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Speaker: Honourable Paul Lane, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER (Lane): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we begin this morning, I just want to take this opportunity to wish the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, as well as the Member for Labrador West, a happy birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: One of them is turning 60 and the other one is the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I would now like to rule on the point of privilege raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition and Member for Windsor Lake on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

During a concurrent point of order, the Leader of the Official Opposition referenced comments made by the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue and Deputy Speaker during the extraordinary sitting of the House of Assembly on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, in the period reserved for Questions to Government Ministers. The Leader of the Official Opposition stated that the Member referred to him as a "sellout." The Member for Placentia West - Bellevue has withdrawn that comment and I have determined that the matter of the point of order is concluded.

In his point of privilege, the Leader of the Official Opposition also stated that after the House had adjourned, the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue commented, if the shoe fits, wear it, as the Member was leaving in the Speaker's parade in his capacity as Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Official Opposition stated that in his role as Deputy Speaker, the Member has an obligation to be impartial and that the

leader's privilege to be treated with impartiality has been breached.

As the Leader of the Official Opposition has pointed out, Members who are also presiding officers in this hon. House have dual roles. When presiding, the Deputy Speaker and other presiding officers can rule on procedural matters and apply sanctions as needed and their decisions carry the same authority as those made by the Speaker. In that context, the obligation of impartiality clearly applies. Those obligations, however, are less clear when a presiding officer is not in the Speaker's chair.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 4th Edition, at paragraph 7.42 states, "While the Standing Orders provide for the Speaker's impartiality and independence by prohibiting participation in any debate before the House, there is no such clear statement as to whether the Deputy Speaker and other presiding officers should take part in debate."

Deputy presiding officers' political activities and participation in debate and voting, except while acting for the Speaker, is largely left to the discretion of the individual Member.

While I do recognize that the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue was part of the Speaker's parade at the time the comment was made, the Member was not strictly engaged in his role as Deputy Speaker and was presiding over proceedings. Therefore, I do not find any *prima facie* breach of privilege.

With that said, I do expect that all Members be mindful of their language and conduct in this hon. House and I remind Members who are also presiding officers to consider the significance of that role. Their conduct as a Member of a political party or caucus, during debate, Question Period or otherwise, can reflect on that important role

and I would ask them to hold themselves to a higher standard.

**EXTRAORDINARY DEBATE PURSUANT
TO STANDING ORDER 8(7) - Definitive
Cooperation and Implementation
Agreement between Newfoundland and
Labrador Hydro, Hydro-Québec and
Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation
Limited**

SPEAKER: Today's format, there are no further panellists, guests, to the Chamber, so it will be an opportunity for each Member to receive 10 minutes to express their thoughts and views on the motion which is being debated.

We will continue on until 12 o'clock, then there will be a recess and back again at 1 p.m. and so on, as we've done throughout the week.

The hon. Member for Gander.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. FORD: Thank you, Speaker.

It's an honour to rise on behalf of the people of the District of Gander, from Appleton, Benton, Gambo, Gander and Glenwood.

As we discuss the Churchill River and replacing the 1969 agreement, I thought about my late father, Arthur Ford, of Amherst Cove. In 1966, my mother, Betty Ford, from Bonavista had secured a position with Eastern Provincial Airways in Gander. My father decided to go with her and enrolled in an office administration course at the Lewisporte District Vocational School. After completing his training, he found work in Churchill Falls, as a clerk, where one of his duties included preparing payroll.

While he was processing payroll, he noticed that the truck drivers delivering fuel to construction camps were earning significantly more than he was, so he made

the decision to switch roles and applied to become a truck driver himself.

My father was there in July 1967 when Premier Joey Smallwood turned the sod to mark the beginning of one of the most important megaprojects in our province's history. I have his album of pictures he took that day.

At that time, Churchill Falls was a celebrated project, a symbol of progress and opportunity for our province. History has shown that it did not provide our province with the benefits many had hoped for. That is why this new agreement is so significant. It's an opportunity to achieve a more equitable return from our resources.

Speaker, it's not lost on me that the political climate in government commentary today is similar to that of 1969. Premier Joey Smallwood built his political vision around development. He once said: We must develop or perish. We must develop or our people will go in the thousands to other parts of Canada. We must create new jobs – develop, develop, develop. That's been my slogan and that will remain my slogan.

When he spoke about Churchill Falls, he spoke about jobs, economic growth, investment and opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, if we listen carefully, we hear many of the same promises today. These were powerful arguments in the 1960s and they remain powerful arguments today.

Speaker, the PC Members opposite spent much of the spring sitting criticizing the 1969 government – fair enough. But also mocking this caucus and the Liberal 1969 deal that came before. As if I – born in 1975 – was a signatory to the deal signed in 1969.

I say this to remind the Premier and all MHAs opposite that supporters of the 1969 agreement also believed that they were acting in the best interests of Newfoundland

and Labrador. They too believed that they had negotiated the best deal for Newfoundland and Labrador, and they celebrated Churchill Falls as a transformative project for our province.

Speaker, few could have imagined how valuable electricity would have become, how energy markets would evolve, or the leverage that clean hydroelectric power would one day provide. That is why we must ask ourselves difficult questions. Will future generations look back and say that we secured the best possible return for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? What will Members of the House of Assembly be saying 50 years from now? Will they stand in this Chamber and question why we settled for less, when we had the opportunity to negotiate for more?

Speaker, this is not an opportunity against development. I'm not a do-nothing. It is an argument for humility and learning from history. Yes, I supported the 2024 MOU, and I did so because it contained market-based pricing. It contained off-ramps, given the length of the agreement, and literally, the word "fair" written into it. In the absence of these, Speaker, I cannot support this agreement.

You will hear some of my colleagues speak to the numbers and particulars of this agreement. I've chosen to speak to the process, because process matters and it shapes the decisions we make in this House. The PC party promised a referendum. When the Premier broke his party's promise, he announced there would be a special debate of MHAs. This was categorically not a debate by any definition. In fact, it was described, Speaker, by the PC government's own Finance Minister as an information session. I might describe it as a three-day show and tell, except even show and tell would place higher value on the question-and-answer period.

Speaker, I was appalled when I learned that the initial proposal was for just 45 minutes

on day four – 45 minutes. Less than one minute of debate for every year covered by this proposed agreement. Eventually that changed to 30 minutes a day over three days, but surely a deal of this magnitude deserves more diligence.

For a Premier who has stated that he doesn't believe in deadlines, he seemed remarkably determined to give this House as little time as possible to debate this agreement, and as little time as possible where he, himself, would be required to stand in this Chamber and defend the process and decisions that brought us here.

When he broke his referendum promise to voters, each Member of his caucus who ran under the PC platform broke the same promise to their constituents. How will anyone ever trust this Premier or his MHAs? The consequences of that, it's not for me to judge. They have to answer to their constituents in the days to come and at the doors in three years or less.

I want to speak to the most alarming part of the PC process, the Independent Review Committee. Another election promise of the Premier formed the basis of almost everything we have discussed this week. Their report provided guidance to the negotiating committee and shaped the Premier's mandate to negotiators. Time and time again during this debate we have heard references to the IRC's findings and conclusions. While the Premier said committee members would be available to the public, this, too, turned out to be a broken commitment.

In the technical briefing, I asked who were the stakeholders and experts referenced in the report who had been consulted with? I was told they had been granted anonymity. It would be kept a secret. I asked this week on who informed this foundational report, but it remained secret, Speaker, but for one panellist who themselves revealed their participation.

Speaker, I was flabbergasted. The Premier himself repeatedly told us the IRC did their work but who did they talk to? Who were the experts? Who were the stakeholders? What expertise did they bring to this process? How can the public trust a report guiding this process when the PCs refuse to identify the people who informed it? It's like being handed a scientific paper with no citations and being told to simply trust the conclusions. Then to top it all off, the Premier stated that he, himself, does not know who those experts and stakeholders are. It's unfathomable to me.

The leader of Newfoundland and Labrador has placed extraordinary trust in a committee of negotiators and asked the people of this province to do the same, yet the Premier does not know who informed the work that became the framework for the negotiations and agreement.

A new agreement should be a moment of celebration, an opportunity to finally right the wrongs of 1969. Instead, the process, Mr. Speaker, has been a boondoggle, not unlike Muskrat Falls. Rather than building public confidence, it has become a source of skepticism and frustration, of doubt and mistrust.

What also troubles me is that I feel this government is trying to sell their 2026 agreement, obsessed with discrediting the 2024 MOU and borrowing from the politics of the day, rather than having their deal stand on its own merits.

The Premier's opening remarks of this special sitting leaned into anti-President Trump sentiment, while riding the pro-Liberal Mark Carney wave that has emerged nationally. The message seems to be that because people are feeling patriotic, they want Canada to succeed because people are frustrated with outside sources, they should therefore support this agreement. That is not how a generational deal should be judged.

When I consider the process that brought us to this decision point, I believe our collective obligation as parliamentarians, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, is to ask whether future generations will thank us or mock you for the decisions made today.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: Speaker, I rise in this hon. House in support of this resolution. In April, I stood in this House and delivered a budget. I told Members that not a dime of assumed revenue from the Churchill Falls deal would go on our books until a deal was signed. I said we were focused on today's reality, not tomorrow's potential. Speaker, there is now a deal.

Long before the Independent Review Committee began its work, we raised concerns about the 2024 MOU. We had questions that had not been answered, so we put one question to the independent experts. Is this in the best long-term interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? They gave us a clear answer. No. They also told us where the 2024 MOU fell short – on power, on transmission and on when value would arrive. They told us what a better agreement would have to look like. Our negotiating team took that report back to the table with three goals: more power, more value, more transmission.

Speaker, this agreement delivers on all three. Let me start with value because the money is my responsibility. On the same basis the Independent Review Committee used, the 2024 MOU was worth \$36 billion to this province. This agreement is worth \$49 billion to the province, but the number I want Members of this hon. House to hold onto is not the headline. It is \$10 billion –

half of the \$20 billion provincial debt; \$10 billion, the amount the previous government added in their 10 years of governance; \$10 billion is the value that will come to this province before 2041, before the old contract would have expired.

Why does that matter, Mr. Speaker? Because the Independent Review Committee's central criticism of the former government's MOU was that its benefits were pushed out past 2041. This agreement brings that value forward. The people will feel it directly. Once this agreement is completed, the Churchill River Electricity Rebate will return 15 per cent to the ratepayers of this province – a start.

Speaker, more power and more transmission are not abstractions in Labrador. In April, I spoke in this House about the ironworker in Labrador City. This agreement is the reason there will be more of them.

Power to Labrador rises from 525 megawatts today to 1,824 megawatts by 2041; more than three times what flows there now. The ramp up begins long before the old contract runs out. The power is what electrifies the Labrador Trough, a belt roughly 250 kilometres long and up to 150 kilometres wide, rich in high-purity iron ore, one of our many critical minerals. The potential there is massive, but it cannot be unlocked without power.

Speaker, this agreement delivers the power that lets mines open. Speaker, this is not ours to celebrate alone. The value of economic development will exceed hydro, wind and transmission value.

The work with Innu Nation is not finished. Our government is committed to doing that work properly, building a partnership that holds long after the ribbon is cut.

Speaker, I said in April that I would not sugar-coat our fiscal position and I will not do it now. This agreement is not a windfall

that solves our problems. As I said in *Budget 2026*, we are forecasting deficits for the next few years. In household terms, that means spending more every month than you take in, and no household can do that indefinitely; no single agreement changes that on its own, but this one does something more useful. It gives the province revenue of its own, on its own terms.

Speaker, increased revenue is debt you never issue and debt you never issue is interest this province never pays. That is the quietest benefit of this agreement, and it may also be the most durable one.

Speaker, everyone in this hon. House knows how fond I am of sinking funds. In April, I told Members we would strengthen ours. More money set aside years in advance so debt is repaid rather than refinance again and again and passed on to future generations. But a sinking fund only exists because we borrowed in the first place. So as fond as I am of them, I would much prefer to need fewer, and this agreement greatly reduces the province's need to borrow money.

Speaker, as minister, I've learned that you do not solve a structural problem by handing the bill to the next generation. We have to build our way out of this and this agreement is how we start.

Speaker, an agreement is not numbers on a ledger. It is a promise we make to generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who will live with it long after the rest of us in this Chamber have moved on. That promise is measured by what those numbers do in people's lives: the mine that opens; the apprentice who gets hired on; the power bill that finally comes down.

This agreement is not only about generating revenue; it is about strengthening Newfoundland and Labrador's financial future and creating room to invest in priorities that matter most to the people of

this province. That is why I am voting for this resolution today.

The Member for Bonavista will be voting in favour of the resolution due to what it will provide for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Speaker.

What a privilege it is to have the opportunity to stand here and represent my District of Mount Pearl North. I pride myself in listening to the people and listening to what people in my district have to say. I am here to represent them and their opinion. One message in particular I have received recently said that I would like to see a re-opening clause. After all, this is supposed to be a new agreement.

