equipment put there and new beds. There was a lot of work put in that hospital, but only have the 24-hour emergency service taken away, it's poor and the people of that district really don't agree with that service the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

There hasn't been any change in the budget to alleviate some of those facts, Mr. Speaker. Cellphone service, that's another big concern I got into. People down around the outlining area of Fortune Harbour, some part of Point Leamington and some part of Leading Tickles, they don't have cellphone service done there. Wooddale, a great farming place in our Exploits District, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of farming happening there, but they have no cellphone service. They got no Internet services.

I was speaking to one of the businesses that set up there just probably two years ago and they have no cellphone service. How are they supposed to run a business? Even though they

are growing their crops, they are doing what they're doing, but they can't relate to other customers. They can't get their produce fast enough out of there because they have no cellphone services. We all know what it is for cellphone service today. That's the way we're connected. We all have them right here. We're even connected here. So, why can't those people be connected for doing business in those areas?

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, that's what was brought to me at my doors, the ones I visited. Those are the people who put me here and those are the people that I'll stand behind. I won't let the issues go, but as for right now, I'll get a chance over the summer to talk to my constituents, as I go door to door and different functions and I'll talk to them again to see how they feel, what they want and I'll bring those issues again back to the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to take a few minutes, and it's a great opportunity, obviously, to speak to Concurrence. Yesterday, in Estimates, I had the first time of sitting on this side. Normally, I had the opportunity to Chair the Resources Committee for the first three years of my time here in the House of Assembly and had the opportunity as well to listen from the other side.

I had the opportunity to share a great morning with both my colleagues, the Member for St. John's Centre and, obviously, the Member for Bonavista. Both very knowledgeable when it comes to education; both former educators, former administrators, former leader of the NLTA and two Members I have whole lot of respect for and their positions.

Like my colleague had mentioned earlier, there was a tremendous amount of information that changed sides yesterday. We didn't stick, necessarily, to the script and to the text. We

broke away and had a great conversation, as far as I was concerned. I was really happy to take it because, Mr. Speaker, I think every time we have an opportunity to engage in debate here in the House of Assembly is an education for us all. That's the way that I take this. I take criticism usually constructively, and as long as it's given in that manner, Mr. Speaker, I have no problems with it whatsoever.

With regard to my department, I want to take a few minutes to provide an overview of the budget for Education and Early Childhood Development and, actually, highlight some of the activities for this past year.

The total gross budget for the department, Mr. Speaker, was \$836,307,500. That was comprised of \$1,069,800 for Executive Services; \$3,487,800 in Corporate Services; \$771,890,000 in kindergarten to grade 12; and just under \$60 million for Early Childhood Development.

Mr. Speaker, the Education Action Plan has been the primary focus of our work over this past year and it will continue to be so for kindergarten to grade 12. *Budget 2019* has increased funding to support the implementation of the plan by just over \$6 million, for a total budget this year of \$13.2 million. This includes \$9 million in Teaching Services; \$2 million of professional learning for teachers; \$975,000 for other additional human resources; over a half a million dollars in learning resources; \$238,000 for youth apprenticeships and co-operative education; \$180,000 for a new case management system; and \$40,000 in bursaries for teachers to upgrade math.

Just to provide more detail in terms of what that means directly in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. There are 21 new reading specialists this current year, increasing to 104 over the next two years; 54 teaching and learning assistants hired this school year, increasing to over 200 over the next two years; and 13.5 additional teacher-librarians this current school year, increasing to over 39 over the next two years.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the budget this year for Early Childhood Development is just over \$59 million. Our work has been guided in recent years by the Early Learning and Child Care Framework; 22 million was allotted over

three years through this bilateral agreement with the federal government, supporting approved accessibility and affordability for child care for low- and middle-income families. More specifically, the funding is supporting and expanding and enhancing the operating grant programs, changes to the Child Care Services Subsidy Program and enhancing the Child Care Capacity Initiative.

We're also improving the quality of Early Learning and Child Care by enhancing grants, bursaries and professional learning for early childhood educators; establishing the Capital Renovation Grant and establishing the Quality Improvement Grant program.

Mr. Speaker, there's an overall increase in the budget for teaching services for 2019-2020 of just over \$1.4 million, and, as noted, we have additional teaching and learning assistance, reading specialists, learning resource teachers and English as a second-language teachers.

Mr. Speaker, we must all strive to do our best knowing that what we do impacts and can improve the day-to-day lives of our young people in every corner of our province.

I look forward to working with the all the staff in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, with each of my hon. colleagues in this House and with the people of my district. I certainly welcome – and I mean that, Mr. Speaker – all input on our important initiatives as we work on the continued implementation of the Education Action Plan and our early childhood programs and services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time and, certainly, I appreciate the opportunity, always, to stand in my place and bring the good news of the department.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to this.

I understand the realities of this province, fiscally and such, but also the realities of the diversity of this province in size and geographics and how we are all spread out, but what I really want to talk about is Labrador and the importance of providing services to those communities.

Unlike the Island, we are very sparsely populated. We don't have our neighbour just next door. When it comes to between communities, it's over 200 to 300 kilometres. So, improving services to these communities is very important. It's been a long-standing issue in Labrador about improving services to these small communities, but we also have to look at community-based solutions that also take the input of Labradorians themselves because we know our land, we know our people and we know how we want things done. We also have to look at the ways that these are all laid out. That's what is really important and I believe it's a very important issue when it comes to this.

Also, if you look at addiction services, addictions is a long-standing issue and a long-standing problem for Labradorians and solutions in the community are ones that most Labradorians feel is the best approach, to keep people in their communities when they are dealing with these things. Taking them out of their communities sometimes causes adverse effects and I think when we have solutions to addictions, it should be community-based solutions.

We need to build on communities this way because on top of that, when you look at these addiction problems, you also look at food security and you also look at mental health services and all these things. These are all small issues combining into large issues. It's not just the North Coast or the South Coast, it also includes East and West, too, when it comes to food security and addiction services. It all goes hand in hand in the end. When you compile all these issues on top of each other, it creates a much larger issue and that's where we need to start, we need to start in the communities.

We also have to look at unique approaches to these as well. It doesn't all have to be massive spending and massive costs to the community. It needs to take an approach that is community based and community driven and community led, and that's where I stand on that one.

We also have to look at the affordability of going to Labrador, which also is another issue that compounds onto other issues. If it takes a lot of money to leave Labrador and come to Labrador, then sometimes opportunities escape us, and that's where we need to really look at finding solutions to that problem as well; affordability of going in and out.

Sometimes an opportunity for a young person to travel and to learn and to broaden their mind, sometimes gets hampered by the cost of just leaving home. These are also missed opportunities for our people home because you don't bring back the expertise and they always want to come home. Labradorians always want to come home. We have to look at that as a solution, too.

That's why we have to find ways to work with industry, to work with individuals, to work with governments and stakeholders to find answers to these solutions. Sometimes they're not at a massive cost. Sometimes it's just adjustments and maybe something regulatory, and maybe it also involves bringing competition into the system to make a more diverse way of travelling.

We have to keep looking at these opportunities. We have to keep looking at opportunities for our youth. We need to make sure that they are engaged, make sure that they are understanding of the issues and we listen to their solutions because sometimes they're the ones that have the greatest ideas, and I know that for a fact.

When I was campaigning, I talked to all three schools in my district, and all three schools, those students were the brightest minds, they had better questions for me in debate than I actually had at the chamber of commerce debate. I'll tell you, they kept me on my toes, those ones did. That's why we have to look at the youth, too, and listen to what they have to say when it comes to what's going on.

Do you know what? They're engaged. They're following all of this. They know what's going on and we have to listen to them. That's very important. We have to continue to give opportunities to them so that they can broaden their minds, especially, home in Labrador. When you give them opportunities, they always come back.

You look at down home now, there are a group of tech people who went away to school and now they're back in Labrador offering technology services in Labrador West. So this is a whole new industry that can happen at home. That's why we need to keep encouraging people that do leave to come back with their expertise, because once we've got that expertise home, it stays home, and that's the most important thing.

We also have to look at more affordable ways to look at senior care. If we look at my district right now, there is no seniors' home. There's not really much for home care, and long-term care is very small. We need to find solutions to help these seniors in my community, because it's a new thing.

My community has only been there since '59. So we never had seniors sticking around, but now we do. We're at the third, fourth, fifth generation of people in Labrador West. These people don't want to leave, but there are no options for them other than to leave; especially when the cost of iron ore goes through the roof, the cost of housing goes through the roof, and these people can't afford to stay in very expensive housing that doesn't even meet the needs of their advanced age.

So we need to look at ways to accommodate more seniors housing on a level that is appropriate for seniors. We also need to look at the next stage of it when it comes to care homes, but also ways to keep them in their home at an affordable level that they don't have to worry about maintenance and repairs and stuff like that, that they physically can't do anymore. So we need to find solutions for that.

I believe in community-based solutions, where the community is very involved from start to finish on the solutions, because once you do that, you know what that community needs.

We're a very diverse people. We're spread out over a huge territory.

The Minister of Health said it himself, and I agree with him a hundred per cent on this one. We're a province but we're also a territory. We're actually spread out like a territory. We have to take solutions from the North to apply here, too, because they're the ones who are doing it now and we probably have to adapt to that.

Like I said, for me to come here, I'm 5,000 kilometres away from home. I live in a community that is literally by itself, in the woods, next to a mountain. For me to drive to another community, the next community is Nalcor, which really is a town, Little Churchill Falls, but it's owned by Nalcor. So it's not really a community.

The next one is yours, Mr. Speaker, Lake Melville. Like I said, that's a five- or six-hour drive. So we're a very diverse, spread out population. So where our solutions need to come in place is community-based solutions.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Members of the House for a warm welcome yesterday, and thank you very much for welcoming me here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

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

I've been sitting here this morning, we had our budget debate and we had our budget vote. I listened to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, I listened to some Liberals across the way there, and what I heard this morning was - I've heard it a couple of times now - playing politics. If playing politics is representing the 16,000 bosses I got from Grand Falls-Windsor to Buchans, then so be it. That's exactly what I'm going to do, because that's exactly what I was voted to do.

In my opinion, we were given an excellent opportunity. You can spend millions of dollars on a study to go through the province and find out exactly what the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want or need. Arguably, every household, just about every household in Newfoundland and Labrador was knocked on and almost everybody was talked to.

Instead of having a million-dollar study, we got to do this study for free - six weeks ago, eight weeks ago, 10 weeks ago - when we talked to the constituents, when we went door to door. And what did the study come up with, the free study that we saved millions on? They gave us hundreds of ideas. We didn't put hundreds of ideas across the floor that we wanted for the budget, we put across eight.

We were told, you know what? Even the staunchest Liberals in my district said if the Liberals get in, we'd like a minority government. This gives all 40 Members the opportunity to work together.

This budget was brought down before the election. The same budget was put to us after the election, and there are reasons why we didn't vote for it and there are reasons - those reasons are there was no collaboration, and that's what we felt. As far as we were concerned, we didn't need those eight items implemented today. It wasn't said, okay, let's implement those eight items; let's spend more money.

You look at \$40 million spent on Canopy Growth. Arguably, three of the four items could've been covered in that \$40 million. The hospice was \$3 million, insulin pumps, and 1.6 kilometre busing. These are items that could've been covered. We were looking to get all of it. Yes, we were looking to get all eight items covered, but if there was a teamwork or collaboration to cover two items, this would've shown the province that yes, we are here to work together for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Unfortunately, that's passed now and we didn't get a chance to do it. But make no mistake, our voices were heard today and we are speaking for our constituents.

Is the budget bad? Of course not. There are things in the budget that we are thankful for. I know in Grand Falls-Windsor we're getting a

new long-term care facility, and I couldn't be happier. I'm just as happy as anybody else. So, yes. So we're not saying that the whole budget is bad by no means.

Our vote today, in my opinion, was a reflection of the lack of team work, collaboration and things that could've been done. Like I say, it was an opportunity that was missed and, unfortunately, it was missed today.

For anybody talking about we're playing politics, we're not playing politics. We're speaking for our constituents, and make no mistake, taking down a government, that's the furthest thing from our mind right now. If the government is to fall, it's going to be the government's fault, make no mistake about that, because they refuse to give the proper dedication to working with us and finding better solutions for what we're looking for.

Just some of these things out of our eight that we were looking for, for instance. The hospice in Grand Falls-Windsor, it's something, once again, that's been years and years of people working towards it. I know that the government also said that they are going to be committed to it, which is great, but we still don't know where that money is coming from.

All the Estimates are done now, all the information is brought forth, so we're still looking for an answer of where that money is coming from. It wasn't implemented into the budget, so that's something small that could've been implemented into the budget one time.

The 1.6-kilometre busing, over and over and over again – why? Because it's so important. It's very important. Like anything else, Mr. Speaker, sometimes action isn't required until an accident or a death occurs. Unfortunately, that's the way things happen sometimes. I guarantee you, if somebody in one of the Member's districts every get hurt, God forbid, or a child gets hurt, I guarantee you action will be taken then, but, unfortunately, it's too late at that point. That's how things work is that no action seems to be taken sometimes until you get a result like that and that's very, very unfortunate.

The insulin pumps: Again, there are people, young people with Type 1 diabetes and these

people have to suffer now and dish out \$7,000 or whatever it is for an insulin pump after the age of 25 if they don't meet that deadline. Of course, we made some progress, which is great. I'm not going to stand here and say that there was no progress made because there was some progress made, but we wanted more. We wanted things that we heard at the doorsteps, that we heard from our constituents and it's not something that we're going to let go.

Child care is the other one. Child care is huge and, unfortunately, it's the determining factor for young families if they're going to have a child or not. Can you imagine? There are people out there that make a decision, a newly married couple at 25 or 26 years old, they sit down and they say let's discuss having a child sort of thing. We can't because we can't afford it. I make a good living. I can take \$2,500 or \$3,000 a month, which can be a good living. Well, now, we have to pay out \$1,400 a month in child care. That can be a deciding factor whether to have a first child, second child. Our population is going to continue to decline because of this, and it's decisions like this that we got to look at down the road.

Again, the decision made from this side, and it was an individual decision, this is something that we all agreed upon, was not to vote for this budget, not because we hated everything inside the budget but because there was no work. The people of my district were so elated when they found out that it was minority government, that we were going to work together. We're going to be forced to work together. There was no working together whatsoever. That's the reason why we voted this way today.

Again, I'm happy that there are certain things in it, but the eight things that we put forth, the fact that not one of those things – not one of them – were looked at and said, you know what, guys, we can do this. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve this. We can find a way of getting this done without an over-expenditure. Not one item was done, not one, and that is a blatant disregard, not for us, it's not for us, but a blatant disregard for the people that we represent, and that's not something that we're going to stand for.

That's why we stood, voted no on this budget, and let's just say that this is the way it's going to be. If they choose not to collaborate, if they choose not to work with us for the people we represent, that's what you're going to get in the future, and we won't stand for it.

I want to thank the beautiful people of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans for voting me in, you voted me in for a reason, and you are all my bosses, I got 16,000 bosses out there and that's who I'm going to answer to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time, I would move that we adjourn debate on the Concurrence Motion, and I would suggest that we recess the House until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands in recess until 2 p.m., consistent with Standing Order 9(1)(b).

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 for the afternoon part of this day.

We have no guests that have been identified, so we'll get right into Members' statements.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we'll hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Ferryland, Mount Pearl - Southlands, Torngat Mountains,

Placentia West - Bellevue, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, and Corner Brook. The last two of which we'll need to confirm they have leave.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize and congratulate a constituent of mine, Tracy Aspell Coady.

Tracy was awarded the Hockey NL Executive of the Year Award on Saturday June 8, 2019. Tracy is a mother of three children who are all very involved in sports. In 2010, she became a member of the Southern Shore Minor Hockey Association. Tracy has held different positions over the past nine years on the Southern Shore Minor Hockey Association and currently holds the position of president since 2017.

Tracy is involved in other organizations such as the Don Johnson Hockey League, the Interlocking House League, the female under 12 Metro League and NL Triple A Hockey League.

Based on Tracy's contribution and dedication to hockey, I could not think of someone more deserving of this award. Tracy has dedicated so many volunteer hours to the sport of hockey in the region and is a great asset to the success of hockey in the District of Ferryland.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members in the House to join me in congratulating Tracy on the Hockey NL Executive of the Year Award.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, the 2019 Mount Pearl Focus on Youth Awards was a tremendous success and highlighted the great talent,

athleticism and intellectual ability possessed by some very amazing youth in my community.

These individuals included: Mount Pearl Female Youth of Year and S. T. E. M. Award winner, Sarah Kennedy; Male Youth of the Year, Cameron Kinsella; Youth Volunteer of the Year, Claire Osmond; Male Youth Athlete of the Year, Max Tavenor; Female Youth Athlete of Year, Kate Sullivan; Youth Team of the Year, St. Peter's Junior High grade nine boys volleyball team; RNC Youth In Service Award winner, Michael Chislet; Youth Group of the Year, Mount Pearl Senior High 2017-2018 student council; Performing Arts Award winner, Grace Nolan; Visual Arts Award winner, Megan Fitzgerald; Literary Arts Award winner, Lily Perchard; Official of the Year, Renee Quick; Adult Volunteer Working with Youth Award winner, May Ann Hounsell; and Adult Volunteer Working with Youth in Sport Award winner, Trevor Budgell.

There were also performing arts recognition awards presented to the cast of *Footloose: The Musical* from O'Donel High, the O'Donel High School Jazz Band, and the cast, crew and band of *Happy Days* – the Musical.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating these amazing individuals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: I rise today to pay tribute to the Makkovik volunteer ground search and rescue team.

On May 1, an aircraft crashed in bad weather approximately 75 kilometres Southeast of Makkovik. There were two military aircraft in the area but blizzard-like conditions prevented the rescue crews from accessing the crash site.

A team of nine rescuers on snowmobile conducted the search. As the team approached the site, they left their snowmobiles and

climbed. Nearing the plane, they actually had to crawl the steep slope, protecting themselves from the wind and blowing snow.

Sam Rutherford was seriously injured with six broken ribs and a shattered and compressed sternum. Unfortunately, the second person, Alan Simpson, had succumbed to his injuries.

I talked with a rescuer who told me that they took great comfort in being able to rescue Rutherford, and bringing back Mr. Simpson was good to allow the family closure in his passing.

Please applaud the heroic efforts of Henry Broomfield, Errol Andersen, Perry Dyson, Rex Voisey, Andy Guy Voisey, Perry Voisey, Robert Gear, Roy Martin, Marv Clark and also a long time ground search and rescue team member and rescue coordinator, Barry Andersen.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise here today among such wonderful colleagues to speak of a great woman. She has been among us for the past year or so, and I feel it's a great honour to tell you of her most recent accomplishments.

Ms. Alden Spencer is from the great District of Placentia West - Bellevue and she is one of the House's Pages. Ms. Spencer is a well-rounded individual as her four-page resume will tell you. Her community involvements are vast and range from being a sea cadet, to a dancer, to a brand ambassador, to a blood donor.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, she has just convoked from Memorial University with honours and Bachelor of Arts, majoring in political science and minoring in history.

She has been awarded the highest award offered by the University of New Brunswick school of law, the Lord Beaverbrook Scholarship. It is the faculty's most prestigious award and recipients are chosen from those with qualities suggesting

attainment of distinction in the legal profession. They are at the top of their undergraduate program with solid LSAT scores.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Alden Spencer is an extraordinary woman. I ask that the Members of this great House rise to join me in wishing Ms. Spencer congratulations on her achievements and wish her much success in her future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Well done.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there is rarely a dull moment for volunteer firefighters and first responders throughout the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

A waterfall swimming hole in Spaniard's Bay, known as the Gorge, was the location of some intense moments yesterday evening. A group of young teenagers hiked to the falls but, before long, a 13-year-old boy fell and sustained significant damage to his leg. The kids knew they would need help in getting their friend out of the woods in order to receive medical attention.

A call was made to the ambulance, the RCMP and to the volunteer fire department of Spaniard's Bay-Tilton. Before the firefighters could reach the boy, they also had to hike through the steep, wooded area. First aid was needed and it was determined that even more assistance would be required.

The Avalon North Wolverines Search and Rescue were also on hand but, given the steep, wooded terrain, it took a search and rescue helicopter stationed out of Gander to maneuver above the Gorge and to repel the young man up. He was then airlifted to the Janeway hospital where he received treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the volunteer firefighters of Spaniard's Bay-Tilton and all first responders for their outstanding dedication and professional service.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, who needs to seek leave first.

MR. DAVIS: I'd like to seek leave to make a Member's statement.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very excited to stand in this hon. House to recognize the fantastic accomplishment of one of my constituents, Mr. Alex Newhook.

An alumnus of Vanier Elementary, Alex left home at 14 to attend boarding school to develop his hockey skills against higher levels of competition. The dedication and commitment to his craft allowed him to be named the MVP for the Canadian Junior Hockey League. Being named the best player out of some 2,000 players from 10 different junior leagues is quite an accomplishment.

This season, Alex led the BC Hockey League with 102 points. He has also represented Canada at the world junior under-18 hockey championships and was their leading point-getter. This past Friday, Alex was selected 16th overall in the first round of the 2019 NHL Entry Draft by the Colorado Avalanche, the first Newfoundlander and Labradorian to be drafted in the first round since the great Danny Cleary in 1997.

I know all of my constituents in Virginia Waters - Pleasantville will join me in congratulating the Newhook family, Shawn, Paula, Abby and Alex. This is a testament to the passion and commitment that the entire family has made to

help Alex achieve this significant accomplishment.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Alex and his entire family, and wish him the best in all his future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Corner Brook, who also needs to seek leave.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, under two very different circumstances, today I recognize two incredible individuals. First, and with great regret, I must inform the House of the passing of a member of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, musician, musical educator, community leader and treasured adopted son of Corner Brook. On Monday, Gary Graham succumbed to cancer.

Recognition of his accomplishments ranged from an Honorary Doctorate from Memorial University, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the personal satisfaction of a message inscribed on a handwritten thank-you card from one of his students who went on to perform with one of the continent's most prestigious symphonies and attend one of the continent's most prestigious music schools. Doctor G's blindingly beautiful legacy will shine as brightly as his musical talent.

On a happier occasion, this Saturday family and friends gathered for the 100th birthday celebration of World War II veteran, community pioneer and a great man, Robert Grant of Corner Brook.

Mr. Grant served in the 166 Newfoundland Field Regiment, taking him into active duty in North Africa and in Italy. Today, an active member of Branch 13 of the Royal Canadian Legion, he resides at the Veterans Pavilion of Western Memorial Regional Hospital, pleasantly keeping

the nurses and attendants on top of their game. With the energy of a 22-year-old still, and still sharply dressed and with full medal decorations on display, he represents Corner Brook's wonderful past, present and future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to rise and join with me in celebrating one life cut too short, and another who thankfully continues to bless us. Happy 100th birthday to Robert Grant of Corner Brook.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is truly an honor to rise today in this House of Assembly to congratulate students from this province whose group, Paradigm Hyperloop, will soon be competing at the SpaceX Hyperloop Competition in California.

With the support of the provincial and federal governments, the students from Paradigm Hyperloop are working on a ground mode of transportation with speeds of over 450 kilometres per hour.

This will be an incredible experience and opportunity for these students. Past student participants have leveraged this experience to give them employment opportunities at such firms as Tesla and Google, while others have created firms right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I invite all hon. Members in this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the students from Paradigm Hyperloop and wish them the best of luck in this competition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I thank the hon. minister across for an advance copy of your statement. Myself, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, are certainly in the same loop as the minister in congratulating the Paradigm Hyperloop team.

Over the past number of years, our post-secondary students have achieved national and international success in many technical and academic competitions. This has caught the attention of the world as leading employers have come to the province looking for first-class talent for their respective organizations.

I ask all hon. Members to join me again in congratulating the Paradigm Hyperloop team and to wish them the very best of luck at the SpaceX Hyperloop Competition in California.

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.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to the students of the Paradigm Hyperloop team on their successes to date, and I wish them the best of luck as they head to this year's SpaceX Hyperloop Competition in California.

I've seen the pod from the last competition in the faculty entrance and I recommend everyone go, and I know that we have world-class educators and researchers who are preparing these students for their competition. I'm proud to see them return to the global stage so they can once again showcase to the world what our province and our students are made of.

I commend the team on their innovation and perseverance, and I wish them continued success in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the last day of school in our province and I am honoured to rise in this hon. House to congratulate more than 66,000 students on a successful school year. I also extend my gratitude to the teachers, administrators and staff who work hard every day to provide safe, productive and inclusive learning environments for our children and youth.

This has been a productive year for our students, educators, the department and the implementation of the Education Action Plan. In less than a year, close to 40 per cent of the actions have been completed or are substantially under way. The plan, which guides actions to implement the recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, will result in a strengthened education system that is more responsive to the needs of students.

This year, 40 schools participated in the Phase 1 implementation of a new student services model to improve the education experience for students throughout the province. An additional 40 schools have been selected for the 2019-2020 school year.

Budget 2019 has increased funding to support the implementation of the plan by just over \$6 million, for a total budget this year of \$13.2 million. That includes \$9 million in teaching services and \$2 million in professional learning for teachers.

Mr. Speaker, through the Education Action Plan, we are providing an educational environment that prepares students for lifelong learning and future academic and career opportunities.

I invite my colleagues in this hon. House to join me in congratulating students, educators, staff

and administrators who have worked diligently throughout the school year and in wishing them a safe and enjoyable summer break.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We, too, join the government in congratulating the more than 66,000 students on another successful school year. We hope that their hard work will result in good marks that they can enjoy all summer long.

We hope that the many teachers, assistants, substitutes and school staff will also enjoy their summer after another year of doing one of the most important things we do as a society, ensuring the education of our next generation, developing lifelong learners.

Mr. Speaker, we continue our call on the government to do all that it can to continue to improve our education system. Our graduation rate is still too low. Our math, science and literacy scores still fall below the national average. Too many recommendations from the Premier's task force report – some-60 per cent – are still unfulfilled, and teaching staff are left concerned that they may lack the necessary resources to fulfill them.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Action plans work because teachers work hard to make them work for their students.

The most valuable resource any action plan can give a teacher is time. Time to work with students individually; time to plan; time to meet with teachers and parents; time to respond to the needs of students, and that means a needs-based allocation model.

I join with the minister and Members in thanking students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators who worked hard throughout the year and in wishing them a safe, enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the government ran on this election budget on which the House voted today, but the electorate gave the budget a vote of non-confidence by returning a government with a minority.

Why did the Premier refuse to make adjustments to the budget to reflect the priorities he heard from the electorate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind everyone once again that the budget we introduced to the House of Assembly, and, indeed, to Newfoundland and Labrador on April 16, was the exact budget that we put in place.

I just want to remind people who are watching today that it was the Leader of the Opposition who said that this would not be the budget that we introduced, and we consistently said that we did.

There are a lot of good things in this budget. Mr. Speaker, it's balanced. It puts us on a track to a

balanced budget in '22-'23, Mr. Speaker. The initiatives, that I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition has a letter that he wrote to me, some of those – many of those initiatives, I would say, almost all eight of them, are issues that we are currently work on and in varying degrees of implementation.

Let's remind the people of the province that the Leader of the Opposition, when I asked him to cost up those eight, he could not do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the exchange of discussion revolved around not increasing the spending of government.

In view of the Premier's attitude, I would ask the Minister of Finance: Can we expect an invitation to collaborate on creating the 2020 budget, and will he provide us with the information necessary to help him make an informed decision?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, in the preamble there, and I want to address this because the letters that were going back and forth between the Leader of the Opposition and myself – the Leader of the Opposition mentioned areas where they needed to find efficiencies. Well, that is really code to the people of our province: cuts. We all know that when we look at a budget like this, one area that we would not want to cut is things like education and, of course, health care.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Leader of the Opposition if he would outline what those efficiencies would be, or cuts, he would not do so. So it was very important to work in collaboration with a Leader of the Opposition who would not even give us a clear idea of where it is he wanted to go. That's all we were asking for.

Mr. Speaker, we are more than willing to collaborate with all 40 Members of this House

of Assembly, and we will do so as we start budget preparations for '20-'21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to the creative terminology that we'll be treated to, no doubt, as the government moves closer to its balanced target which we're told requires savings of \$617 million by that year.

Consultation is more than saying my door is open and send me your ideas. True collaboration is sitting down with us, giving us all the information that Cabinet has and evaluating the options with us.

Will the Minister of Finance commit to holding multiple collaboration meetings with the PC caucus representatives in advance of budget 2020, and when will these take place?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I agree, collaboration is more than just fancy words and so on. It's very clear that if you want to make a submission to a budget process you should come with the amount of money or the budget that you would see that is required.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, that did not happen in this last round. Hopefully, when the Leader of the Opposition comes with proposals – and we will make room for that collaboration – it would come with an expense that he would see, or the cuts that he would be proposing that they would be attached to. Clearly, that was missing from the last round, in the last letters that were back and forth. So these are the expectations on all of us.

If you have an idea, if you want to cut something, let us know where it is you want to cut. At least let us know the department that you're looking at.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Does she agree with the government officials and the consultant who testified at the Muskrat Falls inquiry that it's too late to prevent the rising of methylmercury levels?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to methylmercury, that file has been a priority for this government.

The health of the residents in that area, I can tell you, is a priority. A number of us were a part of that meeting in October 2016, that 12-hour meeting. Since that time, a lot of work has been done, working with our Indigenous partners, and more than 1,200 samples are posted online. It's there for anyone to see.

The methylmercury levels are extremely low. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in most of the samples the levels are too low to detect, but it's certainly a file that remains a priority. We have a first-class monitoring program, the design of which was supported by all of the Indigenous groups on the IEAC committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I just had to look and see where the Minister of Natural Resources was sitting because I did point the question out to her. The next question I point out is, tomorrow, the Minister of Natural Resources –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. EVANS: – will testify at the Muskrat Falls inquiry.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: If asked, will she say that it's too late for wetland capping?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the people of the province again, our priority is to ensure that we protect the health of the residents and that we do what we can. As I said in my first question, the IEAC applauded the water monitoring plan that we have in place. It is one of the best plans that's out there; more than 1,200 samples to date, very low or below the level of detection.

Mr. Speaker, this is important to us as well. The health of the people in Labrador that reside close to that project, that's a priority for me as Labradorian – forget my MAE hat and forget my MHA, it is important, Mr. Speaker. I think it is probably important that I remind the hon. Member during the IEAC not all of the members agreed to the soil removal. In fact, there was indications that (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Your time has expired.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to mitigation, there are only so many levels of mitigation that's being put forward: One was capping and one was soil removal. They couldn't get everyone on board with soil removal. The option left to them was capping. Now we're told during testimony at the Muskrat Falls inquiry that capping, to be effective, would have actually started earlier, Mr. Speaker. So it's basically too late.

The issue of methylmercury mitigation was never taken seriously by this Liberal government. With a revolving door of ministers in Municipal Affairs and Environment, they procrastinated making the decision until it was

too late. It's now too late. The Minister of Natural Resources has been in her post for the duration of this time. I ask the minister –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

MS. EVANS: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the people of the province understand that soil removal of this magnitude have never been attempted anywhere else in the world. As I mentioned in my second answer, there is some scientific evidence to indicate that going down that road, should we have chosen to, would actually elevate levels of methylmercury. That's not what we want to do. We had an IEAC that was put in place and that committee, they did not all agree, but they actually applauded the design of the water monitoring.

What I say to the hon. Member and I've been around this House for six years, the only reason we are dealing with this problem is because we had Muskrat Falls where the Joint Review Panel was kicked out, Mr. Speaker, nobody got to finish the work, the homework was not done upfront and we are doing our best to find our way through this (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, it's been over a year now since the Shoal Harbour causeway in Clarenville was closed to two-way traffic after failing a structural engineering assessment. Despite numerous meetings and letters, the minister has refused to accept any responsibility for the bridge.

Mr. Speaker, how can the minister expect the Town of Clarenville to pay millions of dollars for a bridge they don't own?

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

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

I ask the Member opposite if he wants to go back about 12 or 14 months ago, it's quite clear that the Department of Transportation and Works does not own this bridge. We actually brought it to the Department of Justice for an opinion, Mr. Speaker. The opinion is consistent.

Mr. Speaker, if the Town of Clarenville thought we owned this bridge, why did they make an application for municipal capital works? Mr. Speaker, this bridge is not the property of the Department of Transportation and Works.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, there is no written transfer agreement or legal contract that specifies the causeway was ever transferred from the province to the town. In fact, a former Liberal minister of Transportation and Works stated in September 1995: We have no interest in transferring infrastructure to the council which will result in the council encountering unreasonable maintenance costs.

Why is the minister refusing to do the right thing, sit down with the Town of Clarenville and work out a solution?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, the fact is the Town of Clareville has been doing the maintenance on this bridge since 1995. This bridge is not within the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation and Works. This bridge was part of a transfer agreement like we see around the province all the time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the Town of Clareville has been doing some work on this bridge with the Department of Municipal Affairs which, rightfully so, is where it belongs.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, if this bridge was transferred in 1995, like the minister says, why would they do an inspection in 1997 and deem the bridge due for replacement in 2014?

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

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

If the Member opposite were to do his research, he would know that we do bridge inspections every two years, Mr. Speaker. So if this a bridge that we were responsible for –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROCKER: – Mr. Speaker, we would have done this in 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015. It's very clear here, Mr. Speaker, where this bridge belongs and it belongs within the jurisdiction of the Town of Clareville.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, this a piece of regional infrastructure used by thousands of commuters and tourists daily, as well as commercial traffic and Transportation and Works. An outright closure of the causeway would be devastating to the businesses and commerce of the entire region, not to exclude the fact that Transportation and Works would have to go all the way around the Trans-Canada Highway to get to areas they're responsible for.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister convene a face-to-face meeting with all of the communities and stakeholders to find a way forward before the next construction season?

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, the conversation that needs to be had here, and the conversation I believe that's been had is with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment. The reality here is this outside the jurisdiction of Transportation and Works. We have these circumstances happen all around the province. Once we transfer a road, Mr. Speaker, that road is transferred. The responsibility to the road is transferred, maintenance and capital upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Member opposite to take up this issue with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, as they're the funding arm for this type of infrastructure work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, during the election the Premier committed to restoring 24-hour emergency service in Botwood at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Centre.

I ask the Premier: Will he reaffirm his commitment to restoring this important service to Botwood?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

The issue around 24-hour services is predicated on staffing with the new protective care unit wing at the Hugh Twomey Health Centre in Botwood. That will not come on stream until 2021. Only then will we know, (a), the number of staff available and their work allocation and workload and, (b), the demand in the district for out-of-hour services. At that point, a decision will be made, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: When the minister was asked, he was evasive in his answers. The minister said: I think it's definitely going to be examined and that there's no guarantee in life about this, any of this. Also, in Estimates, he said a decision would not be made until 2021.

I ask the Premier: Will he direct his minister to honour his campaign promise to the people of Botwood to restore 24-hour emergency service?

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

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

I believe I was quite clear in my initial answer just to the House, and it's consistent with previous comments. In 2021, the staffing levels at the Hugh Twomey will be known, as will the workload out of hours at the Hugh Twomey Centre. If there is a need for a 24-hour service at that stage, we will certainly look at it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Mr. Speaker, on June 11, I asked the minister where the money will come from to fund the Lionel Kelland Hospice. The minister said – and I quote: “The exact flow of money through the system, as it were, is a matter for the Estimates Committee. I'd be happy to deal with that there.”

Now, that the Estimates Committee have concluded, will the minister advise the House where the money will come from for this hospice?

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

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

On the Member opposite's behalf, the representative from the PC Party at Estimates asked that question and I delivered the answer to him on that occasion.

There is capital allocation within the regional health authorities and there is operating funds available for end-of-life care through federal transfers. At the time that we receive a more concrete proposal from the Lionel Kelland Hospice board, with whom we have met recently or at least officials have met, at the time we get a concrete proposal, we'll know exactly what the price ticket is, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: I thank the minister for his answer and, again, I thank him for the commitment.

Central Health reported a deficit of \$4.5 million at March 31, 2019. The Minister of Finance has said that they will work with Central Health to find the operating money.

Given the financial position of Central Health, will Central Health be expected to find the money?

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

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

The issue of the RHA deficits is always close to our hearts at this time of the year.

We will be meeting with the boards. Ultimately, the RHA deficit rolls up into the deficit of government and is funded through the votes that we have just passed in the budget, against which the Member opposite voted not in favour, but against. We will be in negotiations with the RHAs to stabilize their finances in the near future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I didn't see hospice inside the budget itself and that's one of the reasons why we voted against.

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland construction season has virtually ground to a half after the snap election, and the lack of permanent minister has paralyzed the department for over two months. Municipalities and contractors have been left standing by waiting for tenders to be called and awarded.

Can the minister update this House on where the department is finally going to get shovels in the ground?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: I'm going to have to ask the hon. Member to ask the question again, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: The Newfoundland construction season has virtually ground to a half after the snap election, and the lack of permanent minister has paralyzed the department for over two months. Municipalities and contractors have been left standing by waiting for tenders to be called and awarded.