That is a common theme I have heard. People don't want to be locked in. They want options; they want off-ramps, and who could blame them? They know the story of Churchill Falls, and being stuck with a bad deal for so long was a big lesson.

As shadow minister for Seniors, I hear a lot from seniors in particular – people who have lived with the 1969 deal their whole adult life. Think about that. For more than 50 years, they have heard about that deal. They have watched Quebec benefit from our power. They have watched our province live with a bad deal. They were embarrassed by it; so am I.

And 1969 has hung over this province like a dark cloud. It has been a hard lesson – a very hard lesson – and I think we should learn from it. Speaker, the people I talk to remember. They remember how bad the old deal was. They remember the fights over it.

They remember the governments of today, different days, trying to change it. Every premier in the history has tried to do that, without success. And they have waited a long time for Newfoundland and Labrador to get another chance.

That chance is here. So they have a very simple question, is this a fair deal for Newfoundland and Labrador? That is what matters to them. Fairness is what they want and how they want to be treated.

Speaker, Quebec has done very well from Churchill Falls. For decades, Quebec has bought our power under the old deal. Hydro-Québec has made a lot of money from that power. Quebec has also been able to keep their power bills lower for their people. People in Newfoundland and Labrador see that. They look at what they pay for power and they look at what Quebec pays for power, and they ask, how fair is that?

Sometimes Newfoundland and Labrador has to get its fair share. When I look at this deal, I still have questions. Quebec gets much more of the new power than we do. Quebec is also set to get more of the federal financial support. So I have to ask, who is getting the better deal? Because, from what I see, Quebec did very well. I don't blame Quebec for looking after Quebec. That's their job. Our job is to look after us, our residents in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Speaker, I don't understand the rush. The Premier used to say he has no deadlines. He said he would not be pushed. He said he would not be forced. He said he would not be rushed; it is too important to be rushed, but now we are being told we have to move quickly. Why? What changed? People have waited more than 50 years for the old Churchill Falls deals to end. We can take the time to get the next one right. We have to take the time to get the next one right. We should not rush because Quebec is having an election. That is Quebec's concern. Our concern is our people.

Speaker, this is about the issue of truth. The Premier promised a referendum. He said they would get to vote on the final deal. We all, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, would get to vote on the final deal. Now we're not. The Premier said, again, he wasn't rushing, but here we are.

I want to share something from one of my constituents. The gentleman sent me an email; his name is Mr. Walsh. This is exactly what he said: Lucy, I'm sorry to say, you did not get my vote in the last election, but I must advocate for Newfoundlander's rights to a referendum on Churchill Falls as promised by the PCs. Then, he went on to say he had contacted the Premier's office to tell him that the PCs have lost his vote. This person felt he is not being heard. He asked me to make sure his words were heard loud and clear in this House of Assembly. Well, Speaker, that's what I'm doing today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. STOYLES: I think that message is the same message many people here in this province have been sending to this Premier.

Again, as shadow minister for Seniors, I take a lot of time to listen to what our seniors have to say. They have seen a lot of governments come and go. They have seen a lot of politicians come and go, but deals like Churchill Falls stay around for a long time. That is why we have to get this one right.

Speaker, I think about the seniors who I have spoken to. They have lived with the old deal for decades. They know what happens when we don't get it done right. They don't want their children to live with another bad deal. They don't want their grandchildren to live with another bad deal. Neither do I.

The Churchill River has given Quebec a lot. It is time to make sure it gives more back to Newfoundland and Labrador. We should take our time. We should make sure this

deal is fair to the people who own the resources – our people. After waiting more than 50 years, our people deserve that.

Speaker, I will not be voting for this and I will not be walking out. I will be here this evening for the vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CORMIER: Thank you.

Speaker, for more than half a century, the 1969 Churchill Falls contract has cast a long shadow over Newfoundland and Labrador. It's been a source of frustration for generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including many residents of St. George's Humber who believed our province was not receiving the full value of one of North America's greatest natural resources.

Governments of every political stripe have sought ways to improve our position. Today, Speaker, we have an opportunity to do just that, not by looking backwards, but by looking forwards. An opportunity to turn the page on the past, escape the shadow of the '69 deal and secure a new and better future for Newfoundland and Labrador and for the communities through St. George's - Humber.

From Codroy Valley to Stephenville Crossing, Massey Drive and Pasadena, and everywhere in between, people want the same thing: good jobs, a strong economy and opportunities for their children and grandchildren to build their lives here, at home, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CORMIER: At a time when President Trump's economic actions against Canada are creating uncertainty, we have the chance to strengthen our economy, build our own industries and create good jobs right here at home.

Right now, Canada needs to be strong. I know our Premier is doing his part and the prime minister is standing up. The federal investment in this new and better deal demonstrates that commitment. It shows a willingness to stand with Newfoundland and Labrador, strengthen our economy and build our industries in the face of economic uncertainty and pressures from the United States.

Speaker, we have an opportunity – a big opportunity – an opportunity to shape the future of Newfoundland and Labrador for the next 10, 20, 30 year and beyond. A new and better deal that delivers more power to build our industries, that brings more value, allowing government to invest more in the true owners of our resources, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and more jobs because we are on the cusp of making the single largest, pro-jobs investment in the history of our province.

Just ask Trades NL what more jobs would mean for their members. It means more families can stay in Newfoundland and Labrador. It means more families in St. George's - Humber can stay together, instead of watching loved ones leave for work elsewhere. It means more workers from communities across our districts can find opportunities closer to home, such as the 5,000, at peak, good construction jobs at Gull Island, transmission line to Lab West and mining, because Labrador West finally has enough power. It means more young people will see the future in the skilled trades and seize opportunities ahead. It means more participation in our government's new high school pre-apprenticeship program creating more pathways to rewarding careers right here at home.

The impact of these new jobs on communities throughout the West Coast will be significant. That includes Corner Brook, where these opportunities will support workers, families and local businesses. For that reason, I hope the Member opposite from Corner Brook will join us tonight and vote to help deliver those good jobs.

Speaker, the deal also means more investment in the District of St. George's - Humber, more jobs for our people which means more economic activity for local businesses and more reasons for young people to build their future on the West Coast.

This deal also delivers more value. It includes guaranteed inflation protection, ensuring the value of our power grows over time. Guaranteed inflation adjustments increase the price at which Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro sells power to Hydro-Québec, from 11.4 cents per kilowatt hour in 2041 to 32.6 cents per kilowatt hour in 2077. Just think about that. The value, the jobs, the opportunity ahead.

Following the announcement of this new and better deal, I took time to speak to residents throughout St. George's - Humber – and the kilometres on my car show it – as did many Members of this hon. House, and, Speaker, people are excited. They are ready to get back to work. Ready to see those good jobs, economic growth and the prosperity that comes with it. Ready to see their children, grandchildren have opportunities here in Newfoundland and Labrador instead of having to look for work elsewhere.

Speaker, I know some people are reminded of the 1969 deal and look at the rates Quebec pays for the power today. I understand why. The 1969 deal has shaped how generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians view Churchill Falls, but this resolution before us today is not about the past. It is about deciding whether we seize the opportunities before us today, because

if we wait until 2041, we get no value from reopening the contract early; we do not receive the billions in additional revenues this agreement delivers between now and then; we do not create the jobs made possible by this deal; we do not realize the economic opportunities that come from moving forward now. For a province facing deficits of more than \$1 billion, that's significant.

Speaker, there comes a time when you have to stop talking about what should have been done decades ago and start acting on what can be done today. We can already see the scale of opportunity that exists in this province. Here on the West Coast, the Atlas salt project represents the kind of major private-sector investment that can create good jobs, strengthen communities and generate new economic activity for years to come.

We want Newfoundland and Labrador to be a place where projects like Atlas salt can move forward, where businesses can invest with confidence and where our people can build their careers and their futures right here at home.

With any major decision, there will always be critics. However, by not proceeding with this agreement, we risk keeping our province anchored to the past while opportunities for the future pass us by. We risk leaving roads and communities throughout the Codroy Valley in rough shape. We risk delaying much-needed school expansions like the one happening now in Pasadena Elementary. We risk putting off the construction and repair of long-term care spaces on the West Coast and residential ratepayers would miss out on the money back in their pockets through our 15 per cent Churchill River Electricity Rebate.

This agreement gives us an opportunity to invest in our communities, strengthen public services, lower electrical costs and build for

our future. We cannot afford to let this opportunity pass us by.

Speaker, for all these reasons, I will be voting yes on the resolution before us. Voting yes to more power. Voting yes to more value. Voting yes to more jobs. Voting yes to more opportunity. Voting yes to a more prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador. It's time to get this done. It's time to turn the page on the past and seize the opportunities before us. I am proud to support our Premier and our government as we finalize this new and better deal.

Speaker, when we stand and vote today, I will be reflecting on the seven generations to come and how they will look at all of us and say, they finally got it right.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

K. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise this morning and offer my closing remarks on the Definitive Cooperation and Implementation Agreement.

I wish to begin by saying I came into this process with an open mind. I wanted to be able to stand in this House and tell the people of St. John's West that we have secured a stronger future for Newfoundland and Labrador, that we had learned the lessons of the past and negotiated an agreement that would protect the value of our resources for generations to come.

Because Newfoundland and Labrador is an energy-rich province. We have enormous natural resources. We have hydroelectricity. We have wind potential. We have offshore energy. We have the Churchill River, and our people should feel the benefit of those resources.

Ultimately, a Churchill River agreement is about value. It is about whether the value created by a resource owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador comes home to those people, not only today, but decades from now. That is the standard I have tried to apply throughout these proceedings, and I believe there are several issues that deserve particular attention.

One of the issues I continue to have serious questions about is Gull Island and the absence of an escalator mechanism. We are not making a decision about the value of electricity only as it exists today. We are making a decision that will have consequences far into the future.

We know that energy markets changes. We know that electricity demand changes. We know that technology changes, and we also know that inflation changes the value of money over time. That is precisely why long-term agreements require a mechanism to protect value.

The experience of the 1969 Churchill Falls contract should be front and centre in our minds. The lesson I take from 1969 is not simply that the agreement was unfair. The larger lesson is that we must be extremely careful about surrendering future value in exchange for certainty today.

When I look at Gull Island, I therefore ask a very simple question. Have we built enough protection into the agreement to ensure that future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive a fair share of the value created by their resources? The absence of an escalator clause causes me concern because the decisions we make today cannot be easily reversed tomorrow.

Another significant issue for me is the treatment of market-based pricing. There is a fundamental difference between having access to an energy market and selling electricity under a predetermined pricing structure. Markets can rise, markets can fall, but market access provides an opportunity

to capture the value of electricity as the value changes over time. Giving up market-based pricing, therefore, requires us to be confident that the value we are receiving in return adequately compensates us for what we are giving up. That is a very high bar, and it brings us back to the central question of these proceedings.

Are we maximizing the long-term value of Churchill Falls for the people who own the resource? That is the question I will continue to ask. Every day, people in St. John's - West tell me that the cost of living is their number one concern. Food costs more. Housing costs more. Insurance costs more. Heating a home costs more, and the recently proposed 15 per cent reduction on electricity used for home heating does not go far enough.

Margaret of St. John's - West wrote to me and said: I feel like the proposed 15 per cent reduction in my monthly power bill is intended to make me feel like this is a good deal. It's not doing it for me, she wrote.

Government is asking people to judge a generational agreement while dangling a short-term break on their power bill. A rebate today does not make up for giving away value tomorrow. For many seniors, for young families, for people living on fixed incomes and for working people trying to make ends meet, household affordability is not an abstract policy discussion. It is their reality.

Mr. Speaker, a decision of this magnitude requires public confidence. People need to understand what they are being asked to accept, what they are receiving, what they are giving up and what risks remain. That is an extraordinarily complex agreement.

There are technical details within the DCIA that all of us serving in this House have had to spend considerable time studying. That is why transparency matters. It is why genuine debate matters and it is why I've taken the time to listen to my constituents, review the

information available to me, ask questions and listen to the experts who have appeared before us.

I do not pretend to be an energy market expert, but I do believe my responsibility is to do my homework. My responsibility is to ask difficult questions and, ultimately, my responsibility is to make the best decision I can on behalf of the people I represent.

There are also broader issues that I cannot ignore. There have been questions about promises made, promises broken. There are questions surrounding the referendum promise and the decision not to proceed in that direction. There are questions about access to American markets and the potential for direct transmission opportunities. There are questions about what this agreement means from a generational perspective.

Those issues matter because trust matters. When governments make promises to the people, people expect those promises to mean something. When circumstances change, people deserve an honest explanation.

Mr. Speaker, throughout these proceedings, I have thought about the people who will live with the consequences of this decision long after every Member currently sitting in this Chamber has left public life, that includes seniors in my district.