Can the minister update this House on where the department is finally going to get shovels in the ground, please?

MR. SPEAKER: We'll try the minister again.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member knows it's been a long week. We were here until pretty late last night in the House answering questions in Estimates. We had a great four hours there.

As we discussed last night in the House, there are a lot of moving parts in the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment. I think it's 547 projects that we have moving through the system. There are tenders going out all the time and there's an approval process that's ongoing.

What I tell the hon. Member is, if it's not out the door, it will be out the door very, very soon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, we are well into the road construction season and there has been very few tenders announced by the minister. Municipalities and contractors have blamed the recent election for the seemingly two-month pause.

Can the minister update the House on his department's plan to get work started ASAP?

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

MR. CROCKER: Wow, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question. He should really check his information.

If you go and look at our Roads Plan, Mr. Speaker, the roads project that we announced in January has all been tendered. Mr. Speaker, our early tendering has been very successful. I believe, right now, we are into some northern and rural approvals, Mr. Speaker, but I believe we've expended somewhere close to 90 per cent of our budget so far this year.

I would encourage the hon. Member opposite to do some more research if he wants to talk about the tenders for Transportation and Works, Mr. Speaker. It's been this government that has brought in early tendering that has been so successful in our five-year Roads Plan, Mr. Speaker. It's hailed by the construction association. We get our tenders out early.

In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, some of the tenders he refers to were actually called last fiscal year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the salaried physician budget is reduced by \$3.5 million in budget '19-'20.

Does the minister have targets to reduce the number of doctors in the province?

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

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

We have a considerable increase in physicians, year upon year. The mode of payment is a matter of individual choice between fee for service and salaried.

The line adjustments that the Member opposite refers to are savings from locums, i.e. replacement physicians who come in on a short-term basis. I would suggest that's indicative of an improvement in physician supply at the specialist level and nothing worse.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated in Estimates that the salaried physician approval committee will decide what physician positions will be filled and that there is a rationalization of physicians.

I ask the minister: What criteria is he using to determine what salaried physician positions will be filled?

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

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

Once again, the mode of compensation of a physician is entirely a physician's choice. Traditionally, what has happened is the salaried physician approval committee will look at the physician or a post fee-for-service billing to ensure there is sufficient work there to justify a salary. If there is, a salary will be found and the money transferred to the salary budget from fee for service.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are constantly hearing about a shortage of family physicians throughout the province.

I ask the minister: How many doctors does he plan to reduce to achieve the budget reductions?

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

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

Memorial University and its family medicine program stands out in the country as one which is the most successful, or among the most successful, at retaining homegrown graduates at 10 years. Our retention rate is anywhere between 40 and 60 per cent.

The number of family doctors in this province has increased year on year and we continue to supplement them with nurse practitioners where appropriate. The advent to primary health care teams will reduce their workload and increase access, Mr. Speaker.

There are no planned reductions in physician numbers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, it's a line item in the budget that there were going to be cuts to the salary units, yet there will be no loss of doctors. That's good to hear. We'll see the numbers next year.

Mr. Speaker, today, NAPE issued a release of ambulance red alerts in areas serviced by Eastern Health. The president of NAPE said: These numbers are staggering and the truly frightening thing is it appears to be the situation is worsening.

I ask the minister: What specific actions is he taking to address the rise of ambulance red alerts?

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

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

The red alerts from the ambulances in Eastern Health fall into two categories. The most severe are level one, they are actually covered off with a collaborative arrangement within metro between St. John's, the regional health authority and the St. John's Regional Fire Department. So, treatment arrives, even though transport may be delayed.

We have, however, a significant initiative through Eastern Health to improve the availability of RHA ambulances and I'm sure we'll be in a position to make an announcement about that come the end of the summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, there was an alarming 341 red-alert incidents in 2017, the number increased to 460 in 2018. There've been 156 red alerts in the first quarter of this year alone.

I ask the minister: Why are the amounts of ambulance red alerts increasing and what are you doing to address this?

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

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

The second part of the question is answered by my previous answer. Eastern Health have, in actual fact, increased the number of rigs on the run over the course of the last year. We have a significant initiative through Eastern Health which will reduce the demand on that frontline ambulances and reduce, if not abolish completely, red alerts.

The announcement will be forth coming towards the end of the summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've been asking questions about the North Spur stability for days. We are not getting clear answers. Despite Nalcor's assertions, Hatch engineers did not review or approve SNC's work on the North Spur design, as well SNC used outdated calculations that would not have predicted the Mount Polley dam disaster.

I ask the minister: With so much on the line, why won't she allow an independent expert geotechnical review of the North Spur before impoundment?

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

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

Again, I will say that this is an important issue for the people of the province, in particular those that surround the Churchill River, and we take this very seriously. There have been over 30 different reviews of the North Spur. There have been multiple engineering firms that have done multiple tests. I named some of them yesterday, I won't name them again today.

We're going to do everything that we must do to ensure dam safety. It's obviously incredibly important. SNC-Lavalin is the engineer of record. They had to sign off on their designs. It was reviewed. The stabilization of the report has been reviewed multiple times by multiple different groups, engineering firms, and all of this is also ensuring it's under the Canadian dam safety regulations.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Nova Scotia have updated their salmon aquaculture regulations to better protect the environment. DFO is also developing tighter regulations; yet, Newfoundland ranks second last in North America in terms of legislation that protects wild salmon from open net-pen farming.

I ask the minister: Will he review our aquaculture legislation and codes to ensure they are legally enforceable and equal to the best practices for protecting wild stocks and marine environments?

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

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

The hon. Member will know, if he reflects on some of the matters that have been put forward to the public record, this government initiated that process months ago.

When we announced our Way Forward on aquaculture, developing our aquaculture industry for the benefit of the province, harmonizing, creating a sustainable resource, a sustainable industry for jobs in rural areas of our province while protecting our environment, what we said at that point in time was that we were going to engage in a regulatory review to make sure that we engage in best practices.

I am so proud of our industry. We're already using best practices, but, Mr. Speaker, this is all about getting even better, and that's exactly what this province and this government is all about. We will perform.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, the province is currently down a water bomber due to an incident last summer. The remaining aircraft are being rotated, leaving some forests in Lab West without adequate protection at times.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Works: How long until the damaged aircraft is repaired or replaced?

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.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, what we've done for this coming season is we work with the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources to ensure we have adequate water bomber service throughout the province. So what we'll be doing this summer is rotating the water bombers based on the expert advice we would receive from FLR.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the condition of the current water bomber, that's still undergoing some assessment. I'm more than happy to update the Member when we have further information on the repairs to the current water bomber.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, you stated on many occasions that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards was independent and you never interfered with his work. I have confirmation that your letter of April 26, 2018, was a request for opinion under section 36 and the Commissioner was consulted. This is inconsistent with your statement of May 3, 2018, in this House.

In your letter of May 31, 2019, you stated: I can confirm there are limited occasions whereby my office contacted the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. The Commissioner's independence has been compromised.

Premier, how can you say you never had no involvement in the process when documentation proves otherwise?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

That question has nothing to do with the administrative and fiscal responsibility of the Executive. I rule the question out of order.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With each passing day at the Muskrat Falls inquiry, we hear more disturbing testimony regarding the low balling of numbers and the withholding of information from the government and the public; yet, nobody seems to be held accountable. We know that the Commissioner has no mandate to recommend any criminal investigations or civil litigation relating to this matter.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Once this inquiry is completed, will you ensure there is a full review of the evidence presented at the inquiry and, if warranted, will you commit to engage with the authorities and/or legal counsel to ensure accountability for the decisions that have been made over the course of this project?

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

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

I appreciate the question from the Member opposite. It's a topic that he's brought up on numerous occasions and I appreciate that he does so.

As the minister responsible for convening all commissions of inquiry, including the one regarding Muskrat Falls, what I can say is that the mandate for all is the same. It is not the responsibility to determine criminal or civil

liability. However, what I can say is if criminal liability was something that came up during this inquiry, it's something that the RNC would be keeping an eye on or the RCMP. It's obviously something. Whenever there is criminal activity or anything of that nature, that's something they would keep an eye on.

Again, we don't want to predetermine what comes out of this inquiry. What I can say is of all the decisions that we've made in government, this is certainly one we're very proud of.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, it's my pleasure to table the 2018 annual report for Nalcor Energy and the 2018 annual report for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to table the 2018 annual report for the Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

I have two. In accordance with section 18 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I am advising the House that the members of the Management Commission

are: the Government House Leader, the Opposition House Leader, the Leader of the Third Party, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Member for Conception Bay South, the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, the Speaker, and the Clerk.

Also, in accordance with subsection 38(1) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I am tabling the report of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards dated June 25, 2019.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice, and by leave, move the following motion. That Ms. Sarah Stoodley replace Mr. Elvis Loveless as a Member of the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

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

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

Yesterday in Question Period, the Opposition Health critic, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, made some inquiries about concerns about prostate-specific antigen testing. I have checked with the provincial laboratory

service and Eastern Health. There have been no changes to whom can order that test, and the same criteria for that are in place, as have been for the last 20 years.

So if the Member opposite has a specific concern of a clinical nature, I would be happy to guide him as to where he might take it.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Further answers?

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, and Children, Seniors and Social Development – I'm not sure where she's going.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Member for Terra Nova was asking some questions about the bridge, and I just wanted to tell him that my department have been working with the town. I don't know if he's talking to the town, but we're working with the town. They're going to apply on the next round of applications.

As we continue to improve our efficiency, Mr. Speaker, our next round of applications we hope to be out in July.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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 inside 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.

This is not the first time this has been raised. It's been raised by a number of Members and colleagues; in particular, my colleague from Conception Bay South.

This is a safety issue. We do understand there are some adjustments made with courtesy busing and courtesy stops, but it's certainly very much inadequate for dealing with this issue. This is clearly a safety issue for our children.

School is getting out tomorrow. They will be let loose for the summer, and next fall we really want to see something done for the people of the province and very much in particular our youth. Our youth are our biggest resource, our most valuable resource and safety should be paramount.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 thank the hon. Member for his petition. Certainly, I'll agree with the hon. Member, safety is paramount for the students of Newfoundland and Labrador. We treat it very seriously within the department, and I can assure the Member that I will continue to – we're using this as a balanced approach. We had 70 courtesy stops back in September, Mr. Speaker. To date, we have 649.

I think we're on the right track and, hopefully, we'll continue to improve the policy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The government now requires regional health authorities to strictly enforce a policy that requires all applicants being assessed to have a physical care need to qualify for admission to a personal care home. Seniors with issues such as anxiety, depression, fear of falling and loneliness are no longer eligible. Many seniors who would have qualified just months ago are now being denied access.

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to revise the policy on personal care home access.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have spoken to this, but I have received several petitions. It is something that I've had personal care homes in and around my district that I have visited and I have relationships with who have contacted me about this. I know other Members have also been contacted as well from personal care homes in their areas.

Something has changed, Mr. Speaker. I know the minister says nothing has changed, but I can guarantee you that something has changed. Up until now, I don't think there was ever such a thing as level zero, for example. There was always Level 1, 2, 3. Now there's this level zero. Of course, when the minister says we're taking into account mental health and so on, I'm not saying there's no accounting for it.

The reality of it is that in the past, if you had a senior, for argument's sake, and let's say their spouse passed away, and you had a person living in their home and they were up in age and they were afraid at nighttime, afraid to be there by themselves. They could fix a meal but they

found it difficult to fix a meal. They could do the laundry but found it really hard to do the laundry. They were lonely, they needed some companionship and so on that wasn't there. So they could decide to go to a personal care home.

Those people are no longer getting in; certainly, not the way they used to be. They're prioritized as level zero. They're at the very bottom of the list, and by the time they ever get into a personal care home they could be ready for long-term care. That is a problem I'm hearing from personal care homes, and there's a concern that seniors have in my district and I know throughout the province, and I ask the minister to bear that in mind and to change back to the way it used to be.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services for a response.

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

The wording of the petition, which I acknowledge the Member brings on behalf of others, is actually founded on an inaccurate premise, Mr. Speaker. The levels of care framework that's in place, which was put in place in 2011 or even earlier, in actual fact stipulates a personal care need and is agnostic on the subject of whether or not this is physical or psychological.

As to the comments made by the Member afterwards, which are his own and I presume didn't come from the petition, there is no level zero. That is frankly inaccurate. If the Member opposite would like to come and have a discussion so that he can better inform his constituents on their next question around personal care homes, I'd be happy to arrange that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Residents of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans believe it is bad health practice to make people wait for so long when it comes to access for an MRI machine in Gander. A more reasonable option would be to establish an MRI machine in Grand Falls-Windsor so people can get the timely care they need. Early diagnosis means healthier people, much better outcomes and reduced costs for the health care system. Long wait times mean people get sick, their outcomes are poorer and the costs are higher.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Central Health to establish an MRI machine in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Mr. Speaker, I'm having people sit in front of me in my office in Grand Falls-Windsor and they're suffering paralysis as they're waiting to get into Gander to get access to this MRI machine. I know it's not something that can happen overnight, but I just want the Minister of Health to keep it in mind, sort of thing, that we have a big district that's west of Gander. There are lots of people between there and Deer Lake who need access to the MRI machine as well.

There are a lot of people, their health is deteriorating as we speak. Their wait times could be up to a year for this MRI machine. I'm not sure what time it shuts down in Gander, but I know there is definitely a need for one for Grand Falls-Windsor because, like I say, there are a lot of people west of Gander who need access to this machine.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand on behalf, again, of the people of Western Newfoundland and Newfoundland and Labrador concerning the hospital in Corner Brook. I assume, and I'm fairly confident, the hospital will be announced before we sit again in the House. I think that's great news for all Western Newfoundland and Labrador.

These people here are from St. John's, Conception Harbour and Conception Bay South, again. They're asking the government to reconsider and, hopefully – and I know the minister is working with the companies and also the Newfoundland and Labrador trades council and the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association to ensure that the work benefit is maximized for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Please God there will be no need for any protest this year, that cooler heads will prevail. With all the compromise the minister is trying to make with both groups and all the unions, that there will be local workers hired in the Corner Brook area and the hospital will be built on time, on schedule, on budget with the great skilled labourers and union workers that are in Western Newfoundland and all across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Once again, this will be my last time to present the petition before the hospital is announced. I just urge government again to work with everybody involved. If there is anything I can do, I would definitely help in whatever way possible. Like I did last summer with the Ironworkers, Mr. Speaker; like I did last summer to ensure that local workers are maximized and the benefits are maximized for the local community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Windsor Lake to stand in his place and introduce the motion, Motion 6.

The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: It's my understanding that after discussions I am to move, seconded by the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, that the private Member's resolution being debated today be amended by deleting the word "admonish" and by substituting instead the word "challenge."

MR. SPEAKER: A little procedural issue. So I ask the Member for Windsor Lake, you first of all need to move your motion and then you need to propose the amendment.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker.

So, in other words, I'd read the motion prior to amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. CROSBIE: That motion, prior to amendment, is contained in the papers today.

"BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

"(1) to admonish the House of Commons and Senate of Canada for passing Bill C-69 with provisions that violate the principle of joint management contained in the 1985 Atlantic Accord and its implementation legislation;

"(2) to take all reasonable measures, including Court challenges where necessary, to safeguard against conflicting federal legislation, the hard-won joint management rights that Newfoundland and Labrador secured under the 1985 Atlantic Accord and its implementation legislation; and

"(3) to refuse to enact any provincial law that will erode those rights."

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a seconder for that?

MR. CROSBIE: I have a seconder in the Member for Conception Bay - Bell Island.

MR. SPEAKER: Conception Bay East - Bell Island. Okay.

AN HON. MEMBER: East.

MR. SPEAKER: Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. CROSBIE: My apologies.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, no problem.

Now, you have an amendment.

MR. CROSBIE: Yes.

Again, seconded by the same Member, it is that the resolution being debated be amended by deleting the word "admonish" and substituting instead the word "challenge."

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I seek direction from the Clerk as to whether or not we need to recess to review that amendment or can we proceed.

Proceed?

CLERK (Barnes): (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. We can proceed.

It's been accepted?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I understand the amendment has been accepted.

Please proceed.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, that was a quick three minutes there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. CROSBIE: I was about to say 15 minutes, it's now 12 minutes and five seconds. I'll do my best.

Let me begin by reading into the record the words of a former premier of the province, who was a principal advocate and a signatory to the 1985 Atlantic Accord, Brian Peckford. This is from a letter published in *The Telegram* Saturday and takes, as a point of departure,

videotaped remarks by our federal Liberal Cabinet representative, Seamus O'Regan.

The former premier says: "First, the minister can't turn up in person, so he does this video for the Noia Conference in St. John's.

"And what does he do?

"Tells the delegates they don't know what they are talking about when they say there are problems with Bill C-69."

"I don't think the Noia of my day would have treated me as kindly if I had uttered such hogwash.

"We have now reached a new low in this country when a federal minister can so misrepresent the facts to a conference and then be thanked for appearing – after insulting the experts."

This is the same letter from former Premier Peckford: "According to The Telegram's Mark Vaughan-Jackson, O'Regan's comments 'went over like a lead balloon.'"

"The bloody nerve of this excuse for a federal minister to so insult the competent people of Noia and the overall resource sector. The minister says the bill will speed up the approval process over what is now in place, and right after that we have Paul Barnes, Atlantic and Arctic director for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers say, 'This bill is creating longer timelines for us with respect to getting approvals for offshore projects, longer than the previous piece of legislation that's in place.'

"And then the minister out of one side of his mouth says he would not agree with the bill if it downgraded the Atlantic Accord, and then out of the other side he talks about having representatives from the CNLOPB on review panels which decide things.

"Well, that breaks the accord provisions of joint management, Mr. Minister. The CNLOPB is a federal-provincial body, not a provincial body, so its representatives would not be representing the province.

"The man does not understand joint management.

"And if the provisions of Bill C-69 that provide the federal minister with sole discretionary power are still there, that violates the Accord as well, since it is sole power to the federal minister, not joint power to the federal and provincial ministers, as the Accord prescribes.

"Is that so hard to understand?

"The minister says Bill C-69 does not violate the 'spirit and benefits' of the Accord.

"How can the minister utter such words when the Accord stipulates in Section 2(d), 'Equality of both governments in the management of the resource,' and, 'joint management' in other sections, and yet Bill C-69 has review panels that are not joint panels that give equal provincial representation, and the federal minister alone has authority over certain relevant decisions.

"The Atlantic Accord was and is not a federal proposal to which the province agreed. Rather, as its very title says, 'Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on offshore oil and gas resource management and revenue sharing.'