Mary, a senior from St. John's West, wrote to me and said: I'm very disturbed and disheartened about what is happening with the Churchill Falls MOU. I'm worried for my children and grandchildren and Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole.

Seniors like Mary have seen what resulted from the 1969 agreement. They understand better than most that a contract signed for decades can shape the future of a province. Then I think about young people, the children sitting in classrooms today, young professionals beginning their careers, the

people who will inherit whatever decision we make here. They will not have the opportunity to renegotiate the decision we make today. That is why this vote carries such weight.

John and Claire of St. John's put it very powerfully when they wrote to all of us and said: Your vote on this deal will be the most significant vote you take in the House of Assembly. Your individual vote will be forever recalled. It is the most consequential decision you will ever make in your life.

I've thought about those words this week. This is not an ordinary vote. It is not about partisan politics. It is not about winning an argument. It is about making a decision that will affect the people of this province for generations. That means every Member must ultimately answer the same questions: Have we learned from 1969? Have we built an agreement that protects the value of your resources? Have we adequately accounted for future energy prices? Have we protected against inflation? Have we preserved sufficient access to markets? Have we provided meaningful benefits to people today, while protecting the interests of people tomorrow? Most importantly, will future generations look back at this House and believe that we acted as responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us?

Those are the questions I have used to evaluate this proposal. I have listened to this information session. I have listened to the experts. I have listened to my constituents. Every Member of this House has the same fundamental responsibility when it comes to the Churchill River: to protect the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I came into this process wanting this to be a good deal. I wanted to be able to say that we had finally turned the page on 1969. Not by simply replacing one agreement with another, but by establishing a framework that protects Newfoundland and Labrador's interests for generations.

The people of this province deserve nothing less.

The Churchill River is not the property of one government; it is not the property of one political party. It belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our responsibility is to be careful stewards of that resource. We owe that to the people who came before us, we owe it to the people living here today, and perhaps, most importantly, we owe it to the people who will come after us.

Mr. Speaker, this has been the most serious responsibility I have undertaken since being elected to this House last fall. I do not take my vote lightly. I have considered the arguments. I have considered the potential benefits, I have considered the risks and I have listened to the people I represent. I will not walk out of this House like my colleagues opposite did in January 2025. I will cast my vote with one overriding principle in mind: learn from 1969; protect the value of our resources; and put the long-term interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador first.

Mr. Speaker, after listening, questioning and carefully considering what is before us, I have come to my decision that I cannot support this agreement. I will vote no because I believe our responsibility is not simply to secure value for today, but to protect the value of the Churchill River for generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians yet to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm pleased today to rise in this hon. House to represent the great people of the Ferryland District and speak in support of our Premier and this historic resolution on our new and better deal for Churchill Falls.

Speaker, at its heart, this debate comes down to a simple question: Is the agreement before us today better than the one in 2024? The answer is yes. I sat in this House during debate, in the old 2024 Liberal MOU. We listened to the arguments, we reviewed the details and I spoke with people throughout the Ferryland District who were concerned about what the agreement would mean for their future.

Like many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, they believed we could do better. Today, Speaker, we have a new and better deal. A deal that delivers more power, more value, more jobs and more opportunity for all of us. This is what this debate is really about.

Over the last several weeks, I've spoken with residents throughout the Ferryland District from Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove to the Goulds and down the Southern Shore from Bay Bulls to St. Shotts. They want more jobs. They want affordable, stable lives for their families. They want their children and grandchildren to have an opportunity to stay here, build a career and raise a family here. They want stronger and safer communities. They want better health care and better roads. Most of all, they want to stay right here at home.

Speaker, this new and better deal helps deliver for the future. It gives Newfoundland and Labrador the opportunity to unlock the full potential of our natural resources and use them to create more jobs, grow our economy and build stronger communities.

So many times we have heard people say that we gave it away, our resources, but not this time. The opportunities for development this creates in Labrador are significant, but the benefits will be felt in every corner of the

province, including the Ferryland District, because when Newfoundland and Labrador earns more value from our resources, everyone benefits.

More value means more investment in the services people rely on every day. It means better health care. It means better roads and infrastructure. More value from our resources means we can make investments that improve people's everyday lives. It means more support for families, our seniors and our communities. It means opportunity for all of us.

Speaker, one of the biggest differences between this agreement and the previous MOU is that this deal delivers real value now. When we say this is a new and better deal, the numbers prove it. The total financial benefit to Newfoundland and Labrador for this agreement is valued at \$49 billion in net present value, compared to \$36 billion under the old 2024 MOU.

In nominal dollars, the value of this agreement is estimated to be \$273 billion, compared to \$225 billion under the previous MOU. That is more value from our resources. That's more value that can be invested in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, more value that stays here at home. Every dollar we receive can be invested in improving the quality of life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians today and creating more opportunities for tomorrow.

This new and better agreement also puts Newfoundland and Labrador in a stronger position when it comes to managing and selling our power. It gives us more flexibility, more options and more control over the future. Those are advantages we simply did not have under the previous agreement.

Speaker, it also opens the door to opportunities at Gull Island that were not available before. For the first time, Newfoundland and Labrador will have guaranteed access to more power through

the existing transmission system and sell it into the markets beyond the borders at the same price Quebec receives. Or we can just use that power to support industrial development and job creation here at home. It creates opportunity.

For too long Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have watched opportunity leave our province. This agreement gives us the chance to create opportunity right here at home. Opportunity is exactly what this deal is about.

Speaker, there is another important lesson in all of this. This agreement proves what can happen when governments work together and focus on results instead of politics. For the first time, the federal government joined Newfoundland and Labrador at the table. Their participation helped secure \$3.5 billion in federal support including investment, tax credits and a loan guarantee that helped make this project possible. When governments work together, people benefit, communities benefit, families benefit and Newfoundland and Labrador benefits.

Speaker, I want to acknowledge our federal partners for working with us to advance what is becoming one of the most significant clean energy developments in North America. This is what can be achieved when everyone works together on building a strong future. This project will create thousands of jobs and opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It will create opportunities for people to work here, stay here and build a life here. While the Ferryland District may be a long way from Labrador, I know the benefits of this project will be felt in every region of the province.

Organizations that know this industry, represent workers and understand that this project can mean for our economy are standing behind this new and better deal. People like Energy NL, Trades NL, Canada's building trade unions, they see what this agreement possible: more jobs,

more opportunity, more economic growth and a stronger future for our province. They recognize this as what it is, a true nation-building project that finally ensures that Newfoundland and Labrador receives more value from our resources and a fairer share of the opportunities they create.

Speaker, let's talk about what this means for workers and families. Many people in my district work in skilled trades. Many work away from home. Many have told me if there were jobs here, they would come home tomorrow. They want to raise their families here. They want to spend more time with their loved ones. They want to coach minor hockey, volunteer in their communities and be there for life's most important moments. This new and better deal creates more opportunities to make that possible.

The construction of these projects will create opportunities for electricians, carpenters, welders, heavy equipment operators, apprentices and countless other skilled workers. For many young people, it could mean building an entire career right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. For many families, it could mean staying together instead of working apart. Speaker, those are real benefits that matter to real people.

As every Member of this House knows, the 1969 contract cast a long shadow over Newfoundland and Labrador. For decades, people have felt that they were not getting what we deserved from one of the greatest natural resources. We also know the contract could not be simply wished away; the only path forward was through negotiation. This is exactly what happened: the result of a new and better deal that puts Newfoundland and Labrador in a stronger position for generations to come.

Speaker, at the end of the day, this is not about hashing out the past, it's about people, it's about creating more jobs and more opportunity. It's about helping young

people build their future here at home and giving those who left a reason to come back. It's about stronger families, stronger communities and a stronger Newfoundland and Labrador. Most importantly, it's about making sure our resources work for the people who own them, the people of the Ferryland District, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For those reasons, Speaker, I am proud to support this new and better deal. I'll proudly vote yes on the resolution.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. PIKE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to offer my thoughts on the Definitive Cooperation and Implementation Agreement. The importance of this decision has weighed heavily on all of us here in this hon. House. I have reflected on what this multi-generational decision will mean for our province and our people.

I have considered the input of my constituents, of my colleagues in the House of Assembly and what I have heard from others this week in this Chamber. Those who know me as a person and as an MHA fully understand my passion for rural Newfoundland and Labrador. They know how it has shaped my values, my character, my integrity and my passion to help others.

Mr. Speaker, many residents of the District of Burin - Grand Bank and, indeed, throughout rural Newfoundland and Labrador are struggling. The cost of living has outpaced their ability to pay for food and services, their ability to provide for their families and their ability to age at home.

Municipal infrastructure needs to be upgraded or replaced. Roads and bridges people travel on for essential services need improvement or replacement. Climate change has intensified the pressures on communities, especially in aging infrastructure and eroding shorelines and breakwaters. These are real problems.

When people talk about billions of dollars and thousands of megawatts, people want to know what it means for them. The resources we are discussing belong to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador – people who want a better quality of life and safer communities.

This is why I am so disappointed in the upfront \$2-billion payment from the 2024 agreement has been given up by this Conservative government. That money could have made a real difference now – right now. It could have been life changing for individuals and families today.

Mr. Speaker, 25 per cent of the residents of this province are 65 years of age or older. Their voices matter. I listened to what they had to say about the Churchill River. They have lived through the 1969 deal. They have lived through the hard time while Quebec made billions from our resource. They know the history and they do not want their children and grandchildren experiencing what they go through and what they went through.

They do not need another giveaway like the 1969 deal. The price Newfoundland and Labrador receives for its power has to keep up with the changes in the market of that power. People in my district do not need to be experts in electricity markets to understand this problem. It is simple. When the value goes up, Newfoundland and Labrador should get a share of it, and that's as simple as you could put it.

Speaker, I also want to talk about the jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We all want jobs for our Indigenous peoples and

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have so many young people that leave this great province to seek work elsewhere. But saying there are jobs is just not enough, we also require training. There needs to be involvement from companies, secondary and post-secondary schools and our unions. If that does not happen, many of these jobs will go to workers from outside our province.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened intently to this information session and I have listened to a lot of people in this House and outside. I would like to mention some of their concerns.

The Premier promised a referendum on the Churchill River and Gull Island deal. His blue book explicitly reads, "We will not proceed with any deal on the Churchill River unless it is approved by the voters via a referendum." On August 17, the same Premier admitted publicly that there would not be a referendum.

It was claimed that this agreement gave Newfoundland and Labrador the right to sell power directly to markets in the United States; we know this is not true.

During the January 2025 debate, Conservative Members repeatedly said the deal was moving too fast, slow it down. There is no need to rush, they said. Now our Premier is saying it is urgent.

The Premier has agreed to a fixed price contract. The price Newfoundland and Labrador receives for Churchill River power, sold to Quebec, will not raise in accordance with energy markets. Similar to 1969, it will now be based on a fixed rate, with increases tied to an assumed 2 per cent CPI increase.

The Conservatives gave up the escalator for the new Gull Island power purchase agreement, meaning the value we receive from Quebec for Gull Island power will not have the same protection over time.

This week, the Conservative government were shamed into admitting the rate Quebec pays for Gull Island power will, not only not increase, but it will actually get lower over time. That's right; Quebec will pay less over time.

The Premier and his MHAs promised a better deal. Do you know something? They got a better deal, but it was for Quebec. Quebec will pay less for electricity than it would have under the 2024 MOU. Quebec will receive more of the new power. The federal government is providing up to \$6.5 billion to Quebec and \$3.5 billion to Newfoundland and Labrador for an agreement about the development of a resource right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Does that make sense?

Speaker, the people of this province have a right to be skeptical of this agreement. This agreement is about the future. We have to think about where we're going to be 20, 30, 50 years from now. But at the same time, we cannot forget the people living here today. The seniors, the families paying utility bills, knowing billions at stake and getting a meagre 50 per cent break on their electricity bills; about \$29 a month for those who qualify for the maximum amount. Not enough. It's our resource.

Meanwhile, experts are warning that diesel and home heating fuel prices are about to soar. People who were already struggling are being told that by the time the cold winter arrives, fuel prices could be more than double of what they were last year. The Conservatives have forgotten that.

We learned a hard lesson from 1969. We should not have to learn it twice. Get the price right, get the benefits right, take the time and get the deal right. When you give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador your word, keep it.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. POWER: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm glad to stand here in this hon. House as the Member for Labrador West. Labrador West is built on hard work, built on mining, built by generations of people who believe that if you work hard, look out for your neighbours and work together, you can build a better future for your family. That spirit is still well and alive in Lab West today, but, Speaker, people in Labrador West also know that potential alone is not enough; opportunity alone is not enough.

Mining development and investment in the region have been hampered by the need for more power. Labrador West's economy is anchored in the mineral sector; in fact, what most people call the Labrador Trough, we in Labrador West refer to it as our backyard. It contains several major open-pit deposits, which together have produced more than two billion tons of iron ore. Existing reserves and resources suggest that the region could see production for many decades to come, potentially serving as a stable, responsible supplier of critical minerals that positions the province and Canada to lead in low-emission green steel supply chains.