"And the very first words in the agreement are: 'The Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have reached an Accord on joint management of the offshore oil and gas resources off Newfoundland and Labrador and the sharing of revenues from the exploitation of these resources.'

"And this was all put into legislation of the Parliament of Canada and of the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador." And that is the end of the letter of Premier Peckford.

With the support and concurrence of my father, Brian Mulroney, Pat Carney, Joe Clark, Bill Marshall and many others, Brian Peckford fought for and achieved the Atlantic Accord in 1985. This Accord gave us in this province an advantage we never had before, something the government of Pierre Trudeau would not give

us, and that was joint management of our offshore resources as if they were resources on land in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Trudeau philosophy, shared by many other Liberals right here in this province, was that these resources ought to be managed by Ottawa on our behalf. They argued that we didn't have the right or the ability to manage these resources ourselves here in this province. That kind of patronizing thinking is obviously alive and well in yet another incarnation of Trudeau government in this country. The mentality is you don't need your own banquet table when you can have the crumbs from ours.

The economic transformation we witnessed in this province over the past decade, the transformation that drove job growth, income growth and housing growth and investment growth and has us leading the country in economic growth, that was a product of the Atlantic Accord, which not only made us principal beneficiary, but also joint managers of the resource.

So what is the Atlantic Accord and what are the benefits of it? It has 68 clauses, covering the whole gamut of offshore management and benefits. I won't read the actual provisions from the Accord, in the interest of time, but we should remember these words taken from the Accord document itself and the subsequent legislation – which was mirror legislation, federal and provincial. These words: principal beneficiary; equality of both governments; as if these resources were on land; stable and permanent arrangement for management; joint management; may only be amended by the mutual consent of both governments. I'll emphasize that again: “may only be amended by the mutual consent of both governments.”

These words ought to be carved in stone on a monument outside Confederation Building. They have brought well-paying jobs and hope to the province, and \$22 billion in revenue to the Treasury. Where would we be without the Atlantic Accord and the offshore? We are a small province. Only through vigilance and fighting spirit can we keep those rights and benefits.

The conflicting legislation, as we're all aware in this Chamber, has been known as Bill C-69 and has now been passed into law by the Parliament of Canada as the *Impact Assessment Act*. This legislation gives the federal government and the federal minister the power to impose their will on Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore industry.

To quote the act: In case of any inconsistency or conflict – this is the federal act enshrining the Atlantic Accord – this act and the regulations made thereunder, that's the Atlantic Accord legislation, take precedence.

Furthermore, the Accord states in section 60: “Except by mutual consent, neither government will introduce amendments to the legislation or regulations implementing the Accord.”

This is mirrored in section 2, which states: The purpose of the Accord is “to provide for a stable and permanent arrangement for the management of the offshore adjacent to Newfoundland” and Labrador today “by enacting the relevant provisions of this Accord in legislation of the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador and by providing that the Accord may only be amended by the mutual consent of both governments.” – both governments.

The resolution refers to court challenges. Court references are a valuable means of achieving clarity because the courts have the ability to negate laws they deem to be in conflict with others that take precedence.

The government of the province can make a reference to the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal to resolve a conflict. That is one avenue for resolving a conflict.

Depending on legal outcomes and political circumstances in the country, we could also press for a constitutional amendment to entrench our rights under the Atlantic Accord. The Accord, indeed, anticipates such a course of action; however, this would require the agreement of Parliament – the same one that just passed the legislation – and also the agreement of various other provinces in accordance with the constitutional amending formula. This is not a small task.

We can also take another course by standing together as Newfoundland and Labrador parliamentarians and state definitely that we will refuse to amend any legislation that gives effect to the C-69 changes, and that is what this resolution seeks to persuade and provoke the Members of this House to do.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the impassioned speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and I certainly do appreciate this private Member's resolution. I thank and recognize the change that has been made to certain wording, and I do recognize and appreciate the spirit of co-operation.

I am pleased to stand here today and speak to this resolution, and speak to what we have been doing as a government over the last number of years. I'm just going to show you the amount of work that has gone into this. These are just some of the documents I brought to Ottawa, letters that I've written, pieces of information I've prepared to bring to Ottawa, to the Senate and to the House of Commons, and to others that have been involved in the development of C-69.

While I appreciate the Member opposite's impassioned voice, his articulation of the Atlantic Accord and how important it is – because it is truly important to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – I wish he had said those words in 2012.

So I think for the people of the province, allow me a few moments of time – and I have only about a few moments – to talk a little bit about where we are today, but before I get into where we are today, Mr. Speaker, allow me to tell you about the importance, because this is all about natural resource development. So I just want to remind the Members of the House how important this is to the people of the province.

In 2019, mining is forecasted to employ 6,300 people. Think about that; 6,300 people, high

paying, well-paying jobs all throughout our province. That's an 11 per cent increase over 2018 – an 11 per cent increase. That's how important mining is and the growth of mining. Our gross value of mineral shipments is forecasted to be \$4 billion, a 47 per cent increase since 2016.

I heard the Member opposite talk about oil and gas, and he's correct, Mr. Speaker, \$22 billion in royalties since oil and gas began in our province. Today, it's 25 per cent of our gross domestic product. We have four major producing projects. About 7,000 people employed, and royalties this year is about \$1.12 billion. So the impacts of both oil and gas and mining, our natural resources, is incredible.

Bill C-69 is all about the responsible development of these natural resources, but allow me just to tell the people of the province and those interested here in the room today, because this is very important, that C-69 really does try to improve upon a situation that occurred back in 2012.

So up to 2012 – and this is important for the people in the province, important for the Members of the House of Assembly. Up until 2012, C-NLOPB, Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, was the authority on environmental assessments. Then in 2012, C-NLOPB was removed from the environmental assessment process through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Since I've become minister – and it was pointed out earlier today, I've been minister now since 2016 – I've been working to restore the role and function of C-NLOPB in that environmental assessment process. They have over 30 years experience offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, ensuring that the environmental assessment process and environmental protections are as stringent as they need to be.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the role and the function of the environmental assessment process is critical to ensure that, for example, short duration, well understood with minimal environmental effects such as exploratory wells, do not have to go through a full panel review, and that timelines for all assessments be very certain and globally competitive. So that's one thing, is ensuring that

30- to 60-day exploration wells don't have to go through an extensive three-year process for approval, which under CEAA 2012 this was occurring. It took up to 900 days to get approval for a 30-day well.

Now, we've been saying very stringently and very dynamically since 2016 to the federal government that, look, allow C-NLOPB, on these minimally invasive geological events, to be responsible for that assessment process.

The other thing we have asked for, and I want to be abundantly clear. It's very complex because I've been dealing with this for so long and dealing with multitudes of changes – as I held up before, I'm talking about multitudes of drafts and infographics and letters and everything else. We wanted to ensure that the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board had a role on the panel.

A panel is formed, Mr. Speaker, when we have a major discovery. Let's just pretend that next week one of our offshore drillers is out there, they're doing some really great work in terms of exploration, and they make a big discovery like Hibernia, a couple of billion barrels of oil discovered. They should have to go through a full environmental process beyond what they had to go through for exploration. This is now an impactful situation. That on the panel that does that full assessment, that will take some time, that C-NLOPB should have a role in that panel.

Up until 2012, they were the panel. From 2012 to now they had no role. What C-69 does is it now gives two out of the five panel members to C-NLOPB.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we wanted to ensure – and I'm going to use simpler language – in all this discourse back and forth between ourselves and the federal government and ensuring that we had what we think is the appropriate process in Bill C-69, we wanted to ensure that the environmental assessment process was about doing it right, doing it in a timely manner and doing it jointly.

We wanted to make sure, Mr. Speaker, there was an opportunity to do this jointly, which is required under the Atlantic Accord. I'm going to

harken back; remember in 2012 that was taken from us. That's why I said I wish the Member opposite had been able to give that impassioned speech in 2012.

We're now faced with a situation in 2019 that the federal government has made some changes. I'll give the federal government recognition for these changes. There have been some gains. In the legislation, C-69, they do give recognition of the C-NLOPB, which has not been there since 2012. In the process, C-NLOPB's expertise and knowledge gained over 30 years offshore will be recognized. Well, I'm very glad to see that.

As I said, two of the five seats on the panel will now be held by C-NLOPB and they will be consulted – C-NLOPB will be consulted on the remaining seats, as well on the terms of reference. So there's been movement from 2012 to now. I'll recognize the federal government for that.

Remember, I spoke about exploration. Well, exploration was very importantly removed from the panel list. The federal government has removed it; said they're going to remove exploration from the panel list in the regulation as long as there's a regional environmental assessment process – which is underway, by the way.

We should have the first regional environmental assessment process offshore Newfoundland and Labrador by the end of this year. So we're pleased with that; however, exploration is still on the panel list, subject to this regional environmental assessment and is still the control mechanism for that, and approving that still rests with the Minister of Environment, federally.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, while I recognize there's been some movement, I will say that two out of the five panel members is not joint management. It's not joint. Giving a say, kind of consulting with members of the C-NLOPB on who the other panel members are, is not joint management, Mr. Speaker.

This government has been saying to the federal government: While we recognize there's been some movement, we're not there yet. We believe in joint management. The Atlantic Accord is joint management.

Again, Mr. Speaker, up to 2012 that was what we had. Then since that time, from 2012 under the Harper administration, it changed. We believe it should be joint management. Also, as I said, exploration is critically important as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not really, truly – the caution I will say here is environmental protection, environmental assessment is critical to everybody in this room. Everyone in this room wants a robust environmental assessment process. Don't confuse what we're talking about with the fact that we want something less than that. No, there's nobody in this room who would say they want less. They want it done right, and that's what I said earlier. This is about doing it right, doing it in a timely manner and doing it jointly, Mr. Speaker.

Now, we're carefully and very cautiously reviewing all the changes to Bill C-69, because I can tell you there have been multitudes of amendments through the House of Commons. There were amendments in the Senate. Then it went back to the House of Commons, there were more amendments. So we're taking the time to ensure that we are doing this properly.

Now, we're never going to give up on doing what is right for our environment, and doing what's right for responsible development, and doing what's right for joint management under the Atlantic Accord. That is paramount.

Now, I'm going to read – I like this quote and I'm going to say this quote because I think it's so important. The former federal Natural Resources Minister, Jim Carr, said this, and I like to quote it because I think it speaks to their intent. We just didn't get to fully their intent.

“The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore area remains one of the most attractive jurisdictions globally for oil and gas development. I look forward to continued collaboration with our joint management partners to realize the full potential of our offshore resources and to ensure they can be developed safely and responsibly.”

Mr. Speaker, there has been some movement in C-69. Unfortunately, it's not quite near enough. Now, what are we doing? We're still reviewing, we're still doing the analysis to see what can be

done. We're investigating what's going to happen under regulation. There could be some movement under regulation, like removing exploration from the full panel list.

There may be some further clarification on the word, consult. What I've been saying to them is maybe the word is agree with the provincial Minister of Natural Resources. The legislation talks about discussions and collaboration between the federal Minister of Natural Resources, and the federal Minister of Environment is mute on the Department of Natural Resources provincially.

So I will say this, Mr. Speaker, I have had, as I said to you earlier, multiple letters dating back to 2016 on this issue. Multiple interventions with my federal colleagues about the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Natural Resources, the minister of Treasury Board, all the way through, various ministers on this very issue.

The Premier and I, most recently, went to Ottawa to appear before the Senate committee. I have had, for the last number of years, a subcommittee brought together of stakeholders like the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association, we brought in the St. John's Board of Trade and others to work collaboratively to impress upon Ottawa the roles and responsibilities under joint management and what that means. Again, it was removed in 2012. So that helped them understand how important it is in the environmental assessment process, the joint management feature of that.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the House stand today to talk about how important joint management is in our offshore and how we want to work together, collaboratively, to ensure that we are maximizing the requirements under the Atlantic Accord and joint management.

I will say this; everybody in this room, again, wants to ensure a robust environmental assessment process. We want to ensure that we are protecting our environment. We want to ensure that we are doing any analysis jointly, which is a requirement under the Atlantic Accord.

That's why this resolution is important, Mr. Speaker, to have everyone in this House come together and say the same message to Ottawa that we've been saying for the last three-plus years, and that is joint management is just that. It is about joint management, it is about the development of our offshore and it's about working together to maximize the opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour to stand here in the House today as we debate the private Member's resolution that we as the Official Opposition have put forward concerning Bill C-69 and the impact it will have on Newfoundland and Labrador's industries; but, particularly, the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and the potential to develop a more prosperous future and ensure this generation and future generations benefit from a resource that we own, that we should be managing. We're even willing to be cordial and open to be part of a joint management process with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring you back to a number of years ago. I had the privilege in 1985 of being in the room when the first accord was signed, and being proud as a Newfoundlander and Labradorian at the time. I was a leader of a particular organization that did a lot of work with government and was invited because of the nature of what we did in encouraging, sustaining and fostering young people in Newfoundland and Labrador to develop their skills around education, around leadership, and to be part and parcel of developing the next level of prosperity for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I remember sitting in the lobby of the hotel at the time, when Premier Peckford walked in. Minister Marshall was with him at the time, and they came over and talked to our delegation. I remember Premier Peckford had his big cigars, big as life as he always did, but very cordial and

very open and very engaging. He come over and said: This is the start of a new future for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and, particularly, people like yourselves, the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Those words have rang true ever since. We knew it wouldn't be an overnight accomplishment. We knew there would still be some struggles. We knew there would be an out date when we would really see the fruits of the labours of people like himself, of all the civil servants who had fought to get this to happen, to people in the industry.

Don't forget, while the oil exploration industry and the oil producing industry may have been flourishing everywhere else in the world, we were relatively new. We had only started in the late '60s, really, doing anything around exploration. Because of the nature of geographics, the offshore and the dangers in the North Atlantic and the technology that was available at the time, in comparison to where it was in 1985, in comparison to where it is now, it's night and day.

The vision seen by the minister and the premier of the day, and by the prime minister of Canada of the day and by the minister, Mr. Crosbie, who was the federal minister for Newfoundland and Labrador in the federal Cabinet, tells you volumes about looking down the road and ensuring that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have a stake in what we're going to do.

The Atlantic Accord was a key component. It's only now because there's a lot of debate about the impact and, particularly, what Bill C-69 is going to do to it. The impact it's going to have on the future direction. The minister alluded to the amendments that were made in 2012. Unfortunately, almost alluded like we had anything to do with it.

I can tell you, unequivocally, with the exception here, I was the only one who was in this House of Assembly at the time. As a matter of fact, we spoke out against anything that would jeopardize joint management. We talked about ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador and the C-NLOPB would have a bigger stake in what would happen in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We looked at modifying the agreements so that the next generation would benefit more and the new agreements.

Don't forget, it was the PC administration of the day and the premier of the day who stood up to the oil industry and first said we have an Accord. Not only is the Accord something that's governed by all levels of government, the two levels of government here that entrenches policy and operational procedures, but it also sends a message to the oil industry. We're open for business, but we're open for business that benefits the people of Newfoundland and Labrador also.

We stood up to the oil industry and said, no, here's our royalty regime. Here's how the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are going to benefit. Here's how we can come up with \$22 billion that have been generated because of what went on in the Atlantic Accord and what went on in subsequent negotiations with the oil industry.

We're going to tell you, if you don't want to business with us, or you don't want to do it under our terms, or you don't want to do it in a co-operative way where we all benefit from this, you know what? No more giveaways. We're going to ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador benefit immediately and benefit down the road.

So we stood our ground. Six months later they came back to the table. Six months after that there were agreements signed based on the principles of the first Atlantic Accord, and instilling exactly what would be beneficial to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 2012, there were some amendments that could be interpreted to be not necessarily, or could jeopardize some of the particular parts of the original one, but that was fought. At this point, it wasn't so detrimental to Newfoundland and Labrador. What we're seeing now, move forward another seven years, is something that is detrimental, that we do have real concerns about.

It's not only us. We've met as a caucus with a number of groups. We've had discussions with the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industries Association which has real concerns

of the impact this will have, particularly around not having joint management, particularly around having another component of bureaucracy to deal with that would slow down exploration.

Even CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, who some would think are obviously all about their industry, and no doubt they have a stake in making sure production is up and it's done fluidly, but they also, like everybody else in this province, and I would think everybody in this House of Assembly, want to ensure that justice is done, due diligence is done and that the environment is protected.

We have one of the most rigid, environmental assessment processes that has worked. Don't forget, we're at this now 35, almost 40 years. We have had an extremely rigid process here that people must adhere to, to ensure if you want to do business in Newfoundland and Labrador you not only have to protect your workers, you also have to protect the environment, and we've been doing that.

I give credit, the minister over the last two years, when there's been more notice and more debate here, has made it clear that the environment is just as important as the production, and there's nothing preventing us from being able to do both of it simultaneously and doing it hand in hand. What we fear here is that one will get outweighed over the other. Don't forget, we have a small window here.

We've developed some of the best qualified individuals in the world. We've put in a regime around royalties that benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, but also make it attractive enough for industry all over the world. Don't forget, we've had new players join the oil industry in the last 18 months. So that speaks volumes of where we are. We've already shown that we can produce, we can build the infrastructure that they need to sustain an oil industry. We've done that.

We're working on some new endeavours now. We're asking that maybe more of it should be given to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to be able to move that forward; but, as we do that, we do it with the hope that the intent of the original Atlantic Accord will still be intact. So

we're not to jeopardize anything here but we're to ensure that we move things forward.

What we're doing here, from the perspective of discussions we've had with industry, from our own assessment of it, from talking to one of the – well, actually two architects of the original Accord, this puts us backwards. When we're about to develop new approaches to technology and being able to do more exploration in deeper waters because the technology has been proven with the North Sea and some other similar like environmental processes or environmental areas that you would face as we do in the Grand Banks and off the coast of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland and Labrador, and as we go further up towards Labrador, as we move forward now we're putting more restrictions.

As the industries improve in its environmental processes, as technology is improved, as people's awareness of the collaborative approach between the environment and production has moved forward and people have come to an understanding that it's not about raping the environment just to get money, it's about a balance here. Now all of a sudden we're looking at doing something that – again, I've read it and I tried to get my head around it.

While I understand people may have concerns about a number of things in any industry, it's a difference between having a concern and having a discussion on how you address that concern, to coming in and actually changing something that is a threefold approach here. One, something that was beneficial; two, it was something that has been proven to work; and, three, why would we fix something that wasn't broken as we move towards improving our technology knowing we have a better ability to address any particular concern that may be in there.

So all of a sudden I get the impression – and this is purely my interpretation – that the federal government have bowed down to a small minority who are either extremely loud or have a great lobbying process to ensure they have things in there that would move their agenda forward at the expense of the agendas of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the people of Canada also. Because it has an impact everywhere else also.

It's not only the fear of what we're doing with the oil industry. The mining industry here, there's an impact on that also. People forget that when we talk about it. For those who are naysayers, and I had a conversation with somebody who said: to hell with the oil industry, they get all the attention. They're always taken care of. There are other industries here. Sure, the fishing industry is important, and we have roles and responsibilities.

One of the things we've all fought in this House for is joint management around that. We know it's not moving where it should because of the fact that the best people who have the best ability to be able to move the industry forward are not in control of it, and that's the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the fisherpersons, the producers, the harvesters, all the people who are engaged in the business community as part of that.

So, the same way here, the fear is if we bring in something that's going to stifle the mining industry or the offshore industry in anyway, shape or form, it's going to have an impact on all of us. To what degree? What's the intent here?

If the intent was to say we're going to set up a system where if there is a change in the environment, if there is a change in the use of technology, if there's a change in how we produce, and I know there are some here. Like, we're going further offshore. Well, let's first do the steps to prove that the industry has the technology to be able to do it at the same risk – and I say risk in a minimal sense. There shouldn't be a lot of risk to the environment, but the same risk.

There's a risk at everything. There's a risk when you get in your car to go off this parking lot that you could have an accident. We just don't stop everything because there's a simulated risk to it. What we talk about is minimizing those risks and accepting what's an acceptable risk. In this case, that's not where we're going. We're setting up another system to delay a process.

Now, the people in the industry, CAPP who we spoke to, Noia who we've spoken to have all said it. They have no problems, and they've been very diligently upfront in dealing with any

of the regulatory processes or any of the restrictions on how they move things in their industries.

When I was out to the mining conference, where people in the mineral industry said, look, we would adhere to any of the processes that we have to, but we don't need another layer of bureaucracy. We haven't had a catastrophe, not saying that something couldn't happen, but we have so many safeguards in play. We have so many players that are very competent, and we're not a fly-by-night province here where we let things just flippantly go by because somebody has a cheque that they can pass to us. That doesn't happen.

We may have made some mistakes decades ago, maybe centuries ago. That doesn't happen anymore because we have too much knowledge here, too many people who are committed to what we're doing here, and we haven't sold out in the last 30 or 40 years.

So, what are we doing now? We're trying to put another piece of legislation in play, and I can't say we because I'm hoping now – and I get the impression here from the Minister of Natural Resources that this PMR, private Member's resolution, will pass unanimously. I would hope all my colleagues here would support it, based on the principle that we're not happy with what just happened.

We're not happy with the Senate and we're not happy with the House of Commons. This shouldn't have happened, not only because of the political part. The one thing they did right, which I thought would give us the right result or the proper result, would have been that they didn't rush this through. They took time. We had hearings. They went around. That only happened after people pushed it.

We pushed it in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I know all sides here pushed it. We had every part of the industry from the environmental side of it to the producer side of it. We had the mineral industry push it from every component. So when that happens, as I saw many things over the years, when they start doing Senate commissions and they'd start doing hearings, you would think now is an

opportunity for everybody to produce the evidence they have.

The evidence, from my understanding, from every side of it, from people who were part of the original, people in the industry, even environmentalists who've said what exists now is pretty good. 2012 did put a little glitch, I won't deny that. As a matter of fact, if they wanted to do something they should've taken that out, went right back to the Atlantic Accord and modernized it to the better uses that we have now with technology, with our legal processes that we do here and with our royalty regimes about how we do these type of things.

Instead, what they've done is put another layer that, at best, the only thing we can determine will happen here – it doesn't improve it any. It doesn't protect the environment anymore. It slows the process down to a point where it may not be viable financially or it may not be viable from an investment point of view when it comes to a company that has a time frame that they have to live within.

Don't forget, we have one of the longest turnaround times before you get from application to actually exploration. That's because you have to fit in that realm and you have to meet all of our criteria, and that's rightfully so.

We've managed to get an industry to be happy with that. Saying if it takes us three years, or 18 months to three years, we'll be happy. But if it takes us five years, we have a billion dollars to spend. We have 500 workers who need to be employed. We have 20 other jurisdictions that are willing to jump at what we're doing, and we're not saying we want to go to another jurisdiction and take advantage that they don't have the same regulatory process we have.

We're happy to work in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're happy to be part of this growing community, but the legislation cannot restrict us from doing what's right in Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to stand up for that, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm confident we'll echo from the mountains to the people in Ottawa, the Senate and the House of Commons, this is not right. We're not going to accept it.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to pick up on some of the points that the Minister of Natural Resources raised as well. The minister mentioned that people in Newfoundland want things done right, and I fully agree with that. Also, as the Minister of Natural Resources mentioned, Bill C-69 sees two members of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board on the new panel out of the five members. So I strongly believe we need to fight to ensure sufficient representation, because I do believe that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are best placed to make decisions about people, issues and resources that impact this province.

So this was my first time going door to door at the recent election. Many residents in my district told me they want a stronger job market, particularly jobs in the energy and mining sectors. The energy sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, as the minister mentioned, is a significant contributor to our economy, and I'm very excited about the opportunities for innovation and digital transformation that will be driven by the incredibly talented people of our province.

We need to increase our innovation in extracting resources. We need to build on the work being done by NATI and Noia in driving innovation in these sectors. We need to explore and develop our green energy capabilities. We need to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador can get maximum benefit from the ocean economy through the Ocean Supercluster investment. We also need to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador remains competitive. Considering all that we've accomplished, we need to fight for joint management to help ensure we're making the best decisions for the people of our province.

And we are doing good work already. In *Advance 2030* we envision a robust, innovative global supply and service sector. This will be driven by innovation and technology. This will improve safety, increase jobs, protect our natural environments and drive efficiencies.

The Innovation and Business Development Fund with Natural Resources and TCII that launched in September funded \$3 million in projects related to autonomous vehicles, clean technology, supplier development and subsea excavation in harsh environments.

Mr. Speaker, on May 31 of this year, I attended the first NATI and Noia Hacking Oil and Gas hackathon held at the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Memorial University. At the hackathon, if you've never been, anyone with an interest, we had a mix of students, industry professionals. They get together around a problem identified by the industry. So they had a series of problems and in teams they spent the whole weekend, not quite overnight but a lot of time coming up with problems to those challenges defined by the industry. They then design and build and prototype and, at the end of the hackathon, they present their findings from the prototypes to the general public. So I was fortunate enough to be there during their presentations.

The projects, they found innovative ways to solve challenges currently being faced by the energy sectors. This reinforced how I'm continually reminded of how smart and amazing the people in our province are. The project is focused on increasing efficiency and reliability of worker qualifications, the management of the qualifications, improving offshore safety and incidents response using very sophisticated camera technology, integrating third-party data sources to improve decision-making in bidding and exploration processes.

Also, speaking of amazing work, I was also fortunate recently to visit the Paradigm Hyperloop team of Blue Water in CBS; that was yesterday. Those incredible team of students, they study and work all day and then 6 o'clock they drive over to the Hyperloop and they volunteer there all evening. None of those people are getting paid to do that. That is their blood, sweat and volunteer hours.

They are building something that no one has ever built before. It just reinforces how smart and amazing people are here. I was chatting with the College of the North Atlantic student and he had designed the wheels of the new Hyperloop. I asked him: Did you buy them from somewhere? He said no, he came up with the whole design on his own and they are building these wheels for the Hyperloop. Participating in these events makes me very proud to be a part of a local technology sector that supports the students, and I think what they're doing is nothing short of genius.

In November 2018, I spoke at the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Digitalization Workshop. So my experience from financial services, which is an extremely highly regulated industry, I was involved in driving innovation in that industry. One of the things that really became apparent to me in my experience is that if something works in one province it doesn't necessarily work in all provinces, you need a specialized approach, which is why I support the joint management spirit of the resolution.

We need to fight for this spirit, and I strongly believe that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are best placed to make key decisions about our energy and mining sectors. As the Minister of Natural Resources mentioned, two of the five seats are currently going to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, and that certainly challenges the principle of joint management that is agreed to in the Atlantic Accord.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot support this bill or this motion. I'm nervous about any private Member's motion that is otherwise wrapped in patriotic rhetoric and the flag. We've been down this road far too often where we've bought into things once the flag is waved. I can think of the turbot wars, I can think of even the fact that maybe we got into Muskrat Falls because we wanted to thumb our nose at

Quebec, and that we can handle this, yet we're in this mess because of that.

For me, and I heard yesterday, of course, when the Leader of the Opposition ends his speech with God guard thee Newfoundland, it's problematic because in many ways standing up for the environment here is just as patriotic for the future generations who will live here. Climate change is not a Newfoundland issue; it's a worldwide issue, so we better get our heads wrapped around that.

So, here is the thing with us: The C-NLOPB and EAs and environmental assessments, petroleum boards have conflicting mandates. They license and promote oil and gas extraction and protect the marine environment. You cannot serve two masters. It's impossible to serve two masters. Petroleum boards have expertise in management of oil and gas resources, but not in environmental impact assessment. They have close relationship with oil companies. So for us a single independent impact assessment body promotes impartiality, accountability and, most of all, public trust.

I go back to a most recent example – and this goes back to December 12, 2018. It was questions that were raised by the former colleagues of the NDP here that in the spring of 2017 Husky oil had a near-miss iceberg incident on the SeaRose production platform. It took 10 months to investigate, and only then do we learn the full story.

The penalties levied on Husky by the C-NLOPB for this iceberg incident apparently had no effect. During the worst storm since 1982 Ocean Ranger disaster – and you might remember the safety regulations that came out after that, and in the inquiry, if I remember correctly, safety procedures weren't followed basically because they didn't want to shut down production, to have to drill. So profit is the prime motive here.

Anyway, during the worst storm since the Ocean Ranger disaster Husky discovers the largest spill in our history when attempting to resume pumping when conditions are still so bad that we can't even assess the spill. That does not inspire confidence in petroleum boards or in the oil production companies when their bottom line is profit. Nothing wrong with profit, but let's not

confuse profit with looking at the common good of the environment. That's a write off, that's an unnecessary interruption – but hey, let's carry on.

I don't know if I really have a lot of trust, either, for that matter, in our province to do the right thing as well. And this is another reason why we cannot support this motion. The reference has been to *The Way Forward* and to the Budget Speech, and I went through those and I can tell you that a lot of *The Way Forward* and the Budget Speech is very much about economic development, but very short shrift given to protecting the environment. It's an afterthought. It's not there front and centre.

Question Periods have not yielded any more comfort either. Despite numerous questions about specifics related to the North Spur and Muskrat Falls, answers have been evasive and vague.

Questions with regard to aquaculture regulations; if the aquaculture regulations were so good there would not have been a judicial challenge mounted by the Atlantic Salmon Federation a few years ago, which basically forced government into doing a full environmental impact statement, assessment of the Grieg Aquaculture project. Let's keep in mind, it wasn't done out of any – like we should do it on our own initiative. It was done in response to, and when the project was released from further environmental assessment, the 15 or so conditions on it were pretty anemic.

Marine harvest is another aquaculture expansion at the Indian Head Hatchery, yet that is also facing a judicial challenge by local groups, conservation groups concerned about the impact it would have on wild Atlantic stocks. If you drive out the Trans-Canada Highway, you will find a mining exploration road that will now allow for mining exploration adjacent to the Avalon Wilderness area, the Salmonier Nature Park, and the headwaters of the Salmonier River. So when I hear comments about how we are going to look after our environment, I don't have the confidence.

I've also heard comments about, well, we know green energy is a way off and we got oil. Oil is going to be around for a little while longer, we

might as well make as much money out of it as we can. Instead of we've got to start turning our mines to developing new technologies and become innovative green leaders. It's about what can we squeeze out of it. Maybe that's why there's such a flurry to get the oil out of the ground before the green technology takes over and they're not making any more money.

Let's be honest, there is a cost to Newfoundland's economy, Newfoundland and Labrador's economy if the environment is not protected, to fisheries, to our farming, to disease. If you've been looking at acidification of the ocean increases, what will it do to our ability to prosecute traditional stocks: crab, shrimp, lobster, you name it. So the environmental damage will have an impact on our infrastructure and on our ability just to live in this province.

So, just a few more general comments. There has always been an important role for an independent federal environmental assessment of offshore oil projects, and that goes back to the Hibernia environmental assessment in the early 1980s. The provincial government and the Official Opposition are trying to convince us that this long-standing EA process is taking away provincial management rights enshrined in the Atlantic Accord. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Environmental assessment is not about management. The Atlantic Accord is concerned with managing the industry, not with environmental assessment. There is no infringement on the Atlantic Accord. Environmental assessment precedes oil projects; management begins when projects are approved. If and when a project is approved, the Atlantic Accord co-management approach begins. We agree that the province needs to be an equal player in management.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, newly renamed in Bill C-69, will continue to provide an independent, transparent investigation of the possible environmental and social impacts of the project. It has been done for the last four decades.

So under the new legislation, the federal Environment minister can allow the C-NLOPB a

greater role in assessing a particular project – for example, in sitting on a joint review panel – but opponents want control of the whole process. They want to shorten and water down the environmental assessment process, and this is not the time to be doing that, especially when we're talking about embarking on high-risk and deep-water drilling. Why on earth would we want the managers of exploration and production to control the environmental assessment process?

The provincial government and the Official Opposition have been arguing for one blanket EA for all exploration projects in an area, but these projects are not in the same, and the deep-water exploration is a high-risk activity. So we want to see a strong federal environmental assessment process remain in place; however, as a province, we need to do more than this to protect the offshore environment and oil industry workers.

That's why our party's been calling for an independent offshore environmental and safety authority. It would do everyday management of safety and environmental protection. It would bring a stronger regulatory and monitoring regime to protect seabirds, make sure that workers aren't in the path of icebergs, and prevent companies from trying to restart in storm conditions, as an example. Even if we had this independent environment and safety authority, we'd still need strong federal-led environmental assessments for new projects offshore.

I reject the notion that oil companies are going to pull up stakes and move away just because we're not giving them a corrupted environmental assessment process. I totally reject that. They are profit motivated and they will come back. They haven't left yet.

Environmental protection is the cost of doing business in a modern world. I will tell you, if we're not factoring in the cost of the environment, we're missing a major cost.

As I noticed, this province's track record is abysmal. Eagleridge, Grieg aquaculture, methylmercury, Sandy Pond at Long Harbour and many others. By the way, with regard to Eagleridge, that was approved by the PCs and

unable to be stopped by the Liberals. So both parties have had an abysmal track record in this.

I have three words to say to people who want to turn over the environmental assessment process to the industry, and that's the Husky oil spill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak to this private Member's motion. I will say from the get-go that I will be supporting the motion.

I reject the notion, quite frankly, that we have a corrupt system now. I believe my colleague used that terminology about a corrupt system. I think we have very solid environmental legislation, from what I understand. I'm not an environmental scientist, far from it, but from what I can gather, we have good environmental legislation. Certainly compared to other jurisdictions, I would say Canada is pretty strong in that regard.

I think all we're saying and all that's being suggested here is that there are grave concerns around Bill C-69 being brought forth by the federal government, and the potential impact it could have on basically shutting down our oil industry.

We've had Members in this House of Assembly stand to their feet, as the Member who just spoke before me stood to his feet, and I agree with a lot of what he had said about the issues around education. He talked about the teachers in the classroom and all the students and the cramped spaces and class caps and students with exceptionalities and all those issues. Issues around health care, issues around poverty, lifting people out of poverty. I support all those things. I think everybody generally does, but I've got to ask the question, I really do have to ask the question: how do we pay for it? How do we pay for it, Mr. Speaker? I wish there was a magic answer.

I know that tourism is doing well. I'm glad to see that. I'm glad to see we're doing well with tourism. The Minister of TCII is always standing to his feet and talking about strives that are being made in tourism and the rubber-tire traffic is up around the province. That's good news. Absolutely, it's positive.

We know there are challenges with the wild fishery. Although it's still a billion-dollar industry, and that's positive; but, my goodness, we can't – we are resource-rich province.

So when I hear commentary about oil and gas and we can't risk the environment. There's risk in everything in life. There's risk in everything, but we can't risk anything in oil and gas. We can't do any mining projects if it's anywhere near a wilderness area. We can't do that.

We talk about some of the other projects. Sandy Lake, I believe, was mentioned. Some other projects where we've seen mining activity. We can't do that. We can't do aquaculture. We can't do aquaculture because that could impact the wild fishery – and I agree with that, by the way.

I can remember standing in this House and talking about the Grieg project and the concerns I had at the time that we were foregoing a full environmental impact which, thankfully, the courts did step in and they went through the appropriate process. I'm glad that that happened. I can remember when I said it, I was being accused then, you're against Grieg. You're against aquaculture. You're against the Burin Peninsula. That's what I was hearing. No, I was for following the rules and the environmental processes that we have in place, and we have good ones.

I don't think we need to create legislation that's going to make it even more onerous than it already is and drive oil exploration and development away, because, quite frankly, we can't afford to let that happen. We're in bad enough shape now. We're talking about the fact that we couldn't make payroll a few short years ago. We would have been \$2.7 billion in the hole, apparently. We just borrowed 1.3 or 1.4, whatever it was, the other day to add on to our crippling debt.

We can't just grab the money out of the air. I'm resisting to use the money-tree analogy, I really am, what I've used in the past, but the bottom line is that if we want the things for our province like good health care and education and roads and all of those things, the money has to come from somewhere.

We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources that we can utilize, if we do it properly, for the benefit of our people. I believe we can do it in a balanced way that brings in the revenues that we so desperately need for all the things that we've mentioned, but at the same time, protects the environment.

Now, when we talk about protecting the environment, we have to realize, I think we all realize, if you build a house or a subdivision or an office building or a hotel or whatever you do, here's some news for you, a news flash, you have to chop down some trees. It has to happen. That's reality. Trees will be cut down. Waterways will be impacted in some cases.

If you're going to do developments and mines, guess what? Heavy equipment is coming in. It's going to dig stuff up, there's no doubt. There's going to have to be detention – I'm saying detention pond, that may not be the right term, but we know for the effluent and so on from the mine. Those things are going to happen.

If we create a landfill for some of the garage like we did in Robin Hood Bay, the garbage has to go somewhere. So there are going to be landfills because those are things we need to do.

Now, would I love to leave every single tree standing and every waterway pristine and have zero risk to the environment? Would I love that to happen? Absolutely, I wish there was a way to do it. I really wish there was a way to do it.

Do we need to invest in green technology and clean energy and so on? Absolutely, we do. It will happen over time. We started very small with the plastic bag ban. That's really nothing. It's minuscule, but at least we're thinking about these things.