However, Speaker, attracting new investment to Labrador West requires this expanded energy infrastructure. Expanding transmission infrastructure is not only fundamental to unlocking the full industrial and economic development potential for the region, but it will also give customers and residents access to significantly more power. The expansion in Labrador West is focused on enhancing the region's energy infrastructure to support its growing needs. This project is a collaboration effort involving Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, industrial contributions and government support.

This opportunity is met with several generation and transmission challenges. Churchill Falls Generating Station has been at surplus capacity to serve new loads in Labrador. The existing 230 kV lines from Churchill Falls to Labrador West are at operational limits, restricting additional power delivery. Under existing regulations framework, Labrador customers must provide upfront funding to capital costs associated with transmission expansion to enable these projects.

Up until the announcement of August 17, these people didn't know where they were going to find the money to fund this until the announcement was made about the \$1.3 million by the federal government to help put this transmission line through.

To support future industrial developments in the region, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro undertook a feasibility study to assess expansion of the electrical transmission system to Labrador West. A single 735 kV transmission line was identified as the preferred solution, enabling strategic and economic development and meeting clean energy objectives.

Speaker, this agreement has the potential to address the long-standing barriers to economic growth, through increased access to power and the advancement of the proposed Labrador West transmission line. This investment is not simply about meeting today's need; it's about creating the infrastructure necessary for future mining, industrial development and economic growth in Labrador West.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of regional partners, industrial representatives, municipalities and the Labrador West Alliance, which have advocated for the Labrador West transmission line and associated economic development opportunities for many years. This work was under way long before the current agreement and reflects a shared regional

vision to support growth and investment in Labrador West.

Labrador West has been a major contributor to the provincial economy. The mining industry generates billions of dollars annually in economic activity, exports, employment and government revenues. The province's rationale for investing in major energy and transmission infrastructure is directly connected to the future development opportunities associated with Labrador's resource sector. Future projects, such as the Kami project, potential future development such as Julianne Lake, expansions of existing operations and other industrial opportunities could significantly increase the economic contribution of Labrador West to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would like to give you one example of what exactly new development will look like in Labrador West, Kami mines: a \$4-million investment to bring the project to life – \$4 million just to bring it to life, so imagine what is coming out of it – a 25-year lifespan; an estimated annual production of nine million wet tons of DR-grade pellets; a 650 workforce during construction and a 400-plus workforce during operation. Four large mining customers have submitted requests for additional power to support existing operations and future critical mineral projects.

Economists predict \$450 billion is the number that they think is untapped in our area – \$450 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. POWER: We believe that as the province benefits from increased economic growth with all the personal income taxes, corporate taxes and export revenues, communities that host and support that development should also share in those benefits.

We often talk about Newfoundland and Labrador's economic future, but we rarely say it plainly enough. Labrador West is already a cornerstone of that; roughly 33 per cent of the province's GDP is directly tied to that region. In 2022 alone, the provincial government collected approximately \$2.46 billion in tax revenue from good and services, not including significant income tax contributions linked to our industries and workforce. Yet, while we benefit from that strength, we are not matching it with the basic infrastructure required to sustain it.

Grandparents and parents who have spent their lives building and sustaining those mines are forced to leave because there is nowhere suitable for them to live. Fourth- and fifth-generation young families that want to stay to grow and contribute are being held back, not because of lack of opportunity, but because of lack of recruitment and retention support and the conditions that make long-term living possible. There is not enough power capacity to enable expansion, stability and long-term growth. If those mines slow, if expansion stalls, a family leaves, then the consequences will just not confine to just Labrador West, they will ripple across the entire provincial economy.

So when we talk about debt, when we talk about fiscal pressure, we must also talk about what will happen if we fail to invest in one of the very engines that keeps our province running. Mining remains a cornerstone of not only Labrador West's economy but the province as a whole. The benefits of the mining industry extend well beyond the mines themselves, supporting local contractors, tradespeople, suppliers, restaurants, retailers and other small businesses throughout the region.

Continued investment in Labrador West's infrastructure will have a ripple effect across the broader provincial economy. The proposed Labrador West transmission line is a critical component of the region's future

economic development. Major industrial growth cannot be viewed through the lens of energy and resource development, and governments and energy expect Labrador West communities to accommodate future growth.

There must be corresponding investments: housing, seniors' housing, health care, education, municipal infrastructure, recreation and community services, protective services, developable land, affordable and reliable air transportation, workforce attraction and retention. Housing must be addressed proactively if Labrador West is expected to support economic growth. We do not want fly-in and fly out. We want people to move and live in Labrador West.

AN HON. MEMBER: You are running out of time.

J. POWER: I am running out of time, yes. I am going to get to the last piece that I want to get out there.

I ran to be a Member of this hon. House to represent the people of Labrador West because I saw the impact that other governments not doing anything had on Labrador West, because doing nothing was never going to build a third transmission line. Doing nothing was never going to unlock new mining developments. Doing nothing was never going to create more jobs. Doing nothing was never going to keep families and seniors in Labrador West.

We need leadership that is willing to act, and that's what our Premier and government is doing. We finally have two governments working closely together that are willing to make meaningful investments in Labrador West. There is an opportunity to work collaboratively with industry and municipalities.

Speaker, the people of Labrador West are tired of waiting for an opportunity to arrive. We want to create it. The people of

Labrador West built this province with hard work, determination and the belief that tomorrow could be better than today. Now it's our turn. We want our children and grandchildren to have the opportunity to build their lives there, to work there, to raise their families there.

Today, we have an opportunity to be defined by our potential. In future, more power, more value, more jobs, more opportunity and a stronger Labrador West. For all these reasons –

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Waterford Valley.

J. KORAB: Thank you, Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in this hon. House to represent the residents of Waterford Valley. It's a privilege I do not take lightly.

I thought long and hard about how I would vote, taking in everything I heard this week, everything I heard over the number of weeks in the media, the grocery stores, the emails, the phone calls, at the door, everywhere I went.

The top things I've heard from residents with regard to this deal comes down to trust with this PC government: Where is the referendum that was promised? Is there really no escalator clause in Gull Island? Is there no market-based pricing? The so-called independent review which was hand-picked by the Premier. Why is Quebec getting more power than us? Quebec is paying less for electricity in this deal than they did in the 2024 MOU. Is Quebec getting more money from the federal government, \$6.5 billion, almost double what Newfoundland and Labrador gets? This is what I've been hearing.

The referendum that the Premier and PC MHAs campaigned on, it was a marquee piece of the PC campaign and was repeated often. "As premier, I will subject any final deal on Churchill Falls and Gulls Island to a public referendum so that all of us can have our say." Fast-forward one year, no referendum. Saying you'll do it, campaigning on it, repeating it for months, then turning around and deciding you won't, it's a broken promise to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's not about whether the referendum was a good idea; it's about trust.

Trust – the Premier telling Newfoundlanders and Labradorians they now have the right to sell physical power directly to US market. That claim, as we know now, is simply untrue. The new deal says we can sell it to Quebec. That's not in the United States.

Trust – we asked this PC government for the Gull Island pricing structure on August 18. We asked again on September 8. They said we would get it. We didn't receive it. On Tuesday, I asked for it again. Here in this House, I asked the government's financial advisors, J.P. Morgan, and was told they didn't have the numbers. That's troubling. The PC government's financial advisors not having the numbers on this generational agreement. I asked for even an estimate on the start and end price that Quebec will pay. Again, I never got the answers. They actually said they could get it soon.

Three times asked; three times denied.

We did get it late Tuesday after Power Advisory and J.P. Morgan had left. What did this mean? It meant that we did not have the opportunity to ask them questions.

What was submitted by the government, what did this document say? It said the PC government have agreed to sell power for a 50-year contract that declines over time; declines more and faster than the infamous 1969 Churchill Falls contract.

Speaker, we have a historic opportunity here. When you say the word 1969 to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I can tell you it's not met with a smile. It's met with a scowl, a grimace, a glare, a rotten look.

Are there real benefits to this agreement? Yes. I don't think anyone here is going to pretend that there's not positive things in this agreement, but Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need to develop its resource and we need to create that opportunity. It's not about being against the development or being against Quebec. It's about whether the terms are right for our province.

Speaker, 50 years is a long time, as some people have already said. For most of us, the people voting in this hon. House, we're not going to be around when this deal expires. In those 50 years, the governments will change. Markets will change. Technology will change. The value of electricity will certainly change. What seems like a good price today could look very different in 10, 20 or 30 years. That's why the protections in this new agreement matter so much.

The point shouldn't just be that 1969 was a bad deal. The bigger point is what lessons did we learned from 1969? The value of the resource was underestimated. Too much was given away. The province was left with limited ability to benefit when circumstances changed. We cannot afford to make that same mistake again. The lesson from 1969 isn't simply that we got a bad deal. The lesson that we have to think about is our resource. What will it be worth tomorrow, not just today?

The 2024 MOU took an important step in this direction. It included market-based pricing, meaning, if the rate of power goes up, we get more. It also included the protections based on replacement costs and a fairness mechanism. The word "fairness" was in that agreement. The word "fairness" is not longer in this new agreement.

The idea was that the price Newfoundland and Labrador received would have a connection to what the power was actually worth. This 2026 agreement changes that. Instead of market price, we have fixed pricing that goes up 2 per cent-ish and inflation could factor in a little bit, but market-based pricing and small fixed-based pricing are not the same thing.

Think about a house. Let's say you purchased a house in St. John's 20 years ago in 2006. The average price of a house built in St. John's then was about \$203,000. Today, the benchmark of a home in the St. John's market is \$425,000. That's a big change in 20 years. That's more than double. Now let's say you build that same house 20 years ago for \$203,000. You decided to sell it 20 years later, but the purchaser says I'm not going to give you market price. I'm going to give you what CPI went over the last 20 years. CPI, using the figures we have, would put your house worth roughly –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. KORAB: You'll have a time to speak later.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. KORAB: Roughly, CPI would put your house at \$304,000, but, remember, market price says \$425,000. Do you want the CPI price or do you want the market price? I can tell you, as a realtor in my previous life for 12 years, I know what my clients would have wanted. They wouldn't have said, well, at least my house went up \$100,000. They would have said, I left \$120,000 on the table.

Speaker, electricity is obviously not a house. Obviously, markets are different, the agreements are different, but the basic idea is pretty easy to understand. CPI tells you how prices generally have increased; market tells you what something is actually worth. Those can be very different things.

This is why I'm concerned about losing market-based pricing. Over 20 years, that difference can be significant, imagine over 30, 40 or 50 years.

Why is there no market-based pricing in this agreement? We asked Mr. Perry; he said on Monday, Quebec wanted a simple formula and, b'y, they got it. They got it at the expense of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

As a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, know, better than anybody, we've spent more than half a century living with an agreement where the price of power becomes disconnected from its value. So not having it in negotiations because it's hard doesn't sit well with me. It should not sit well with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

This brings me to Gull Island. I have a similar concern here.

Gull Island – one of the largest undeveloped hydroelectric resources in North America. Under the 2024 agreement, Gull Island revenues were projected to increase by 2 per cent a year to avoid the mistakes made in '69. Now this new 2026 deal, the current PC government lost or gave up that escalator. That means the price Newfoundland and Labrador receives from Quebec for Gull Island power will now remain the same and eventually decline – yes, decline. Quebec will pay less after 2041.

Speaker, I'm not going to stand here and tell the other 38 Members how to vote. The question is whether this is really the best deal for Newfoundland and Labrador, and there's no simple answer to this question.

The people in each of our districts have sent us here. They put their trust in us to make the decision that's right for our district and right for our province, but there was a responsibility that comes with sitting in this House. We have a responsibility to put the

interests of the people we represent ahead of political pressure, above our parties. We have a responsibility to look beyond the next election, the next headline and the next political talking points. We have to make a decision that we can defend, not just today, but in 10, 20, 30 or 50 years time.

We all know what happened in 1969. We have one opportunity to make sure we don't repeat that mistake again and, when I look at this agreement, I have serious concerns. No market-based pricing, no escalator clause in Gull and I don't believe there are enough protections for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to receive the true growth and value of our resource over the life of this agreement. It's too much like the mistakes of '69 for me.

This is a decision I have to live with today, but more importantly the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, to the people who will have to live with this decision in this House for generations. We cannot judge a 50-year agreement by what it looks like today, Speaker. We have to judge what it could mean for Newfoundland and Labrador in the next 50 years. My children are eight and 13. Some day I want to look at them, and hopefully my grandchildren, and say, when I had the opportunity to protect this province, I took it. I did what I believed was right.

This is ultimately a question I have to ask myself this week, not whether I agree with what's in this agreement – there are good things in this agreement – not whether we should develop our resources – we definitely should – but whether I believe this agreement does enough to protect Newfoundland and Labrador for the next 50 years. Is this really the best deal we can get for Newfoundland and Labrador?

I wish I could stand here today and say it is, but, Speaker, I cannot. That's why when this vote is called, I will be in this House, I will be in my seat and I will be voting no.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. MCKENNA: Thank you.

Speaker, over the past four days we have heard a great deal about power, value, transmission, financing and the future of the Churchill River. As the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels, I want to close by talking about what those words mean when you bring them home to rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have heard different views in my district. Some people have raised concerns about the length of the agreement, the pace of the process, transparency and the decision to hold a referendum. Those concerns deserve to be heard. Others who have told me they support the agreement, believe it's time for Newfoundland and Labrador to move forward to create more industry and make better use of our resources.

Members have had days to question the people who negotiated, advised on and oversaw the negotiations of this agreement. We have heard evidence. We have put questions directly to experts. We have debated it here in the people's House. My own view is that a referendum would not improve this decision. We were elected to study difficult issues, ask the hard questions and make decisions in the best interest of the people we represent. On a complex commercial agreement, that responsibility belongs here in the Legislature.

The question I keep returning to is, can this agreement help us build a stronger Newfoundland and Labrador?

In Fogo Island - Cape Freels, people know what it means to build communities around

our natural resources. The fishery remains the backbone of our district. Tourism has grown rapidly. People are coming from across Canada, the United States and elsewhere to experience our communities, our coastline and our culture, but we also know the challenges. Our roads need attention. Our ferry system is essential infrastructure, not a luxury. The New-Wes-Valley hospital in Brookfield needs attention, along with Bonnews Lodge. We have an aging population and we need more people and families to see a future in our communities. Those needs require investment. That is why the value pillar of this agreement matters to me.

When Newfoundland and Labrador receives greater value from its resources, that creates greater capacity to invest in things people use every day: health care, transportation, community infrastructure and the services that keep rural regions connected, but value is only a part of the story. More power for Newfoundland and Labrador means more ability to grow our own economy. It means electricity that can support new industries and new projects. It means a stronger foundation for investment and employment. That matters because one of the greatest challenges facing rural Newfoundland and Labrador is population. We need people to stay. We need people to come home. We need families to choose our communities. You cannot accomplish this with slogans.

People need jobs. They need housing. They need health care. They need roads and ferries they can depend on. They need confidence that their children can build a life close to their parents and grandparents. Major economic opportunities can help create that confidence.

I also think about the people who have chosen to make our district their home. We have a growing Filipino community made up of hard-working people who are contributing to our communities and our economy. We should continue advocating, federally, for

policies that help people who come here to work and put down their roots, purchase homes and become long-term members of our communities.

Growth should mean building communities, not simply filling vacancies.

Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador knows better than almost anyone what it means to see the value of a resource flow somewhere else. That history hangs over every discussion of Churchill Falls. The lesson of that history cannot be that we should never make another agreement. The lesson has to be that when we make agreements, Newfoundland and Labrador must receive fair value, meaningful power and the ability to use the resources to build our future.

That is why I believe this agreement offers more value, more power, more access to move that power and more opportunity to use those advantages to strengthen the province, as a whole.

For rural districts, the promise of economic growth only matters if people can see it in their communities. It has to show us better services, stronger infrastructure, more jobs and a renewed sense that rural Newfoundland and Labrador has a future.

That is the standard I will continue to apply. I want a young person from Fogo Island, New-Wes-Valley, Gander Bay or any other community in my district to be able to look ahead and see the reasons to stay. I want people who move away to see the reasons to come back. I want our fishing communities to remain strong, our tourism sector to keep growing, our ferries and roads to be connected, used reliably and our health care system to be there when people need it.

A stronger Newfoundland and Labrador gives a better chance to do all those things.

Speaker, I have listened to the concerns. I have listened to the support. I've listened to the evidence presented during this sitting. I have listened to the lead negotiator who is from Pound Cove, in my district. I believe the responsible course is to move forward. That is why I will support this resolution because I believe Newfoundland and Labrador should receive greater benefits from its own resources. I believe additional power can help create economic opportunity. I believe in the value we create must help strengthen communities in every part of this province. I believe in this new and better deal because, Speaker, that is not only about Churchill Falls; it is about what we choose to build from it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Speaker, I rise today as the elected Member for the District of Placentia - St. Mary's, but I want to start by saying something that is personal to me. Churchill Falls is not just a negotiation between governments for me. It is a part of my family's history.

My father was one of the thousands who went to Churchill Falls to work. For my family, Churchill Falls was an opportunity. As a child, I remember that it meant a paycheque for our family. I will always be grateful for that, but there is a difference between what Churchill Falls meant to my family then and what Churchill Falls means to Newfoundland and Labrador today.

My father was proud to work on the Churchill River and his hard work helped build Churchill Falls, but while our families helped build it, our province did not receive full value of what Churchill Falls became. That is the distinction I want to make today.

I am here today on behalf of the people who sent me here and I am standing here because we have a responsibility to learn from 1969. We must learn from the past before we make decisions that will impact our children and grandchildren.

The lesson of 1969 should be quite simple: Never again should Newfoundland and Labrador sell a valuable resource at a price that becomes disconnected from the future value of that resource. That must be the lesson. Because under the 1969 agreement, Churchill Falls electricity was ultimately sold by Hydro-Québec for approximately 0.2 cents per kilowatt hour. The government of today has described that agreement as one that allowed Hydro-Québec to purchase Churchill Falls electricity at 0.2 cents per kilowatt hour and sell it at market rates.

What happened? The value of electricity has changed. The world has changed. Markets changed. Quebec's electricity system grew. Quebec benefited. Newfoundlander and Labradorians were left with a price that was fundamentally disconnected in the value of the resource we were providing.

For more than 50 years, Newfoundland and Labrador has lived with the consequences of the 1969 Churchill Falls agreement. That history mattered when I looked at the 2024 MOU. I knew it was not the final agreement, but what mattered was the direction moving away from a fixed price and toward market-based pricing. The effective price would move from about 0.2 cents to approximately 5.9 cents per kilowatt hour with an escalator tied to market conditions.

After Churchill Falls, we should have learned one simple lesson: Never again shall we lock the value of our electricity into a price that stays the same while the market changes around us. We need it to make sure that if the value of electricity increased, Newfoundland and Labrador would

participate in that increase. Yes, the 2024 MOU was non-binding.

The final formula still had to be negotiated; I will acknowledge that. But the principle was there, the architecture was there, the parties had agreed that the pricing model would be market based.

So now we come to 2026 and government has replaced the MOU. The government says their deal is better, and I hope that is true. I want this agreement to succeed. I want Newfoundland and Labrador to get the best possible deal.

But, Speaker, wanting something to be true is different from proving that it is true. Government has replaced a defined market-based pricing structure with a new arrangement that relies heavily on market access, transmission and specific opportunities to sell power into external markets.

The government says Newfoundland and Labrador will have access to New York, New England and Ontario, that we will have 985 megawatts of transmission opportunities. Government says some power will be sold at the same price Hydro-Québec receives and that all sounds good. But where is the equivalent protection? Where is the provision that says in plain language if the market changes, if transmission is unavailable, Newfoundland and Labrador is protected? If circumstances change 20, 30, 40 years from now, Newfoundland and Labrador is protected. Where is that protection? That is the difference between having access to a market and having legal mechanisms that protects the value of your resource.

Market access is an opportunity. A contractual pricing mechanism is security, and the people of this province want security. We need to know exactly what happens when things do not go according to plan and that is what contracts do. They're not supposed to protect us only when

everybody does exactly what we expect them to do. They protect us when circumstances change. They're designed to protect future generations and they will protect the people of this province when the people sitting in this House today are long gone.

Speaker, there was another promise made when the Premier was in Opposition. He was telling Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: Don't rush. He told us Churchill Falls was too important to rush, that the decision was too important to be made without the input of the people. He promised that the final Churchill Falls deal will go to a public referendum. That was an election campaign promise.

The government has now chosen this special sitting of the House instead of the referendum it had promised. That is a genuine issue of trust and, Speaker, I feel like I am at a wake today. People deserve to have confidence that when a government makes a promise before an election, that promise means something after the election.

I'm not raising this issue because I want to stop development – quite the opposite. I want development, investment in jobs and I want my district, the District of Placentia - St. Mary's, to benefit from this. Argentia is one of the greatest industrial assets in Newfoundland and Labrador. The potential economic spinoffs in the new Churchill Falls agreement are enormous. I want those opportunities for the people of Placentia - St. Mary's and I want the future generations of Newfoundland and Labrador to be treated fairly.

The people I represent are entitled to straightforward evidence from their government that now is the right time to move forward with this deal. They want to see the market protections. They want to know what happens if the market changes? What happens if transmission is unavailable? Who carries the risk? What

happens if Quebec does not deliver and if the market for electricity increases as it has done since 1969? Show us that Newfoundland and Labrador cannot once again find itself locked into a price that becomes disconnected from the value of its own resource.

How can you sit here and say trust us after 1969? We've already learned that lesson; we do not need another promise. We need a contract with enforceable protections. We need certainty.

Speaker, I have a responsibility to make sure that Argentia gets its opportunities and to do everything I can to make sure that the mistakes of 1969 are never repeated. Government tells us this is a better deal, and I hope it is. If it is better, then it should withstand scrutiny, questions and an independent legal analysis. It should withstand the test of time because that is the standard we must apply. Will this still be a good deal for Newfoundland and Labrador 50 years from now? That is the question and that is the only question that matters.

Speaker, my father went to Churchill Falls to build something for his family. Thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians went there to build something for this province. They worked in Labrador in conditions many of us could never imagine. They helped build one of the greatest hydroelectric projects in the world. We owe these people something. We owe them the responsibility of making sure that what they helped build is protected.

Let us learn from 1969; let us never again sell the future value of our resources without protecting that value in a legally enforceable agreement. Let us not confuse market access and market protection and let us not ask the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to simply trust that everything will work out. Trust is not a contract and hope is not a guarantee. We need to know that Newfoundland and Labrador is protected when the market changes. The people of

this province have waited long enough. We have learned the lessons of 1969; we cannot afford to forget it in 2026.

As a present elected Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, I am standing in this House and advocating for the right deal for Newfoundland and Labrador, not the deal for Quebec. Most importantly, I want a deal that succeeds for generations that come after us, but I do not believe that the 2026 agreement as it stands is that deal. We need to keep negotiating. We need to keep fighting for Newfoundland and Labrador and make sure we get the best possible value for our people, because the real test is whether 50 years from now our children and grandchildren will look back at 2026 and say we finally learned the lesson of Churchill Falls.

For the people of Placentia - St. Mary's, I will vote no.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development; and Immigration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: And Francophone Affairs.

Speaker, after four days of debate, I want to use my closing remarks to focus on the decision before us. Opportunity has value and the timing of an opportunity has value as well. So let's focus on the economics, not the emotions.

A basic principle in economics: a dollar today is worth more than a dollar tomorrow. That principal matters, enormously, because this House is not deciding in a vacuum. We are deciding at a moment when investment, jobs and major economic development opportunities are moving forward. If we wait to develop our resources,

we don't simply press pause and come back later to exactly the same circumstances.

We lose economic activity. We lose potential investment. We delay jobs. Our debt continues to carry financing costs. Projects elsewhere move forward. Opportunities that could have come to Newfoundland and Labrador can and will go elsewhere. So as we consider this agreement and its timing, I believe we have to ask two questions: What do we gain by moving forward and what could we lose by stalling?

Over the first 14 years alone of this new deal, we are talking about approximately \$18.4 billion in nominal financial benefit. Think about the scale of what that means for a province of our size. Speaker, \$18.4 billion is approximately 1.5 times our current budget. Even just \$1 billion has enormous socio-economic reach right across every bay in our province.

Now, consider the potential impact of billions flowing into our province sooner, while at the same time we gain more access to more power that can help unlock future economic development. That is the part of that agreement that I believe we simply cannot overlook.

The value is not only in what it provides, but in what and when it allows us to begin building. The value of this opportunity is not limited to the dollars coming directly from Churchill Falls; it is about what those dollars and the power allows us to do next.

We have extraordinary mineral resources in Newfoundland and Labrador, but having minerals in the ground is not the same thing as having mines. Mines require investment, infrastructure, workers and, yes, they require power. If additional electricity allows another mine to proceed, the benefit does not stop with that mine. Workers earn paycheques, contractors and subcontractors get work, local businesses gain customers, governments receive

revenues, families build homes, communities grow and those benefits multiple throughout the economy. Jobs will multiply into more jobs.

The same is true of the extraordinary defence opportunities emerging in Labrador. We are looking at the potential for approximately \$8 billion in investment associated with Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but it needs power, as well for potential data centres.

Those opportunities do not arrive every day and they do not wait forever. When they do arrive, we must seize them – we must. We cannot afford to find ourselves handcuffed, watching major investments pass us by because we lack the infrastructure, power or economic capacity to support them when it matters most.