There are other things that I think can be done and will be done in the future with green energy and electric cars. All those things eventually will

come, but, in the meantime, until that happens, because it's not going to happen overnight, until that happens, guess what? We have 500,000-plus people living on this Island that require jobs and they require services and, like it or not, the reality that we have, despite diversification, which is good and needs to happen, but the reality of it is that we depend on our natural resources, and we have to be able to utilize those resources to pay the bills, and that's the bottom line.

The legislation, as I said when I started, that's brought down in C-69 – and I'm no expert on it, I'll say again – but the understanding I have is that it raises serious concern that it's going to prohibit our ability to develop our natural resources. In particular our offshore oil, and possibly mining as well.

I think we have a reasonable balance in place now. As long as we're using the legislation, as long as we're following it through the full processes that are there, as long as those processes are being adhered to and monitored and enforced – and I do agree with the NDP on the need for an independent regulator for offshore safety and environment. I absolutely agree.

I do believe there's conflict of interest. I've heard the minister say that eventually when the industry grows and gets larger that may happen, but I think it's a conflict right now. I think it should be separated, and I will say that. But, with that said, we have legislation in place now, and as long as we follow it, as long as we monitor it, as long as we enforce it, then I think we're fine as is. We don't need Ottawa, the federal government, imposing legislation on us that's going to in any way infringe upon our rights under the Atlantic Accord and our ability to develop the resources that we need for our province.

So, with that in mind, I'll take my seat. I will say again, I support the motion. We all know it's only a PMR, private Member's motion, that's non-binding, but at least it's taking a stand. We're not taking down flags. We're not going to start calling the prime minister by his first name and none of that stuff, but we are at least saying that we have serious concerns about this legislation and we want to make sure that it does

not negatively impact our ability to provide for our people and our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm delighted to speak to this private Member's resolution.

Interesting perspective we have on the floor of the House, and I do appreciate the hon. Member for his candid comments from the NDP. It's not always easy not to be populist. Sometimes we drive a particular position based on what we presume will be adapted to, gravitated to, supported by because it projects a fighting image. I felt the hon. Member gave a very reasoned account of balance when it comes to protecting what is ours and sharing what is ours.

It's one of the things about environmental stewardship which is so keenly essential to providing a long-term – as we so casually and easily use the reference that we need to be sustainable; we have to promote sustainability in what we do. The truth is that we have to put that into action. While I don't necessarily agree fundamentally with all that the hon. Member had to say, I do appreciate his perspective and his courage for breaking away from a purely populist or easy argument to make.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, we do have an opportunity and we have a responsibility to ensure that the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador are protected, balanced and that we act in good faith with those interests. I reflect with certain uneasiness that it wasn't very long on the floor of this House of Assembly that we were debating and we were posing questions and providing answers to each other about an oil spill.

The SeaRose production platform had a major oil spill and there was no talk about how that's a good thing or let's forget about that, or let's sort of just let that one slip by, let's not really pay

too much attention to that because that's an anomaly. No, there was some pretty heated debate on the floor of this House of Assembly about an oil spill that occurred on our offshore area just a short while ago.

Fortunately, for us, it does not occur very often. In 2004, with the Terra Nova spill, we encountered a similar situation, albeit of lesser impact; but it reminds us that when we get into a mode or a position of trying to regulate for the best interest of the economy that it's extreme circumstances which draw us to wish to really look at whether or not we are fully regulated and properly regulated.

I state, with terror, Cougar 491 where, after an incident, we responded by examining the situations and then up the game when it comes to regulation. And again, as the hon. Member pointed out, it was a terrible tragedy with the Ocean Ranger which really created the bedrock, created the foundation for a regulated oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I will always say is that if you are going to raise the bar on all of this, if you're going to ask for joint management, it's absolutely essential you have a game plan in mind as to what you're going to do with it. Otherwise, you're the dog chasing the car that finally grabs hold of the tire and starts to spin around and around and around. What do you do then?

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the difference I think with our administration, our government and our Minister of Natural Resources and our Cabinet and our caucus, our colleagues here, is that we have a plan. When we ask for joint management, when we go to Ottawa, when we go to our colleagues at a federal-provincial-territorial table and we make these cases as to how we can improve the management of our natural resources in our own province, it's not just simply an ask for the sake of the ask with no inherent plan or motivating factors behind it. We go with a plan and *Advance 2030* maps out that plan.

We not only say and we spell out in detail – the Minister of Natural Resources spelled out in detail what we will do with our industry and for our industry and what will come from our

industry, we map out our own regulatory processes that we would like to see. We put in place a plan. There's a logical sequence here.

I look at other examples where there's desperate need for greater linkages between our national government, our federation and our province, our provincial government, as well as Indigenous governments, our First Nations. Take for example, caribou, while a provincial jurisdiction is now managed or it's at least regulated, it's legislated by both federal endangered species regulations, *Species at Risk Act* as well as provincial endangered species enactment.

It's been enacted since 2004, but we've never gone to Ottawa with a request for a true partnership on creating a recovery plan for caribou. Well, this year we have. We've succeeded. Under both federal and provincial arrangements, we have struck upon an agreement, which we will be announcing the details very soon, to be able to make sure that we put in place a recovery plan. So it's one thing to want joint management, it's another thing to put in place all of the pieces that are required to make it successful. This government is putting in place the pieces.

Now on C-69, on the *Impact Assessment Act*, we do have issues that we have raised. We have made modifications. We have been successful. We will continue to make that case, but our case is made stronger by the fact that we have in place industry collaboration, an ENGO collaboration to make that case much stronger to be made.

When it comes to something we already have a significant degree of joint management on, which is our aquaculture industry, from a jurisdictional point of view, it's co-managed, it's a co-jurisdictional piece when it comes to the development of our sea-based, marine-based aquaculture industry.

It's striking that whenever an issue comes up, it is not the federal government to whom a plea is made or litigation occurs against, when it comes to environmental assessment. It is, as practice has shown, exclusively directed at the provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. When, in fact, it is equally eligible to be litigated

against, against the federal government, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and their Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, as it was known.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks volumes in many respects because, while the federal government does have a significant recourse in positioning in major resource development projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we have already in place certain joint management measures, some through the realities of the Constitution and jurisdictions within the Constitution, when environmental organizations and other groups have come forward, instead of making a case to the federal administration to invoke an environmental assessment or to invoke environmental requirements, it is never done. It never happens.

I'll give you some tangible examples. For the Committee on Introductions, there is a particular proponent for an aquaculture project that advocated for the use of introduced species. It was met with no challenge whatsoever by the DFO Committee on Introductions, the formalized committee of the federal government that we have a partnership arrangement in. It met with full compliance of the federal government. That decision was never challenged.

When the environmental assessment came forward, we conducted the normal practice, the standard practice of the EIS, our practice was challenged, but the federal government, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, which could have played a role, it could've been invited, could've been asked to participate, and it was not. It was not.

There was simply a decision that was taken, the concentration will be exclusively on the provincial jurisdiction and on the provincial statutes and the provincial requirements. Well, that speaks quite an interesting tale in its own right, Mr. Speaker. So I am a very strong proponent, as this government is, of enacting stronger joint management initiatives on a whole number of fronts.

The purpose of my recitation to you, Mr. Speaker, is simply to say that we are succeeding on many fronts where others have failed. We're doing so because we're making the case that not

only is it in our interest as a province to do this, but we have the capacity, we have the ability and we have the plan in place to meet other interests as well while maintaining pre-eminence of our own interests, and that's the difference.

Why we are advancing things such as improvements to inland fisheries management, getting greater joint management in that regard, that is an expectation we have as a government that the federal government will participate with us. We expect and would appreciate the support of other hon. Members in doing that, but we're doing it for the right reason for the right things.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will end off with just a simple statement of recognizing that when we push forward arguments of joint management, it has to be with a fully-scoped plan in place to be able to convince not only our governmental partners but others as well. Non-governmental organizations, environmental organizations, industry organizations, Indigenous organizations, these are all very important players in the outcomes of these discussions.

What I will say is that our government is doing it right. We have not always succeeded on every venture we have taken on, but we've done so with a promise to try. We have not ripped the flags down, we have not surrendered territory. We have not just simply broken off in splendid isolationism whenever someone decides that things aren't going our way. We advance the argument piece by piece by piece over the course of time, and that is the most successful strategy that will always win the day.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the movers of this particular motion and the fact that they were prepared to amend. That speaks volumes in many respects as well. I appreciate the fact that we are moving to a more collegial, a more brokered way of working with each other. I think that will always succeed.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say how much I appreciate the hard work of our Minister of Natural Resources, the hard work of all those around her, led by the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, to make a difference here at home, in the nation's capital, when it comes to the regulation of the environment around us.

At the end of the day, whenever we see a situation where our environment is eroded or we always, unanimously, each and every one of us, move collectively to improve the management of our environment, but this side will never, ever surrender or broker against ways to do that simultaneously with improving the economics and the standard of living that we enjoy in this province, and that, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, is what separates the two sides of this Chamber.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to stand and talk today and represent the District of Terra Nova, but, more importantly, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I grew up in Labrador – in Wabush, Labrador West, actually. As the Member talked about this morning, how beautiful it is. What a lot of people don't realize about Labrador West is it has two of the largest open-pit mines in the world that have been in operation since the '60s. I have seen first-hand the benefits of these mines and I've also seen what they can do from an environmental standpoint.

Mr. Speaker, there's nobody in this room who loves this province, Newfoundland and Labrador, any more than I do. I love the beauty. I have travelled from the very tip of Labrador, Saglek, to every small nook and cranny in Newfoundland.

When I worked as a recruiting officer with the military, anywhere there was a high school, I was. We've hiked throughout all of Gros Morne and different areas. What we have here is very, very special. In my mind, as a government, we need to have the ability to jointly manage every part of it, and that includes offshore oil and gas, mining resources and the fishery.

A lot of people haven't probably taken the time to even understand fully what Bill C-69 is. Just the name of the bill in its whole should cause

alarm for people. So I'm going to read it out because it's certainly a mouthful.

The full name gives a sense of how sweeping and complete it is. It's called, "An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts." What is that? I don't really know, and I'm sure nobody in this room knows because it's a whole lot of nothing, right.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution that I'm standing up for and talking about is so we can secure the rights that we had since 1985, and they came with the signing of the Atlantic Accord. Those rights belong to every one of us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. If we don't secure these rights and find a way to jointly manage our assets and our resources, obviously, the future is bleaker every day.

I don't doubt for a second that there have been some great strides made with Bill C-69. I listened to the Premier this week talk about CEAA and last week CEAA, and the week before CEAA, and do you know what? I think everybody in this room will agree that the points of CEAA are not beneficial to the province and they were a mistake. We need to ensure that we're not making a mistake with Bill C-69. We cannot repeat history. We cannot give up the rights we had.

I listened to the Minister of Natural Resources talk today about the two members are now guaranteed on a committee, and I think that's great. What's not great is that committee is to be determined by the Minister of Environment for Canada, and that could be five, seven, nine, or 11 members, whatever he deems. Say what you will, I don't see that as joint management in any way, shape or form. What I do see that as is them just trying to keep us at bay and not have the rights that we are looking for.

Bill C-69 takes away joint management and puts the power totally in the hands of the federal Minister of Environment. It's wrong, unjust, unfair and in total disagreement with the spirit of the Atlantic Accord.

Last week on Thursday, when this bill passed, we had seven members who represent us

federally vote against it – seven. Not one, not two, seven. Seven of those members indicated to us – not only as a government here provincially but to the people in Newfoundland and Labrador – that they thought our thoughts and values as presented to them by our Minister of Natural Resources and the Premier, by the people of the province, by CAPP, by Noia, by industry leaders, by the workers that work in these fields, meant nothing. My struggle is now we're expected to trust these same people, negotiate with these same people and this same government in order to uphold the Atlantic Accord.

I said in caucus a couple of days ago, I learnt a long time ago that you can listen to people and tell a lot about them, but what really tells you something about a person is when you watch them and you see their behaviour. To me, the behaviour of the seven MPs who voted for Bill C-69 really says how they feel about it.

If you look at all of our resources as a whole, from the offshore oil and gas, our mines, you look to the Coast of Labrador, Labrador West, the South Coast, the West Coast, all of our offshore resources, we employ a lot of people, but we have the ability to employ a lot more. We have the ability to do it environmentally and we have the ability to do it so people make money and we can further our cause as a government.

Like the hon. Member behind me said a few minutes ago, we have to pay for everything we have here. It's okay to say we want better roads or we want more schools or we want better health care, but the only way to find that is to find the revenues to do it.

We can find those revenues in an environmentally friendly way and still develop the resources we have. Our economy cannot run strictly on royalties. We have to find a way to develop these resources here in Newfoundland. We have to find a way to develop them with our own people and our own facilities. We've proven time and time again that we have the ability to do it. There is no reason why we can't continue to do this and to find a way to do it faster and more environmentally friendly.

Our resolution today is that the House of Assembly urge the Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador to do two things. First, is to challenge the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada for passing Bill C-69 with provisions that violate the principle of joint management contained in the 1985 Atlantic Accord.

Second, is to take all reasonable measures, including court challenges where necessary, to safeguard against conflicting federal legislation, the hard-won joint management rights of Newfoundland and Labrador secured under the 1985 Atlantic Accord and its implementation legislation.

Third, to refuse to enact the provincial law that would erode those rights. It's critically important.

We've heard disturbing words in recent days that indicate we may not be able to do this. There's no need to mince words or add caveats, we need to be firm on this resolution and we need to stand united on this as a House. Let's avoid every temptation to do anything except the right thing, and the right thing is to support this bill and move it forward.

We're at a critical path in Newfoundland financially, and we're at a critical path when it comes to our resources. The environment has never been more important for the future of our children, but the resources that will give those children a future are equally as important.

I certainly have no issues supporting this PMR and I think it's a way for us to send a message to Ottawa. I think it's a way for us to send a message to our federal MPs, to our federal senators and to the prime minister. We can no longer trust Ottawa to do what's right for us and collectively, as a government, we need to come together and make sure that we do this ourselves.

The right thing to do today is to vote in favour of this very strong resolution we have brought before the House on behalf of generations of Newfoundland and Labradorians, present and future, whose security hinges on how we respond to this terrible piece of federal legislation.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake, who will close debate on this motion.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard valuable consideration and reflection from many Members in the Chamber, from various sides, from various parties, and I thank all the Members for their contributions and the wisdom that they've added to the course of our deliberations.

I'd like to refer briefly to the open letter, in my remarks, that Premier Peckford provided to the hon. Premier on Sunday in which he points out that over 30 sections of the 68 sections of the Accord relate to joint management. Of course, the subject matter of what we're dealing with today is an initiative legislatively by the federal Parliament to trench on and infringe rights of joint management contained in the Atlantic Accord acts and the original Atlantic Accord contractual deal.

In this, Mr. Peckford lists some reasons which reinforce the idea that this federal legislative intervention should be challenged in the courts. He says: There's no pressing matter of national concern that necessitates the federal override in this instance. In that, he's referring to a general federal power provided by the Constitution. There's no pressing matter of national concern.

He goes on to say that if one concept like joint management contained in several provisions of the Accord – when he says several, he means 30 sections out of 68 – can be so violated, then the precedent is set that others can be violated too, like the provision that the province receive royalties as if the offshore resource were on land. Since the signing of the Accord, the province has received over \$20 billion because of this provision. So there he's pointing to the slippery slope that we're on that if the federal government can unilaterally intervene to enforce or force changes in the provincial mirror legislation, the Atlantic Accord act, then what will they do next? It's joint management today, it'll be fiscal arrangements the next day and other things the day after that.

I'd like to briefly refer to remarks made to this House of Assembly which can be found in *Hansard* May 6, 2013. These remarks were made by the minister of Natural Resources, Tom Marshall, when he was introducing Bill 1, which itself was a bill, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act regarding the safety of offshore workers. So what it means is the Accord act has been amended before – at least twice before that I'm aware of. And this had to do with occupational health and safety in the wake of certain events.

In this, the minister of the day, Mr. Marshall, reflected on the wisdom of dividing the jurisdiction over the offshore between more than one regulatory authority. This has been looked at and considered before. And I just want to refer and read into the record to remind Members of what Mr. Marshall observed.

He said: "The Accord Acts make safety a paramount consideration." And then he goes on to say that "on February 15, 1982, the Ocean Ranger capsized on the Grand Banks. Eighty-four people were on board, and there were no survivors. I think everyone here remembers where they were when that tragic event happened. Mr. Speaker, there were few families in this Province who were not touched by the tragedy. A Royal Commission was set up on March 17, 1982, and it was chaired by Chief Commissioner T. Alex Hickman, then the Chief Justice of the Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court.

"Mr. Speaker, the commissioner's report recommended ways to improve safety in the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore industry. The Ocean Ranger commission undertook a detailed analysis of offshore safety issues by commissioning studies, meetings with the professional experts in the field of safety from academia and industry. They held public hearings. They visited offshore rigs, training facilities, and emergency facilities, and they participated in safety meetings with people who worked on the rigs." These were the words of Minister Marshall in 2013.

"The Ocean Ranger commission concluded, '...the single window approach would appear to be the best institutional arrangement for

regulating offshore oil operations,' as long as appropriate steps, such as '...establishment of a Safety Branch within the single regulatory agency...' were taken."

Mr. Marshall himself says then: "I think that it is very interesting to note, because we subsequently had another report after the Cougar helicopter crash, the Wells commission, the Wells inquiry, and he has recommended something different.

"He has recommended that there be a solely independent safety regulator separate and independent from C-NLOPB." So this kind of separation of regulatory authority has been reflected on, recommended, considered before. "It was interesting that the Hickman inquiry, the Ocean Ranger commission, concluded that a single window approach would be the best arrangement for regulating offshore oil operations, but they did recommend that there would be the establishment of a safety branch within C-NLOPB."

The Hickman commission, in connection with the single regulatory agency, stated that competing jurisdictions, administrative overlaps and lack of co-ordinated, consistent policy are diminished by dividing jurisdiction. The Hickman commission recommended that Canada maintain the approach of a single regulatory agency in concept and in practice.

So this has been considered and recommended on before by the Hickman commission. It's interesting to note – and I'm following again the remarks of the former minister – Rowland Harrison, a prominent lawyer, former director general of the Government of Canada, led a task force to review the recommendations of the Hickman commission and other things.

That task force also noted that: "In addition to overlaps and duplication among multiple authorities, a division of jurisdiction also raises a serious risk of gaps in the regulatory system." So that's yet another body making a recommendation. Mr. Marshall says this is very important for us to note. This is a quote from the task force report: "These may appear as gaps in the conferral of the jurisdictions of the respective authorities. They may also appear as a consequence of confusion about the extent of the

jurisdiction conferred or even about the exercise of a conferred jurisdiction." It goes on in that vein.

Mr. Marshall summarizes: "So at that point the recommendations were that there would be a single regulator. There were concerns that if regulatory authority were dispersed over more than one agency, there was a possibility, not only of overlaps of duplication, but a dangerous potential for gaps in the system." And I leave my quotation from the remarks on the second reading of an act to amend the Accord legislation – I will leave off right there. Again, this was on May 6, 2013.

So here we come again to an initiative of the federal government to divide jurisdiction and have more than one regulatory agency and to intervene in the disposition, the settlement that was arrived at after long legal fights and long political negotiations by leading politicians of this jurisdiction and of the country of Canada which resulted in, I'll call it, a quasi-constitutional settlement by which we were awarded the right, we achieved the right, we negotiated the right of joint management, which has repaid us now, to the tune of more than \$20 billion contribution towards jobs and hopes in this jurisdiction, towards prosperity, towards self-respect and our ability as a jurisdiction within Canada to contribute to a greater Canadian federation.

I, therefore, call upon this House to endorse the resolution before it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

First of all, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The amendment is accepted.

All those in favour of the resolution, as amended.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The amended resolution is approved.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

House Leaders, call in your Members, please.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

First of all, all those in favour of the PMR as amended, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Reid, Mr. Davis, Ms. Haley, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Mitchelmore, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bennett, Ms. Pam Parsons, Ms. Stoodley, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Loveless, Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Petten, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Lester, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Evans, Ms. Conway Ottenheimer, Mr. Paul Dinn, Mr. Pardy, Mr. Parrott, Mr. Tibbs, Mr. Forsey and Mr. Lane.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the amended resolution, please rise.

CLERK: Ms. Coffin, Mr. James Dinn, Mr. Brown.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 32; and the nays: three.

MR. SPEAKER: The amended resolution is approved.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

As per the Standing Orders, normally we would close this House as of 5 o'clock, but with leave of my colleagues I would ask that we continue on with regular business.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Government House Leader have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you to my colleagues.

At this time, I would recall, with leave, from the Order Paper – actually, it's not on the Order Paper – the Concurrence Motion for the Estimates Committee for Social Services.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today representing the great District of Placentia West - Bellevue and all its great constituents. I have a couple of comments I guess. Obviously, I'm a rookie and I'm just taking notice of a few things. This is new to a lot of us and stuff like that.

When we came in, I guess we offered out an olive branch and the message we received loud and clear was that 42 per cent of the province's electorate that we represent on this side of the House don't matter and are not being listened to. I've also heard that we're the ones getting blamed for playing politics, but we're not playing politics at all, it's just that we don't agree with the budget as it was presented. We put out eight action items, as of which none were adhered to. So, in the spirit of collaboration, I really need to get a definition from the other side of the House.

When the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board talks about the action items and he talks about the Premier being a real leader and stuff like that, I think real leadership would find ways to pay for it instead of asking the Opposition how to do their job.

Just so that you understand where we're coming from, I think the thing is we're all asking for extra services, but nobody is focusing on the economy. Because if we focus on the economy and we get people working, then that is where the money is going to come from. It's not that we have to rob Peter to pay Paul.

Look at all the infrastructure we have. Are you not interested in blowing the dust off that and getting people back to work? That's what we're asking you to do. We're not asking you for more services. We're not asking you for something over the moon that we can't attain. We're asking you straight up that we want to work with you, but you guys have to want to work with us too.

The dramatic, seeing the theatrics – communication is obviously lacking. There's no new approach here if you're not going to communicate. Do you know what I mean? The childish approach with the theatrics and stuff like that, it's appalling to be quite honest. It's not something that is becoming of this House.

When the other side talks about reducing taxes, no, you're not. You can stop saying that as soon as you can because you implemented the taxes. If you take away those taxes, you're just taking away something that you implemented, so it's not reducing taxes. It's just taking away something that you burdened the province and the constituents of the province with: 300 fee increases and taxes. It doesn't make any sense.

Something I think that needs to be said is that we didn't say anything about cuts are needed for the economy. We just want no more giveaways. We want to bring industry here, but we want to make sure that it's utilized to the best of our potential for our people. It's our resources. Let's stop giving it away.

We don't need to prop up Ontario and Alberta anymore. They're already full of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Now, we have a project down in Corpus Christi, Texas. We only have 110 working in Cow Head and we have 750 working down in Corpus Christi, Texas. So, I guess it's the government's prerogative that instead of worrying about our own economy, we may as well prop up Texas.

One of the biggest things that we need to realize too is about diversifying the economy. I've heard people talk about diversifying the economy. You don't take oil money and put it into the oil industry. That's not diversifying the economy. You take oil money and you put it into another industry so that you can get that industry going and get it up to its full potential. That's what diversifying the economy is.

Why don't we take some of the oil money and put it into Nalcor? That would be diversifying the economy. Once we start getting some dividends from Nalcor, now we can start diversifying the economy with our fishery or with our oil; but if we take the money that we're making from Nalcor and put it into Nalcor, no, there's no diversity there. If we take money out of the oil industry and we put it back into the oil industry, no diversity.

What we need to do is we need to focus further on the economy to expand the economy, not just go along with the little run-of-the-mill giveaways that we're used to. We need to increase our economy. That's what needs to happen with Newfoundland and Labrador.

I come from a generation of giveaways. Next year, I'll be 50 years old. That's 50 years of giveaways. It's enough; enough is enough. Like I said, in my district alone, I have Long Harbour. I have Bull Arm. I have a state-of-the-art fish plant in Arnold's Cove that's world renowned and world class. I have, as I said, Bull Arm. I have Cow Head and I have the Marystown Shipyard. Those industries alone, if we could get those up to capacity, you don't have to worry about increasing taxes, you wouldn't have to worry about the levy and the increase on insurance. They'll be forgot about, just for the simple fact that people can afford them.

I'll finish on saying this. A quote from Winston Churchill says that taxing your citizens out of debt is that same as standing up in a bucket with your two feet in the bucket and trying to lift yourself up by the handle. It's just not possible. It's not going to work and the people are sick of it. It's time for a new opportunity. If you want to have a new approach forward, then come up with something better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am just going to be a few minutes here as we wrap up in Concurrence debate and as we reach the close of this session. I just want to remark on a few comments on the budget. I'm going to be soft today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. PETTEN: I know Members opposite don't really think that's coming, but I'm going to be very mild today.

We talked about the budget and a lot of things have been said, so I don't have to repeat all that, but the budget debate is what it is and we've made our stance. We stood this morning and voted against the budget.

The good things in the budget are good things, and we don't mind saying that. The reason we voted against the budget was there were things that we felt that the people who elected us wanted and voted for us for a reason and they supported our policies, they supported our *Blue Book*, they supported what we had to offer, and it was incumbent upon us to vote in favour of what the people who voted for you – it's just a natural progression; that's what we're here for.

There were things that we put forward. There were nice words, we're willing to work with you and all the right words were said, but actions needed to meet the words, and that didn't happen. We had lots of discussion in our caucus room about it and I believe, at the end of the day, you have to be very principled. If you stand on your principles and your morals, you'll never go wrong. I've always said that if you follow your gut, your gut will never mistake you, never lead you wrong, and I think collectively we all sat around the room and we agreed we could not in clear conscience to support the budget.

As for the fact of protecting the government from falling, that's a government issue, that's the sitting government in a minority Parliament. If they don't want to fall, they work with all

sides to make that happen. Now, they got through the budget vote, so good for them. On a go-forward basis, there are a lot of things have to happen in the next year or two, Mr. Speaker. There has to be a lot of conversations. But our issues will not go away. I said in this House there yesterday, I believe, I'm not giving up on the 1.6, we're not giving up on insulin pumps and we're not giving up on asking for taxation to be reduced. We will not give up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: That I can assure you, Mr. Speaker. If anyone in this House knows me, and know the Members, and they're getting to know our new Members, there's the same tenacity that I show, and these other people have the same tenacity. I've been accused at times of being a dog on a bone, and I'll take that as a huge compliment, because I will not wake up one day and say I'm not going to fight for something anymore. That's not the way I'm wired. I've never been wired that way. Since I've been old enough to walk and talk, that's who I am, and I'm not giving up on any of the things that I feel are important to me and the people I represent, and that I'll make no apologies for.

In saying that, you hear just a couple of friendly jabs, but the blame game has to stop, Mr. Speaker. We're entering the end of this session and, in the fall, we'll come back to another session which will be more legislation, but the people have heard enough of this blame game. Not only us as politicians, the people have heard enough of it. Every time a Member opposite gets up and throws the blame game around – I'm not even going to name any Members or ministers, I'm not going at it. They know who I'm talking about. It's old. This is the second term for this administration now; they're in their second term. The blame game is done. People have had enough of the blame game. I think that's something that they need to learn.

I heard that at the doors during the election. So on a go-forward basis, every time I hear blame the other crowd, you crowd, it's old. I mean, I can argue with the best of them in here. I can get up and go on my rants; people have seen me do it. What are we doing that for? Why are we standing up? Why are you saying you crowd? We're proud people, every one of us in this

House. We're not you crowd. We're all elected MHAs in this House who represent different parties but we're not you crowd.

You check *Hansard*, I've never once used that term to refer to any other Member in this House of Assembly. You're the government, you're the Liberal Party, you're the Third Party, you're an Independent, I don't agree with everything, trust me I don't, but I try to be as respectful as I can when it comes to that sort of stuff. Yeah, we've had our rows, we've had our go back and forth, but I also try to be respectful and if I'm not respectful, I'm man enough to go that Member or that person and say so, and pass my apology.

That's just my piece of advice, a little thing and a parting shot, but I think that's something that we all need to look at, and especially the people who are at this, they need to look in the mirror and say we need to move past that because that's not what the people voted for and that's not what they want. That's what they got sick of. That's what they wanted us to stop.

So, we still hear it, and it's not as much – trust me, it's not as much, but it's still there. People want answers to the questions and they feel their issues are important enough for us to bring them to this House and someone should stand up and give them the decency of an answer. That's another thing, on a go-forward basis of understanding committees on those things – why don't we look at that stuff? That's what people are looking for. They're sick of this nonsense throwing blame around. They're sick of it.

I use the word nonsense because a lot of it is, Mr. Speaker. It's absolute foolishness. People want better and we should all aspire to be better. If one of us are better, it makes it all better. If one of us goes down the gutter, everyone are down the gutter. That's the things about this House. No matter what party you're with, if you go high, we all go high; if you go low, we all go low. That's what people need to realize, every Member.

As my time is winding down I do want, on my point, to say I do hope everyone does have a nice summer and I'm expecting to see everyone back in full form in November. As schools are getting out tomorrow, I want the children to be safe and everyone have a safe and healthy

summer, happy summer, and I'll see you back here in the fall.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, that'll be my last words for this sitting of the House.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak to Concurrence. Myself and the Members here of my caucus have sat through all of the Estimates and I must say that was a very, very good experience, albeit somewhat grueling. One of the benefits of having sat through all of the Estimates is you get intimate perspective on what each department does and the programs that it offers and the way in which they operate.

So much like being an economist, we learn perspective in economics and we can learn the perspective of government, we learn the perspective of business, we learn the perspective of individuals, and we can apply the fundamental principles of economics, which is simply the study of choice. So if we were to apply those perspectives across our government departments, there are a number of areas where we see good initiatives being undertaken. I must applaud the Members for coming up with some reasonable initiatives that are being undertaken in albeit very trying times.

We do recognize that we do have some significant fiscal constraints, and a great deal of our fiscal constraints are well outside our control. As I've spoken to before, oil prices are outside of our control. The exchange rate is outside of our control. Our resource prices are outside of our control. The interest rates in the national economy are outside of our control. In that context, we have to build a budget based very strongly on resource prices. So that takes a great deal of delicate balance.

Now, if I want to get into this in a bit more detail, let's talk specifics about the budget because it's very easy to talk very generally in a

macroeconomic term but sometimes we need some of the more tangible issues and ideas. As I was sitting in each of the government Estimates, I noticed there were a number of initiatives that certainly span across the silos we see that are represented by government departments.

One in particular was a bit of an eye-opener for me, certainly. I heard there were a couple of government departments that do have pots of grant money and one of which was using another assessment, a group of individuals who assess the availability and awarding of grants. I laud that. I think that is an excellent idea where we minimize the duplication of resources and we take the talents of individuals who are capable of assessing those grants and apply those grants.

If we wanted to take this a step further and if we want to look at true collaboration or if perhaps we wanted to do something utterly radical and say, make things non-partisan, for example, perhaps we could take these pots of money and put them together and have one grants assessment agency do all of the assessments for all of the grants in government departments. Sure, we could have different criteria for the grants that come out of each of the different departments but to be truly independent and to be truly non-partisan, we could actually have a single individual department or agency administering those grants. I think that would be a revolutionary idea.

Another thing I saw that was a bit of an eye-opener for me; in Advanced Education, Skills and Labour they administer the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement. A wonderful, wonderful initiative. It enables individuals who are low income to be able to access additional money to have additional nutritional supports for the mother and child, and at a critical time in their lives; however, the grant assigned to that was not all spent this year.

In Estimates, they said if you have some ideas how you could probably make this work, then can you let us know? Immediately I suggested, why don't you go to the Women's Policy Office and ask them to help initiate that and help roll that out. Somehow the silos between the Women's Policy Office and Advanced Education, Skills and Labour had not come together on that issue. That would be a

revolutionary idea. We would have actually gotten the money out to the individuals who needed it had we taken that initiative one step further. So we can collaborate within government departments.

Here's another idea I had. How about we start talking between Transportation and Works, and Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation? Yes, we had brief discussions about the importance of our tourism industry, but I retold the story of a family vehicle that was travelling out over Roaches Line ahead of me with out-of-province plates on. They had a fold-down camper and they were making their way down Roaches Line. The fold-down camper was shaking and shimmying so much so that they had to pull off before that fold-down camper popped out like a Jiffy Pop on a campfire. It was looking like that.

Wouldn't it be a boon to our tourism industry if works, services and transportation not only sent a whisper of pavement down but, in fact, had a sound and resounding statement about that pavement and, in fact, gave it a firm pat on the back to tamp it down? Wouldn't we have better pavement so that people coming in to enjoy the wonderful tourism in our province would have a better experience? So perhaps collaboration between departments like that would give us a better sense.

Now, if we want to be even slightly more radical than that, how about we take Environment and – who are they with now – Municipal Affairs, and Natural Resources, and we combine that with Transportation and Works? We talk to Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and we say how about we electrify this province and create a co-op, provincially owned by the individual citizens of this province, and create a co-op that puts electrical generating stations all across this province, and we do that in collaboration with all of the departments that I have just mentioned here.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful initiative? Where we are coming out ahead of green energies, we are finding a way to get us off the dependence of oil, we are putting money back into the people of the province's hands, and we are giving jobs to people in this province who do not have jobs right now.

That is a collaborative initiative that we can use with several people who are already working in these areas. Wouldn't that be radical? Wouldn't that put the ownership back into our own people's hands and our own authority? I think those are excellent ideas; however, they have not yet been broached.

There are a number of other things we can talk about when we want to talk about collaboration. Certainly, when we go through the Estimates process we go through a line-by-line discussion of why we spent this much money here and why we spent this much money here. Then we can go to the Auditor General and the Auditor General can say, well, perhaps you shouldn't have spent that money there, or that was a poor allocation of the money, or the consequences of your policy decision was poor and they have left us with an environmental disaster or an enormous cost to our ratepayers and taxpayers.

If we went so far as to say, well, instead of being reactionary to our policy decisions, let's be proactive and let's put in place something like a parliamentary budget officer who not only do they provide education and training to new MHAs, as well they give policy guidance and advice. A parliamentary budget officer would be the person you would go to first to ask their opinion on the possible negative ramifications of policy decisions that are made.

That would be a pre-emptive step in our decision making and our policy. So we wouldn't be left with environmental disasters or rate mitigation concerns or joblessness because we are dependent on resources outside of our control. These are smart things that we can engage in right away that can prevent serious repercussions, negative repercussions into the future. I would like to see these types of initiatives being considered as we move into the next budget process.

Also, I would like to point out that there is \$111 million – that is \$111 million – parked in the Department of Natural Resources for what we hope will be the sanctioning of Equinor's next project. We do not know that this is guaranteed. There is still no decision from Equinor; yet, our people are crying out for food security. Our people are crying out for home support. We're

crying out for roads, and we have \$111 million parked in a government department right now.

This is not necessarily prudent use of our resources. So I think we really need to reconsider how we go about allocating our budgets and how we go about collaborating, interdepartmentally, but also collaborating across the House.

In the House we, of course, have had some suggestions on the part of my colleagues here to my left, as well as our caucus has also made some very good, very legitimate no cost suggestions that we can initiate right away. If we want to talk about true collaboration that does not have a cost associated with it, we can start making very small legislative changes, things like making pay equity legislation, things like gender and diversity criteria on agencies, boards and commissions. These are no-cost issues.

We can move towards even greater democratic reform by fixing and sticking to an election date that will reduce stress on the public service and all of the people that have to prepare for an election, as well as all the people who need to do all of the prep work after an election is done. So it minimizes the upheaval for the people of the province and it minimizes the upheaval of the people who deliver the public services on which we so rely.

Mr. Speaker, while I have some serious concerns about some of the issues in the budget, while I also have some concerns, and as my colleague spoke out earlier we did not support the amendment regarding C-69 because we see that there are other opportunities beyond environmental or resource development that has negative environmental consequences, such as we have enormous potential for secondary and tertiary processing that do not necessarily have environmental issues associated with that, there are ways in which we can stimulate our economy that does not mean environmental devastation or the cost of life and limb to our next generations and even our own generation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that, as a caucus, we have allowed the budget to pass and we believe in supporting the fiscal and the sustainability of the province. We are all for a stable, strong provincial economy. We want to

encourage businesses to come here and show them that we are a stable government, that we are open for business, that this is a good place to come, get a job, raise a family and have a living. However, we want to see movement towards increased collaboration into the future and we would like to see collaboration across the House, in all facets of the House, as we go into preparing budget 2020.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I'm honoured to be able to stand here today and speak to this particular aspect of the entire budget process. I know I have 20 minutes on the clock, but my goal is to take somewhere around 10 minutes to –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I am not even started and I'm getting heckled.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

Just some observations that I've made over this period – when you're doing this process, it feels a lot longer than what it actually is, but I don't think I've actually spoken since I spoke to Interim Supply starting off or maybe spoke early on. But what I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that I've listened, whether here in the House or on the video recording, to every speech. I've actually listened or read – if I never had a chance to hear what somebody said in the House, I actually had a chance to read their speech in *Hansard*, and I felt that was important.