That is what I mean when I talk about unlocking opportunity now – more value, more power and more ability to develop and, ultimately, more opportunity for every Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Speaker, I also want to speak directly to the people in my district. I represent 38 communities in Baie Verte - Green Bay, representing students, workers and seniors. I know that when I stand in this House and talk about billions of dollars and megawatts of electricity, there are questions being asked at home: What's in it for our district?

Well, for the workers, it is a variety of opportunities and jobs. The developments for power, developments in mining, developments across a range of industry, working with contractors and subcontractors, even opportunities for Budgell's in Triton for expanded work in Labrador.

For our young people, students, it is the possibility of building a career without first having to build a life somewhere else like I had to.

For our seniors, it is about having a stronger economy and more Treasury capacity that can sustain the programs and services that they depend on. Government cannot improve senior benefits, health care, roads and public services without the economic capacity to pay for them.

Economic development gives us the means to achieve social progress. That's why when I look at the approximately \$18.4 billion in nominal dollars over the next 14 years, I view that as more than a financial figure. I see socio-economic opportunity, like tax reduction and electricity rate rebates and more to come, as the Finance Minister highlighted.

Speaker, I also know that there are concerns, like with the referendum and the 50-year deal. You see, Churchill Falls has occupied a unique place in our history. People remembered what happened. They are cautious and when they see claims circulating online about the structure of this agreement, it can reinforce the distrust. The answer to this is not less scrutiny, it is more. That is what this four days has represented. We've heard from outside experts, 14 of them, here in the House, and people, our residents, have had the ability to watch that scrutiny take place in their Legislature.

I also realize and recognize that there is a responsibility that comes with being elected to this House. I have examined every piece of information that I've been able to get my hands with regard to this. Then, when we get to decide, we have to look out for what is in the best interests of our province. I truly believe that is preferable to an agreement of this complexity and urgency, to a single yes-or-no question in a referendum.

On the 50-year deal, opening the old contract 14 years early, we were able to extract \$18.4 billion. That's a trade-off to a 50-year deal, or really a 36-year deal based on the old contract timeline. There's also an historical perspective worth remembering here, the development of the pulp and

paper industry in Corner Brook a century ago. Today, we can look back and see what that industry meant: Generations of employment, families supported, communities built and an entire regional economy shaped by that development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: Major projects rarely arrive wrapped in certainty. They are questioned; they are second-guessed. Learning from history means when the evidence supports it, it's having the confidence to move forward when we can still make the greatest difference.

Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador has spent too much of its history watching the value of its resources create prosperity elsewhere. We now have an opportunity to write a different economic story, one where more of the value comes home; one where more of the power is available to us; and one where we use that power to unlock mines, industry, defence investments and possibly data centres – a mix of good-paying jobs.

There will always be another question. There will always be someone who will say perhaps something better will come along. Opportunity has a shelf life and, Speaker, after listening to the evidence presented during this special sitting, I believe the greater risk is not moving forward.

Speaker, I believe that we should not allow this opportunity to pass us by now. I choose certainty over uncertainty, and that is why I will support this resolution. Because this agreement takes something that has limited Newfoundland and Labrador for generations and now gives us a timely change to turn it into something that we can collectively build around right across our province.

I believe our responsibility is not simply to ask what this agreement is worth today; it is to ask what Newfoundland and Labrador can build with it tomorrow and whether we

are prepared to begin with that opportunity in front of us.

Mr. Speaker, as I used to say on the bridge as a young naval officer: Full speed ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Given the hour of the day, this House is now in recess until 1 p.m.

Recess

The House resumed at 1 p.m.

SPEAKER (Lane): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Continuing where we left off, the hon. the Member for Burgeo - La Poile.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, there is one word I keep coming back to this week: trust – trust in our institutions, trust in our leaders, trust in government to act in the best interests of the people it represents. Trust matters because none of us in this House can predict exactly what Newfoundland and Labrador will look like 50 years from now.

We are being asked to make decisions today that our children and grandchildren will have to live with. So when the Conservatives ask the people to trust them, that trust has to mean something. Speaker, I've noticed something else throughout this entire discussion. Government seems almost obsessed with comparing this agreement to the 2024 MOU.

We hear again and again about what was in the 2024 MOU, what government says was wrong with it and why they say this agreement is better, but the 2024 MOU is not what this House is being asked to vote on. The agreement on the table today is the

2026 agreement. That is the agreement we have a responsibility to examine.

The question for me is not whether the Conservatives believe they negotiated something better or new than what was proposed two years ago; the question is whether the agreement before us today is fair, acceptable and in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Does it protect our interest? Does it protect the value of our resources? Can we defend the commitments being made today to the generations that will have to live with them?

That is the test. When government asks us to trust its answers to those questions, its record matters. Last week the Finance Minister called *VOCM Open Line* to clarify the government's proposed 15 per cent electricity rebate. The minister was making the distinction that the rebate is linked to the Churchill Falls agreement but is not itself part of the agreement. When the host suggested the rebate could be seen as an incentive to support the deal, the minister responded, will you take my word for that, that that is absolutely not the case?

Speaker, that sentence gets to the heart of my concern. Because on a decision of this magnitude, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should not have to take anybody's word for it. Later in that same interview, the host put the issue of trust directly to the minister. He pointed to significant promises that government has broken and asked why people should simply take government's word now.

The minister responded by saying that sometimes people concentrate on the negative more than the positive. He gave the example of a government keeping 98 per cent of its promises and people concentrating on the 2 per cent it did not keep.

Speaker, not every promise carries the same weight and when one of the promises you break is a commitment to let the people

vote on the Churchill Falls agreement, you cannot dismiss that as people concentrating on the negative. Trust isn't a percentage. It isn't something government gets to demand. Trust is something government earns.

People asking questions about an agreement of this magnitude should not be treated as a nuisance. This week we heard the Minister of Energy and Mines call Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who question or oppose this deal do-nothings. I think government should be very careful about dismissing residents who have important questions or opinions because we have seen this before.

When people raised questions about Muskrat Falls, they were called naysayers by the premier of the day; that the project was sound and the numbers worked. A minister in that government, Mr. Jerome Kennedy, told the people of this province that Muskrat Falls is a project that will pay for itself. Today, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know who is paying for Muskrat Falls. They are, and they are paying dearly for it.

Mr. Kennedy is now part of the negotiating team for this agreement. That does not mean we dismiss everything he says or everything government says, but surely it means we have learned enough from our history to ask questions. Surely it means the Conservatives should understand why the people want proof, transparency and accountability instead of being told to take somebody's word for it.

So, Speaker, you'll understand why I cannot simply take this government at its word, and neither can the residents of Burgeo - La Poile. They will judge government the same way I will, by its actions, not its words. They were promised a referendum on the Churchill Falls agreement. There will be no referendum. They were promised 24-hour snow clearing. Ask the people of Burgeo -

La Poile whether they saw that service this past winter.

They were promised better health care. When people in my district are waiting hours in an emergency room, days for a transfer, hours for an ambulance to pick up a dying patient or a patient missing a blood transfusion because someone forgot to take it off the plane. They were promised safer communities and better services, yet people in my district continue to tell me about the conditions of their roads and whether they can travel them safely. Crime is rampant and our highways are becoming less safe by the day to drive on.

So when the Premier and the Conservative Members say trust us, people have a record against which they can judge those words, and that record matters because the people will remember.

Speaker, I am 31 years old. Some Members have reflected on their age in 1969. My mother was one year old when the 1969 Churchill Falls agreement was signed. Think about that, an agreement signed when my mother was a baby has shaped the province I inherited as an adult. Now I am sitting in the House of Assembly being asked to make a decision about another agreement that could shape Newfoundland and Labrador for the generations to come. That is how long-lasting this decision is.

I represent a generation that is trying to get ahead, a generation trying to buy a home, trying to build a career, trying to raise a family, trying to decide whether Newfoundland and Labrador is somewhere they can build their future. I believe part of my responsibility here it to make sure we can create a province where people my age and the generations coming behind us want to stay, where they can find opportunity, where they can afford to live, where they can raise their children and where the resources that belong to them are developed in a way that creates lasting value for them. That is the standard I bring

to this agreement, not simply does it look good today.

But what will it mean when I'm 41, when I'm 61, when I'm 81? What will it mean for the generations that come after mine? We cannot make the mistake of handing another generation consequences we failed to properly consider.

Speaker, when we talk about the future, we also have to talk about electricity bills, because people do not experience energy policy as a number in a Conservative government presentation. They experience it when the power bill arrives. Right now, the Consumer Advocate is warning this province about what she calls the Muskrat Falls cliff. Without intervention, the cost associated with Muskrat Falls could push residential electricity rates to double by 2030. That is not 50 years away. That is coming within a few years and the people I represent deserve to know what the government's plan is.

This agreement includes a proposed electricity rebate, that's fine. But that rebate is tied to these agreement proceedings. Meanwhile, government has tools available to provide relief independently of this deal. The government could have immediately removed the PST from electricity bills and the people of this province would have seen immediate relief.

So before government tells people what their electricity bills might look like because of the benefits that depend on this agreement, I want to know what they are going to do about the cost pressures we already know are coming, because that brings me back to where I started – trust.

Trust does not mean asking no questions. Trust does not mean accepting a projection because government says it is right. Trust certainly does not mean telling the people of this province to take government at its word.

Trust comes from keeping your promises. Trust comes from answering difficult questions. Trust comes from being transparent when the stakes are high. Trust comes from recognizing that people who question government are not the enemy, they are citizens, they are taxpayers, they are the people who sent us here.

Speaker, as I said, I am 31 years old. If I am fortunate enough to live a long life, I will live with the consequences of the decision we make here for decades, so will all the people of my generation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would ask Members to take any conversations outside. I think this is a very important day and every Member has the right to have their 10 minutes unimpeded without any noise.

Thank you.

M. KING: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm glad to know the government is listening because this is very important.

Generations who are not even born yet will inherit what we decide. That is why I will not take anybody's word for it. I will look at the record. I will look at this agreement. I will listen to the questions being asked by the people of Burgeo - La Poile and across Newfoundland and Labrador. There has been a lot of those question this week, Mr. Speaker. Then I will make the decision I believe I can defend to them, not just today, but for the rest of my life.

Speaker, I'm quite comfortable in my decision that I will make this afternoon, because governments come and go, premiers come and go, Members of this House come and go, but the people will remember and they will live with what we decide.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, it's certainly an honour to represent the constituents of the Exploits District, especially today, to start a new chapter for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I was here for the 2024 MOU debate, which I felt at that time needed further review. I believed it fell short of what we needed as a province. After the independent review was completed, we found there was a number of deficiencies in that MOU. Based on their conclusion, we had a blueprint to guide new negotiations. We then formed a new and better negotiating team with a clear mandate to get more value, more power and more transmission. The negotiating team came back with new partnerships and with the very same, more power, more transmission and more value, and more optionality. In other words, a new deal for all of us.

While that is my belief, I also respect that there are people that I represent who have questions about this deal and what it means for us in the Exploits District. Speaker, during the past few weeks, I've had a number of conversations with the residents of my district regarding the new DCIA. The majority approved. However, I did have some that raised concerns of what the deal may mean. During this week, as a result of this debate, I found that these questions were answered.

Just to note a couple of the questions I received: Why not wait until 2041? This was answered from the experts this week, who noted quite clearly that leaving this until 2041 would diminish the chance of getting a

deal and all the cost involved. Waiting until 2041 would mean that we cannot use the power to open new mines, grow new industries and address even our food security, which needs new power.

Another question from my constituents was about giveaways – another comment I heard. By waiting until 2041, we give away the chance to ever get a new deal. We give away \$10 billion up to 2041. We give away thousands of jobs attached to this project. We give away economic potential and opportunities that will come from this deal.

I received feedback and questions about our children, our grandchildren. Well, Quebec is taking the risk of the project, and we will own our share in the end, which gives our future generation enormous opportunities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. FORSEY: The 2 per cent escalator was also brought to my attention. Well, it was shown that the 2 per cent escalator in the 2024 MOU would leave our future generations with a \$30-billion debt. These were the concerns I've heard, which were clarified by the experts.

As a representative of my district, I have heard many times about well-paying jobs. This gives us the opportunity to provide our skilled trades, other hard-working individuals, with employment to show our skills.

Trades NL has endorsed this deal and their members are ready to go to work. We want this province to be a place where people want to live and work, not leave to go to work.

With training institutions in my district and the broader Central Newfoundland, they stand ready to rise and meet this occasion. We have an existing and upcoming workforce that spends too much time travelling outside our province and our

country. This deal will allow current and future skilled trade workers and young apprentices to build their future right here at home.

For the Exploits District, this new deal gets us more value and more money, allowing us to continue and maintain and expand vital public services, such as healthcare – something our party ran on and continues to deliver – road services and other services in our district.

As the Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands, a continuous issue I've heard throughout this province is the issue of food security. With more power, we will be able to grow food all year round and provide more fresh food in our province as well as more variety. I have had a number of conversations with investors who are willing to step up with their own financing, all they need is power.

Whether it plans to be for expansion of Country Ribbon and initiatives and new ideas in the dairy industry, we have companies right here in Newfoundland and Labrador who want to help solve our food security in this province.

The people of my district often hear from government about new growing industries here in the province. I want to highlight an inspirational trail-blazing young woman, who has roots in the Exploits District, who has set out to bring year-round growing to this province. Emily Bland has a goal to bring growing fresh produce into rural communities and Northern and isolated Labrador. Through hydroponic and greenhouse growing, her company SucSeed will be able to meet the goal to bring truly fresh produce to the steps of those who do not have it.

For Emily and SucSeed there is only one barrier, and that's power.

As minister, I had the opportunity this summer to travel to Labrador. One of the

most concerns I hear is that they feel that, while they are producing a significant portion of the province's GDP in growth, they are not seeing the fruits of their labour and growth themselves.

It is time for this to change. People are calling this the spark for Canada to become a global superpower in electric energy all because of us right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador has what the world wants and, because of this new and better deal, we have set a new course for a prosperous future for all of us.

To conclude, given the results of the independent review, the results proven by the negotiating team and the results of this debate, which clarifies that this is definitely a new and better deal, I am certainly in support of this new and better deal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker.

I stand today with incredible honour as the representative of the good people in my District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi for their incredible support, their engagement and their passion on this monumental decision about this iteration of the Churchill Falls MOU. I want the public and my residents to know that I heard you loud and clear. I also need to thank every single resident of the province, this beautiful province, who I also represent in making this decision, one that will impact our people for generations.

We are so fortunate to live in this resource-rich land, and its management is crucial. Unfortunately, we have been barraged by PC government political messaging after broken promises of a referendum and the lack of a truly independent oversight process.

Our NDP caucus had an insufficient one hour in total to ask the myriad questions we all have about this deal. We have a long string of questions yet to be asked and many questions to the government and negotiating team left unanswered. We have spent the past three days listening, mostly, with our very limited and insufficient time to do a fulsome investigation on behalf of the people that we serve.

Our public are not stupid, nor are they do-nothings. They are trying to get by and deal with the basics of living in these deeply unaffordable times. They have not been provided the adequate information they are demanding. As a new MHA not a part of the former MOU discussion, my observations are that this has been fast-tracked for political purposes.

I take this opportunity as well to thank my colleague and NDP caucus leader, Jim Dinn, who continues to guide me –

SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. Member you can't use the names of Members.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you – my colleague and leader who continues to guide me in a never-ending process for transparency and fairness, and that is true. I would thank the expert guests who presented for this short time frame; however, this process has been deficient of time, independence and a true debate. Finally, I thank the public experts, the many people who have had an insurmountable amount of experience in former megaproject deals, who have reached out with their expertise and have shared their opinions and perspectives as well.

Last week, I attended the film screening of Greg Malone's book, *Don't Tell the Newfoundlanders*. It's an exposé on the backroom negotiations between England and Canada on our fate as Newfoundlanders in joining the Dominion of Canada. I certainly encourage folks to read

this important historical account. My takeaway from that historical and archival investigation is, again, the importance of transparency and oversight.

We know that we have been taken advantage of repeatedly throughout our colonial history since this time. Let's just refer to the cod moratorium brought on by international overfishing, low royalty regime for our offshore oil, unfair equalization rates and a PC Muskrat Falls deal we are burdened with and exorbitant cost overruns that we are still paying for, approximately \$6.1 billion, but that's our colonial history.

The Indigenous people of our province continue to struggle for respect, recognition and truth and reconciliation with no apologies granted from this government nor admission of Innu existence beyond 300 years. All on lands we continue to develop.

The remarks indicated by the chair of the Oversight Committee, Mr. Dan Levert, pointed all arrows to the review by the negotiating team. I understand the complexity of the negotiations with the very powerful Hydro-Québec. The Power Advisory stated Hydro-Québec is so good at what they do. Yes, they are. Our concerns about past mistakes, including the 1969 deal, Muskrat Falls and other resource mismanagement, means that we must have optimal scrutiny, because we have not had that.

Negotiating team member, Jerome Kennedy, and the former PC minister was a decision-maker in the Muskrat Falls deal. We know where that has left us. He said we are living in a confluence of international politics and unprecedented times. With unknown technological advancements coming at incredible speeds, even over the next two decades, there could be economic and political shifts. Without any review option in this deal, I believe this is short-sighted and could be detrimental to our future projects. The public will not forget.

This present MOU has failed us in ensuring true independent oversight with representation from negotiators appointed by the PC government and potential conflicting interests in companies as we heard and witnessed in this House of Assembly. This is why the requirement for true independent oversight in lieu of the broken referendum promise of Premier Wakeham is imperative in our understanding that this is the best possible deal for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I want to support a new deal but a fair deal, and I want economic prosperity as we rightfully deserve. However, we deserve one that we have clearly outlined, requires a review by the PUB, a final debate and vote on the final agreement in the House of Assembly and offer meaningful consultation and support of the Innu Nation. To not apologize for the continued cultural erasure of these Indigenous peoples and their lands is truly unacceptable.

Speaker, there is a lack of information and concern indicated in the insufficient environmental oversight with outdated environmental assessments from 2012. I was disappointed that the minister did not respond to my questions in Question Period. What impacts are yet to come? We need this government to do its due diligence.

The optionality for the very contentious issue of the negative impacts other AI data centers, as we heard at least 11 times, over past three days from the negotiating team and from our colleagues, is deeply troubling. Climate change is real and this PC government remains without a climate action plan and gives little or no recognition of a climate crisis. This stance is truly out of touch.

As a mom of an aspiring trades worker, I heard of no assurances of apprenticeship opportunities for the many skilled trades workers needed for this work. As a parent of

three who all wish to work and live and sustain themselves in this province, I wish for their future. As a long-time activist and community builder, I truly want a more prosperous future for all of the people of our province.

Unfortunately, I have little confidence that this new MOU will provide just that because transparency around this deal has been, quite frankly, missing. I take my responsibility on this matter seriously and because of that inability to make a truly informed decision, I will vote no to this standing resolution because, at this point, I cannot honestly know if it is in the best interests of the people of the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you to the hon. Member.

Before I go to the next speaker, I will just advise that in our public gallery this afternoon, we have former MHA Perry Canning.

Welcome to our House of Assembly. Good to see you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in this House today on behalf of the people of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde to speak in support of this important resolution. Throughout this debate, my colleagues have talked about what our government has achieved through this new and better agreement: more value, more power, more transmission and more opportunity for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They have talked about

finally turning the page on this disastrous 1969 Churchill Falls agreement and addressing the serious flaws in the old Liberal 2024 MOU.

Speaker, I support this resolution for all of those reasons, but I want to focus on what this agreement can mean for communities like the ones I represent, and particularly what it can mean for my generation.

When I look at the decision before this House, I don't just see an energy agreement. I see a decision that could shape much of my working life and the working lives of thousands of Newfoundlander and Labradorians my age and younger.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Speaker, I also see something we have not seen before, an extraordinary level of federal partnership. The Government of Canada has recognized these projects for what they are, projects of national importance.

Our federal partners have put billions of dollars on the table to support the Labrador wind project, the Labrador West transmission line and Gull Island and, importantly, Speaker, that support is new. It was not part of the old 2024 MOU. That speaks to the work of our Premier and the negotiating team, but it also tells us something much bigger, Newfoundland and Labrador has something Canada needs. We have clean energy. We have natural resources. We have skilled workers and we have enormous potential.

When the prime minister stood beside our Premier for the announcement, he quoted from the Ode to Newfoundland and said: Newfoundlanders and Labradorians don't just endure the tempest roar, they embrace it.

Speaker, coming from a district whose communities have faced the North Atlantic

for generations, I think the people I represent understand the tempest roar. Our communities were built by people who took what this place gave them and made a life from it. They built fishing enterprises, they built businesses, they learned trades, they raised families and when industries changed, they adapted.

That same determination should guide us today, because we have another tremendous natural resource in front of us and this time our government is determined to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador is the primary beneficiary.

Speaker, one of the things that excites me most is what these projects can mean for employment. Under this agreement, a minimum of 85 per cent of construction person-hours will be worked by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians or a minimum of 20 million person-hours overall, whichever is greater. Those numbers represent real people – trades people earning paycheques, apprentices getting their hours, families with greater financial security, workers who may no longer have to fly across the country for employment and young people who can see a career here at home.

We have skilled trades people in all of our districts throughout Conception Bay North, including my colleague from across the way, from the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. Will she stand with me when the vote is called and deliver prosperity across all of Conception Bay North?

Speaker, we also have contractors and businesses ready to compete. In Carbonear, we have campus of the College of the North Atlantic helping train the workforce our province needs. Projects of this scale will need electricians, welders, heavy equipment operators, technicians, suppliers, contractors and many others. They will need a new generation ready to take on that work.

Speaker, I am a part of that generation and that gives me a very different perspective when I hear people say, why not just wait until 2041?

For my generation, 2041 is not some abstract date written into an old contract. It is a significant portion of our working lives. Are we really going to tell young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to wait another 15 years? Wait 15 years for jobs; wait 15 years for investment; wait 15 years for more power; wait 15 years for economic development; wait 15 years to receive greater value from a resource that belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Speaker, I cannot look at a young person beginning their training at the College of the North Atlantic and tell them that waiting is the better option. I cannot look at a worker from my district getting on plane to work somewhere else in Canada and tell them we should put opportunity on hold. Why would we wait when we have a better opportunity in front of us today?

Successive governments have spent decades trying to find a path forward – our government has one. A new and better deal, and the benefits will not stop at the Churchill River. When a worker from my district gets a job, their family benefits. When a local contract wins work, they hire people. When an apprentice gets their hours, they begin building a career. When families have good jobs, they spend money at local businesses. Someone who was thinking about leaving may decide to stay. Someone who has already left may find a reason to come home.

That is how major projects in Labrador can create opportunities in Carbonear, Trinity Bay, Conception Bay and communities right across Newfoundland and Labrador. The revenues generated by a stronger economy helps support the things our constituents rely on every day: health care, schools, roads, housing and stronger public services.

Speaker, for generations after the 1969 agreement, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have asked: When is it going to be our turn? When will we receive greater value from our resources? When will we have greater access to our own power? When will these resources create the opportunities they should for our own people? I believe the answer is: Our turn is now.

Before I conclude, I want to return to the prime minister's words about the tempest roar. The people of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde understand weather. For generations, people along Trinity Bay and Conception Bay have watched the horizon and planned accordingly, but for too long, when it came to Churchill Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador lived under a forecast set by the disastrous 1969 agreement. We cannot change that history, but we can decide what comes next. We indeed have an opportunity to make our own weather.

Speaker, I will proudly vote in favour of this resolution. I will vote for more value. I will vote for more power. I will vote for more transmission. I will vote for more jobs and business opportunities. And as the youngest Member of this hon. House, I will vote for a generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who should not have to wait until 2041 for their turn.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Speaker, we are about to do great things in Newfoundland and Labrador, and those opportunities can reach from the Churchill River to Carbonear, from Labrador West to Trinity Bay and into communities throughout our province. Let us learn from our history, let us seize the opportunity in front of us and let us build something future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be proud of.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

For most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Churchill Falls engenders feelings of shame, of being cheated, of being exploited. Many people don't directly remember the deal from '69, yet they know it's a fable of short-sightedness, of Quebec taking advantage of us, of an opportunity squandered. Understandably, there is much unease and skepticism around this deal. Some of that skepticism is founded in the history of Churchill Falls and our failure at Muskrat Falls, but some of it has been created by this government.

To say the rollout of this deal to the public has been a PR nightmare is an understatement. First, the Premier announced the new deal just a few months after resuming negotiations. Then he said there would not be a referendum, a promise that could have been the deciding factor in last year's election. That betrayal stoked the distrust of government and the skepticism that this was a good deal.

After digging through the government's marketing materials and their statements and comparing them to the actual agreement, it became clear that there was space between the rhetoric and the reality. There was no new transmission through Quebec. Quebec wasn't paying for the cost of overruns on Gull Island. And the wind project was nothing more than hot air. As these things came to light in the House and the interested people in the public poured through the deal, this government lost the trust of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Making things worse was the clumsy approach to this session: last-minute rules changes, last-minute changes to the witness list. Hours with witnesses that couldn't answer direct technical questions

about the deal. I appreciate good debate on any topic, but this wasn't a debate. My colleague said this was show and tell. Government hid behind their biased experts; talked more about the old, dead deal than the new one and, as usual, failed to answer any direct questions when they did have the short opportunity to do so this week.