So I've had an opportunity to listen. I can say, having sat on the Opposition side and sat on this side, there are times back in the day when you'd get up and somebody might get a bit fiery in their speech, you had that urge to stand up and fire back, and things would go back and forth, but this session we haven't seen a lot of that.

What we've seen are people putting forward their positions, their points of view, agreeing, disagreeing – that's fine.

But I did want to point out just a couple of things here that I took from the different points that I heard. What I will say is that I appreciate the thought – I do feel that there is a desire to work together from all Members. Sometimes that doesn't come across in the speeches. That's the reality is that there's always a bit of politics at play in this. That's the nature of this that we're in. I get that, but I do think there's a sense of collaboration.

I don't want to speak too highly of him, because it might go to his head, but my time working with the Opposition House Leader as well as the House Leader for the Third Party, as well as the independent Members, nobody sees that. That's not in the House, that's not on TV. And again, I should go to the Deputy House Leader too before I make him upset. But we've managed to work together to make this House operate and to get these things happening. At the end of the day, whether you agree with the budget or not agree with it, we've managed to make the process work. So there is that spirit of collaboration that is there.

Now, what I will point out, though, and I think I have to do this, and I think it's incumbent on me to do this, again, having listened to what everybody has said here, the one thing I noticed when listening to my colleagues in the Official Opposition is that there has been a disciplined approach that they've taken to this. Their message, which I think was made clear in their leader's letter – the eight-point letter, we'll call it – emphasized their concerns and the things that they felt were important.

I think, as an Opposition, they have stood up and you've seen that in most of the speeches that have come forward. You've seen that disciplined nature. But I have noticed times when that discipline has broken down and I felt that it has resulted in contradictions. So, for instance, at one point today we heard a speech that was very much – actually, I think the quote was leadership is finding the money and talking about – again, it was multiple references to 2016, multiple references to taxes. The very next speech said: People don't want to hear the blame game.

I want to make sure again that sometimes we get these contradicting messages. It's funny; I've heard multiple quotes again from Churchill. I like that; I enjoy history. Anyone who has read about Churchill, it's amazing. It's not as good as my favourite quote because we talk about fiery speeches. A person said: I want to get a bit more fire in the speech. Sir Winston said: Well, maybe you should put that speech in the fire.

Sometimes when we hear this stuff, the fact is we have to point that out. Now, I think it's fair, upon me again, as someone who's listened to this, to point out that if we are going to talk about the spirit of collaboration, we have to eliminate the contradictory messages that sometimes we receive.

I've looked at some of the notes here. Again, I look at talking about just some of the stuff we've heard: indecision. There's an indecision problem. We talk about the cuts and the budget of 2016, but at various points I've heard people say we don't want to go back in history, but I also don't think it's accurate to reference a budget that's three years old without talking about what led up to it.

Earlier today during the speeches, I heard it said, 50 years of giveaways. Do you know what? That's fair to say that, but if we're going to use 50 years of history and we're going to use three years of history, we have to use all that context as well that led up to what was undoubtedly an unpopular budget; 2016 was tough.

I'm going to use that as a segue when we talk about leadership. I'm speaking here now – I'm not supposed to point it out, but the Premier's not here. He's at the Premier's Athletic Awards. Do you know what? Sometimes I want to say leadership is many things to many people, but leadership is also making the tough decision that you know is not popular. Leadership is doing something that you know is not in your best interest, but is in the best interest for those people down the road.

What I can point out, and certainly there has been lots of opportunity, we all have faults and, certainly, the Premier of this province has his, but what I will say is that he had no problem making many tough decisions that were completely unpopular. There's nothing fun

about it, but we all know that there was a need to do that.

Now, I get the political side of pointing that out, don't get me wrong. I sat on the Opposition side, I had an opportunity to do that as well but what I will say, I think true leadership is not always worrying about yourself but it's worrying about the well-being of others.

I will tell you, there is no doubting that the Premier of the province has tossed aside the worries about himself for the worries of others. I can guarantee you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: The other thing I'll point out – again, in the spirit of collaboration. Don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker, I point these things out but it's not about taking a shot, it's just pointing out when we talk about collaboration. I think one of the things we do need to work on – and it's the thing I noticed, and I go back to one of the speeches I heard earlier in this process. It talked about, these are the things we want to do and we want to collaborate, but if you don't we're going to pull the plug. We're going to pull the plug on you, and pull the plug usually has a very negative meaning and usually it relates to somebody that's ready to go.

We heard a speech from one Member where he mentioned the term reprieve. Now, reprieve, when you look at the definition, usually applies to the criminal death sentence, when somebody is going to get punished for death. When I look at some of the comments that we've made where we're not going to take that, we're putting you on notice. What I would suggest is I do think there's a way to get the point across without using language that leads to death.

We cannot talk about collaboration on one hand, in one speech, and on the other hand talking about heads on platters. They are mutually exclusive. They do not exist together. So what I would say – because I have no problem, I have absolutely no problem with negotiation, with collaboration. Again, I point out all the positive collaborations that I've had just in this session, working with Members on the other side, the meetings that you don't see. The meetings talking about legislation that is something that

matters to a person. You don't see it here on the floor; that goes on.

I get having served in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. What I will say is I know the position sometimes you have to take, but I will say as a Member of government, we will not negotiate at gunpoint.

Again, we talk about quotes, and I love them. We talk about JFK, one of the greater presidents of the last century. We talk about how we must not fear to negotiate, but we cannot negotiate in fear. So I point that out here, that I look forward to the continuing collaboration, but I would point out to Members that sometimes in standing up and making our point for our districts – and I do not fault anybody for that. Lord knows, I've done that plenty of times.

What I will say is when we talk about wanting to collaborate, we have to remember that sometimes when we get in those fiery moments that it's hard to collaborate at times when you think that you're on the defensive. So what I would say is I think going forward, I think there are a lot of good points that Members on the other side make of all parties and independents. Do you know what? They make a lot of strong points.

I know for a fact that Members on this side – because we have shown it. We are willing to do it. We will continue to work together, we have to. We are going to work together, but what I will say is that of all of my sessions in here, this has been a very, very positive one.

As someone who has sat here, I look at some Members who have been here longer, but I can tell you the tone and the co-operation in the room, just the tone in the air, is a lot different than even it was eight years ago. It's a lot different, and I think that's something positive that we can take from this.

I'm very happy to speak to the budget. I'm very happy that I get an opportunity to speak in this House, and on that note I'll take my seat.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that the report of the Social Services Committee be concurred in?

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.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 4.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm delaying for a moment because my trusted Clerk is on her way back.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I have received a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

MR. SPEAKER: All rise, please.

I have a message dated June 21, 2019:

As Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit Estimates of sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending 31 March 2020, by way of further Supply, and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, I recommend these Estimates to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.: _____

Lieutenant-Governor

Please be seated.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that the message be referred to a Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

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!

Considering the bill and related resolution, Bill 4.

Resolution

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

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,622,521,200.”

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

CLERK: 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 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, schedule 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: Whereas it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the resolution and Bill 4 carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Chair, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$7,576,549,700 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year be carried and I further move that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and a bill consequent thereto.

CHAIR: The motion is that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$7,576,549,700 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year be carried and that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and a bill consequent thereto.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise and report progress, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, Deputy Speaker and Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have passed the amount of \$7,576,549,700 contained in the Estimates of Supply for the 2019-2020 fiscal year and 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 the Whole reports that the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to same.

When shall the report be received? Now?

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, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to the Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 21, 2020 the sum of \$2,622,521,200."

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 this resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,622,521,200."

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 the Supply bill, Bill 4, 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 Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce the Supply bill, Bill 4 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce the Supply bill, Bill 4, and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill,

“An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service,” carried. (Bill 4)

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service. (Bill 4)

On motion, Bill 4 read a first time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board that the Supply bill be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the supply bill now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service. (Bill 4)

On motion, Bill 4 read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board that the Supply bill be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 4)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 4)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, prior to adjourning, Mr. Speaker, I think this is generally the customary point in time where House Leaders or leaders have an opportunity just to say a few words, so I’ll call upon my colleague.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Government House Leader for this opportunity. Again, while we’ve been only here a short period of time it’s been a long sitting because we started back in March; but in the last three weeks, while it’s been primarily on the

budget and the related pieces of legislation relevant to that, we have come to having some good debate in this House. We've come to some consensus on a number of things, but I think we set the tone for the future over the next number of sittings in the House of Assembly of how we're going to collaborate, how we're going to work together, how we'll develop partnerships and how we'll come to a consensus on the best way to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, again, I want to thank and congratulate everybody who got elected only recently, for putting their names forward and standing to the serve the people in their respective districts, and particularly at times having to make decisions that may not be in the best interest of your particular district but serves the bigger whole here when it comes to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and those are decisions that we end up having to live with over the next periods of time, but there're in the best interest of serving the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I don't want to belabour too much but I want to personally thank all the people who are involved in the House of Assembly, the Table Officers here, the great work they do. Keeping in mind, there are a lot of rookies here, including myself as the Opposition House Leader, of learning the process, and there are little glitches you may forget about but you get helped along very quickly or nodded to, to stop now and move back and forth. So, I thank them for that.

I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chair of Committees for their work, particularly to all the other people here, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Pages, Hansard, the communications staff and the Broadcast Centre, all the security that works within the House of Assembly to ensure that we're safe in here, that things run smoothly, that everything that's at our disposal that's needed is at a moment's notice that we can have access to, all the staff that make things work for the House of Assembly. Also, particularly in our own caucus, I have to thank the staff that we have there. They are diligently, day and night, doing research for us, preparing questions to ensure that we have the factual information we need to do our jobs in the House of Assembly.

My colleagues here and our leader who – I won't note, but I will note – is like the Premier, at a significant acknowledgement for the athletics in Newfoundland and Labrador and couldn't be here, but on his behalf and on behalf of our caucus I want to wish everybody a safe holiday as we go through the summer.

People think it's a holiday and I wanted to correct that because people say: You're on holidays now, are you? They don't realize now it becomes the 18-hour days. The days in here are more structured, then it becomes 18 hours of dealing with district issues, dealing with particular responsibilities you may have as a minister or a Member of a particular caucus, or a critic, but also as a volunteer because we all still volunteer in our roles here. We're always invited to things that we have to take as a stake that's beyond what we signed on for as part of our employment as representatives of the people, so we all take that and they are the things that are more enjoyable and the things we do.

I also want to thank – while we just got through Public Service Week – all the public servants in Newfoundland and Labrador who make this great province of ours run very diligently. There are times here we get up and we go back and forth with questions and none of the questions are ever meant to be against a particular part of the civil servants. It's about clarification. It's about can we find better ways of doing it and it's about if somebody falls through the crack, how can we help that civil servant who is providing that service do their job more diligently and provide a better service. That's what we do here. When we ask questions, we get answers and hopefully we come to a better solution.

On that note, again, I want to thank everybody, wish everybody a good summer and we look forward to seeing everybody maybe earlier than people would have suspected this summer, but no doubt the fall when we sit again and particularly get into debate about legislation that's going to improve the operations in the House and the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join my colleague in expressing my gratitude. The analogy I've come up with: This experience is like riding a bike except the bike is on fire, I'm on fire, everything is on fire.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. J. DINN: We got basically a brand new caucus and we bring to this experience a wealth of experience but not in this capacity, so it was being dropped into learning of what it means to be an MHA, how the House works, then on top of that dealing with the budget, and then learning about the gruelling pace of the Estimates Committee so it's been quite an experience.

I would like to say, first of all, I come from a background with the NLTA, around the executive, where we could debate things rather hot and heavy and it would be hot and heavy. But, at the end of it, whatever decision we made we walked out of there, we were one, and we had that social moment.

That's the one thing I do enjoy about this. I think the Government House Leader has made that very clear that there is an awful lot of stuff, side conversations that go on beside collaboration of how do we work together, because we do have a role here to fill in the government of being the government and being the Opposition. Sometimes we will agree and sometimes we won't. And I'd like to believe that we will agree on those times when we really do – we won't disagree or agree because of politics but because of our personal beliefs.

I do want to say thank you to all of our constituents who voted for us, and they put a tremendous amount of trust in us here to do the right thing in this province in recognizing the situation we're in. I think you would join in saying, even to those who may not have voted for us, that we will earn their trust over the next year or two years, three years, four years, and that we will actually work together to earn their trust and their respect.

Debate, I said, is hard. I'll also turn to the staff – I'll tell you one thing in terms of the sessions that we've had here, the Estimates sessions that have gone on five hours long at the end of a long day, it's very gruelling – it's one thing for us who signed on to it, but to bring the staff in and then have to sit through it and many of them don't always get to answer a question, but they have to be there to support the minister, thank you.

For those who offered the training sessions, those who've offered advice along the way, for our own caucus support staff, as I think Gerry Rogers used to say, we're a small but mighty caucus, and very much the same thing. So I have a tremendous respect for all those who make this what seems to be a pretty effortless operation move so slowly, but there's an awful lot of moving parts that go on and a lot of people that go unsung. So thank you to those who made this experience an interesting experience, to say the least.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I'll try my best to be brief. As a smart politician once told me, when you're the last thing between a bunch of people and freedom, you get out of the way.

What I will say is I'm speaking right now – normally the Premier would be speaking, but like a lot of Members of this House, he is at the athletic awards, which is an important event, so I get the pleasure of speaking here. The point of speaking right now is just to say a bunch of thank-yous, because we are here doing this job that we're very lucky to do. I liken the House and what we do to an iceberg. There's what people see, and then there's everything underneath that people don't see but what makes this function.

To our Table staff, Elizabeth, Sandra and Kim, I don't think people realize the importance of

these individuals, as well as those in the backgrounds out in the offices, the Clerk's office, the Speaker's office, these people that are doing work that's unseen, but we know their importance. To our Pages, thank you so much for putting up with us and being here and I wish you the best this summer as you move on to new endeavours and new opportunities.

To those down there that are again behind the scenes, people doing the *Hansard*, people doing the video centre. I mean, these are people that sometimes we forget that they're down there doing this job and waiting for us, so thank you to all those that are doing that.

To all of our caucuses and departmental staff, it doesn't matter who you are, every one of those people, we owe a big debt of gratitude to the work that they're doing. Our caucuses are so important and our political staff, but also, as the House Leader for the Opposition referenced, it's the non-political staff that are out there doing great work, working all the time. So I want to thank them and thank them for putting up with us. It's a hard job but when the House is in session, everything becomes a bit more manic, a bit more frantic and a bit more anxious because we need that work and we need it now, so I thank them for putting up with all of us during this time.

I want to thank – and again, sometimes we don't give them enough thanks – the members of the media that are out there. They're out here covering this every day. Sometimes we don't always like what they have to say, but they have an important job, they do it well and I'd like to think, by and large, they're very fair. We're very lucky in this province to have the media that we do, so I want to thank all them for everything they've done.

I want to say, again I've said it before, to the House Leaders, this House does not function without co-operation, so I want to thank them. Both are fairly new to the roles in taking it on, but you would never know. It's been like dealing with experienced professionals. So we work very well together and I think that will continue on so I want to thank them, as well as I worked with my colleagues and the deputy, deputy House Leader. I want to thank them for making this House function the way it does.

I guess one of the big things I want to say to everybody is we're privileged to live here, we're privileged to work here and 40 of us are in a group that is very lucky. I was talking to a person the other day and sometimes you need that perspective when you see a constituent that's down in the hospital that just had to come here for a surgery or something else and we think about my God how good do we have it, how lucky are we. So sometimes we need that, but that's a bond that all 40 of us share. Every single one of us shares that. We all know what that's like to deal with that.

What I would say to my colleagues – and again, before I get to the final part, to our new Members and to our new ministers on all sides I want to say congratulations on a job well done. I got to tell you when you jump into this and go into the budget process like we did, that's a lot to take on, that's a lot to learn but you would never know that people were new because they carried themselves with respect, with decorum, with understanding, with intelligence, integrity. It was really good to deal with, so I appreciate that. We only get better. It's one of those things, there's always something new but sometimes with that experience it gets more interesting. So I wish them the best.

Before we leave, I wish to all of us, but more importantly to every one of our family members, I wish everybody safety. I hope everybody has a great summer. We're all going to be busy. I'm sure we'll cross paths, but I wish everybody a safe and happy summer. Enjoy it with your families.

We're very lucky to be here. Before you know it we'll be back here going tooth and nail at it again. I think the fact that we're all going to go out and enjoy summer, doing the work that we do, serving the constituents that we serve, and hopefully with our families and our friends by our side.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If I may take a minute, and as is the custom, I'd like to wrap up with a few remarks and try to complement what I've just heard from these eloquent speakers.

As I said when I walked into this chair here just a couple of weeks ago, it is definitely a different view sitting here. It's quite an interesting situation. Now I have this 180-degree view in front of me and, frankly, we've never seen that in this room ever. So it's quite fascinating. I've been tending to sit in the chair somewhat this way and then looking over but there's a lot going on, on both sides, and it's absolutely challenging and fascinating at the same time.

Sticking on the analogy of the iceberg, there's also a lot goes on in this room that is off the camera. For example, there's been a couple of times what I've mentioned to the Pages, I said do you realize what's happening behind this chair right now? Sometimes they've been aware and sometimes they haven't, but it's just indicative of the good rapport and conversation and dialogue and there is a lot of good working together here in this room. So I congratulate you all on that.

As everyone else has done, these people in front of me – Sandra likes to refer to herself as the furniture, but they're so much more than that. They are pretty wise and very experienced furniture that guide all of us, both here on the floor and before and after we come to this Legislature. So I have to thank them, and all of the team that works very closely with us, so very much.

I guess a final thought, and to the new Members, this is now my fourth year in this political adventure. I have to say even after four years, I still don't feel like a veteran, but you are learning new things every single day. I keep asking these folks that work with me, the Table Officers, have we done this before? They say: oh, no, this is new.

We keep encountering new situations and so on, as I think we get more sophisticated and we challenge ourselves to look at our parliamentary procedures and ensure that we're staying to what was the initial intent and so on. Perhaps the next time we see each other we will feel a little bit more like a veteran, but I don't think that

newness will ever go away. There will always be things to learn.

Finally, I'd like to say, and on behalf of all of us, we are all MHAs. Regardless of the role we play in this House, we all have constituents and family. To all of those people, I say thank you very much for allowing us this honour to be here and work and speak on your behalf. Have a great, safe summer.

I'll turn it now to the Government House Leader.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you very much.

I would move, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House do now adjourn until July 23.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This House does stand adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, the 23rd day of July, at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, July 23, 2019.