There were genuine experts here this week but was it really surprising that they would say nice things about a deal that they had a hand in designing? Did government really think the people of the province would just take their word for it? I'd asked a lot of technical and financial questions this week. I think details matter. I spent far too much time this month with spreadsheets and power contracts and annual reports, getting in the weeds of how these things work. I take my responsibility to the people of Corner Brook and the people of this province very seriously.

I've gotten some answers and I've confirmed some of my assumptions but I've also heard a number of times that they didn't have the information I was seeking. It was kind of disturbing that we had to ask multiple times before getting a grainy printout of a graph showing the price of Gull Island power. We still don't know what we're getting from Churchill Falls upgrades or even how that power is priced.

The Hydro board couldn't say how important their current export power was to their bottom line. This is no way to instill trust and build confidence. I have many concerns with this deal. First, the financial model we're using for Gull Island and the Churchill Falls upgrades – there are many financial models that power projects can adopt. The most common one is a cost of service model. This model is used to provide customers with just and reasonable rates while keeping their utilities solvent.

The recent proposal, for example, by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to

expand the Bay d'Espoir facility is done as part of their cost of service pricing mechanism. They identify that project as the least-cost option to provide power to the people of the province. They are building this new capacity for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. We get the benefit of the power from this project.

The project in Gull Island is being built as a cost of service utility too, but not for us. We are not the customer. This project is being built for the benefit of Quebec. Hydro-Québec will take a minimum of 84 per cent of the capacity from Gull Island and likely 100 per cent of it for quite some time.

We've been told the price of this energy will start high and will decrease as time goes on. Who is actually paying for Gull Island? The Premier said that Hydro-Québec is paying the cost overruns on Gull Island but we know that's not true. The joint venture pays for it. We would own 60 per cent of that joint venture.

Now, the negotiating team will say cost overruns are recovered from the off-takers, but that's like saying that your customers are paying for your new factory. If there are cost overruns, our return equity payments will be affected by the cash flow required to cover off this additional secondary debt. Make no mistake, Gull Island is a utility for Quebec.

Unfortunately, the Churchill Falls upgrade project follows the same model, except this time CF(L)Co is taking on all the debt and equity, and we own 65.8 per cent of CF(L)Co. Yet, Quebec is getting 77 per cent of this new capacity and maybe even more. The Churchill Falls upgrade is a capacity project for Hydro-Québec.

Speaker, Churchill Falls power is the real prize here. The capital cost of Churchill Falls plant has been paid off. We don't have to worry about financing construction. If this plant were anywhere else in the world, we'd just plug it in to the open market and make

bank, but as it is, we're stuck with one real customer: Hydro-Québec.

Past negotiations use a basket of market prices to determine how much Quebec would buy this power for. This deal locks us into a fixed payment schedule. They try to dress it up by saying we could sell power at other prices too, but ostensibly, we're agreeing to a 50-year contract with price increasing 2.5 per cent per year after 2041. Now if your financial advisor said to you that you can get 2.5 per cent per year on your investments, would you be impressed?

Imagine you locked into a 2.5 per cent GIC for 50 years instead of buying a diversified portfolio of stocks and bonds. Does that sound like a good idea? How would you feel if the market soared and you're stuck at 2.5 per cent?

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have made it clear; they are not happy letting Quebec get market-based pricing –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. PARSONS: – while we're stuck at a set price.

SPEAKER: Once again, I would like for every Member to have their 10 minutes, unimpeded.

Thank you.

J. PARSONS: Letting them profit off our power; letting them take advantage of us. People want us to learn from the lessons of 1969. It doesn't seem that we are doing that with this deal.

Speaker, I want to find a fair deal on the Churchill. We need money for health care, for housing, for education, but we can't negotiate with a gun to our head. We've been told by the negotiating team and government this is our last chance to do a

deal on the Churchill River. We've heard claims that there won't be improvements in health care for people in Labrador unless we do this deal – hogwash.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians won't be coerced by our own government into any deal. We've been fed slogans once again. More power, more value, more transmission, more jobs. Their website was branded as a better deal. More value for what? A better deal than what?

It seems the government hasn't had an original idea since they've come to power. Instead, they've acted like the Opposition and not government. They are not leading; they are reacting. They are rushing into a deal and following a timeline set out by the Quebec government. They are failing to communicate the facts to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

So I ask the government to set this deal aside, take a breath and get it right on our timeline, on our terms.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is this a point of order?

L. DEMPSTER: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Several times today I wanted to stand on a point of order, but I did not want to disrupt my colleague in the middle of their speech. I think it's ridiculous, given the limited amount of time we have had discussing a 50-year deal, that's going to impact your grandchildren, that we can't stand when we've got 10 minutes without it striking a chord over there because they know deep within their own conscience it's not right.

So I ask for better co-operation of the House, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

As per *Standing Orders*, this isn't a point of order. She didn't even quote what the point of order was or what article she was referring to. So there is no point of order.

But having said that, there is as much talking over there as there is over here.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

There's no point of order per se, but I'm going to say this once again, because I think it's important to say. This is perhaps the biggest decision that will be made in this House of Assembly for years and years to come. It's impacting every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. Regardless of which side of the issue you're on, it doesn't matter. It's still a huge issue, an important issue, and every Member should have the right to have their 10 minutes –

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, they do have their right.

SPEAKER: Well, they do have their right. I'm speaking, I would say. Every Member has the right to speak for 10 minutes. If there was ever a time that they deserved the respect to have their time and to speak on behalf of their constituents, whatever that might be, it is now.

So I am asking all Members to please show your colleagues the respect and show the people of Newfoundland and Labrador the respect as we continue on with this debate.

I recognize the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

For more than half a century, the 1969 Churchill Falls contract has cast a long shadow over Newfoundland and Labrador. I was born just months after the deal was signed. It has been a source of frustration for my generation and many generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including many of the residents of Placentia West - Bellevue who I am proud to represent, who also believed that our province was not receiving the full value of one of our greatest natural resources.

Governments of every political stripe have sought ways to improve our position. Today, Speaker, we have an opportunity to do just that, not by looking backward, but by looking forward. An opportunity to turn the page on the past, move beyond the limitations of the 1969 deal and secure a new and better future for Newfoundland and Labrador and for communities throughout Placentia West - Bellevue.

From Long Harbour to Bellevue, to Southern Harbour, to Arnold's Cove, Come By Chance, Terrenceville, Petite Forte to Marystown, and throughout many more communities that make up our beautiful district, people want the same things: good jobs, economic stability and opportunities for their children and grandchildren to build successful lives right here at home.

Speaker, Placentia West - Bellevue is one of the biggest industrial districts in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our region has helped power this province for generations through major industrial projects, energy development, marine services, manufacturing and skilled trades. We understand better than most, I believe, that the opportunities that come when investment, industry and skilled workforce come together, that is why nowhere in this opportunity created by this new and better

deal is more important than for our trades workers.

For generations, skilled trades people from our district have helped build Newfoundland and Labrador. They have worked on major industrial projects, built our roads and infrastructure, maintained our plants and facilities and contributed to projects across Canada and around the world. Too often, however, many of them have had to leave home to find work, which I had to do in my lifetime. They have missed birthdays, anniversaries and time with their families because the opportunities they needed were somewhere else.

This new and better deal gives us the opportunity to change just that. At a time when economic actions against Canada are creating uncertainty, we have a chance to strengthen our economy, build our own industries and create thousands of jobs right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Right now, Canada needs to be strong. Our Premier is doing his part. The prime minister is standing up and the federal government's investment in this new and better deal demonstrates that commitment. It shows a willingness to stand with Newfoundland and Labrador, strengthen our economy and support the industries that create good jobs for working people.

Speaker, this is a massive opportunity, an opportunity to shape the future of our province for decades to come. A new and better deal that delivers more power to build industries, more value for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and, most importantly, more jobs.

In fact, we stand on the cusp of the single largest pro-jobs investment in the history of our province. For the members of Trades NL and the thousands of skilled workers they represent, that means opportunity. It means work for welders, work for electricians, heavy equipment operators, iron workers, carpenters, labours,

mechanics, pipefitters and engineers, and work for the next generation of apprentices for deciding today whether they can build a future here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The 5,000 at peak construction jobs associated with Gull Island alone and the related transmission infrastructure represent opportunities on a scale our province rarely sees. Those jobs mean families can stay together. It means workers can earn a good living without having to leave the province. It means young people can enter the skilled trades knowing there will be meaningful work for them when they graduate, through investments in education. It means that communities throughout Placentia West - Bellevue will benefit from the economic activity that follows.

When tradespeople are working, local businesses benefit, restaurants benefit, shops benefit, service providers benefit, entire communities benefit, including our persons with disabilities and our senior population.

Speaker, this deal gives us the foundation for long-term economic growth. More power means more industrial development, more power means future investment opportunities, more power means Newfoundland and Labrador can attract new projects and support the growth of existing industries. Every major project requires skilled workers to build it, operate it and maintain it.

Speaker, this deal also delivers more value. It includes guaranteed inflation protection, ensuring the value of our power grows over time; value that could be invested in better infrastructure, value that can be invested in health care, value that can be invested in education and value that can help create even more opportunities for future generations, like my colleague behind me.

I have spoken with residents throughout Placentia West - Bellevue. Like many Members of this House, I have heard a

great deal of optimism about what this agreement could mean. People see opportunity. Trades workers see opportunity. Apprentices see opportunity. Families see opportunity. They see the possibility of more work, stronger and safer communities and a brighter future for their children and grandchildren.

I understand why some people continue to focus on 1969. The people of this province, including myself, have every reason to remember that history, but the decision before us today is not about changing the past. It is about deciding whether we seize the opportunities available to us now as we move forward on Bay du Nord while exploring liquified natural gas developments as well.

If we wait until 2041, we leave billions of dollars on the table. We lose the benefits that come with reopening the contract early. We lose the jobs that are made possible by moving forward today. We lose valuable time in building the economy our province deserves and needs. For a province facing annual deficits of more than a billion dollars, that matters.

Speaker, there comes a time when leadership requires action, a time to stop debating what should have happened decades ago and start focusing on what can be achieved today. I will be voting yes on this resolution before us today; voting yes for more power, voting yes for more value, voting yes for more jobs, voting yes for more opportunities for trade workers and apprentices, voting yes for stronger, safer communities in Placentia West - Bellevue and voting yes to a more prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is time to turn the page on the past. It is time to put our people to work. It is time to seize the opportunities before us, eliminating the boom-and-bust economy that has kept up afloat for years.

I am proud to support our Premier and our government as we finalize this new and better deal for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians throughout this beautiful place we call home. The greatest compliment I have heard many times over in this past year is that people are happy when they hear our Premier speak, and they see the underlying question of how does this decision impact Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and guiding every decision. For that, I am beyond proud to support this Definitive Cooperation and Implementation Agreement setting our course toward prosperity.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

K. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today as the Member for Lake Melville and I rise as an independent Member of this House. That distinction matters today, because when I cast my vote on an agreement that could shape Labrador for generations, I have one responsibility above all others, and that's to the people who sent me here; not to a premier, not to a political party, not to Hydro-Québec, for sure, and not to Ottawa, I say, and not to anybody who tells me that this agreement is simply too important, too urgent, too complicated for us to keep asking questions.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I come from Lake Melville. I have an Inuk mother from the North who has her family, my grandparents, that way. I have a Newfoundlander as a father who came from the Island. I have a wife from the Northern Peninsula, I will say, where power bills are as big as mortgages. I take all these things and all my family into consideration when I rise in this hon. House.

I tell you one thing, after everything I've heard and everything I've read and everything I've asked during the debate, I cannot support this agreement. I will be voting against the DCIA and I want to explain why.

For me, this debate begins where the Churchill River begins and that's in Labrador. The Churchill River generating station in Labrador, Gull Island in Labrador, proposed wind in Labrador and, I tell you what, all this bundling has led to a lot of ambiguity, a lot of confusion for everybody out there in the public. I think everybody can agree with that.

All the new transmission infrastructure will be built in Labrador and thousands of workers are going to come to Labrador, but I'll tell you first and forward, first things first, we have to talk about this project being on Innu land and Innu Nations should be respected during this process, and they have not been. I can say that this government has given them the ultimate disrespect in challenging their identity and their history in Labrador.

In moving on from that, if I would, the government just said and we've said, everybody has said in this hon. House, that these developments will create pressures involving things like community infrastructure, health, education, public safety, all that. We want to talk about public safety? We're in chaos and we're in crisis in Lake Melville right now and our children are dying. We have violence. We have violent crime. We don't have enough resources. We don't have infrastructure. We don't have enough people. We have murders and people walking the streets with shotguns that are commonplace, Mr. Speaker. This is not good enough in today's society. For a year, I've asked this government for help, and what do we get? Nothing, lip service over and over and over again.

So let's follow this admission, we've had no help and there will be more pressures

coming with this project. What does that mean? It means that Lake Melville is going to be expected to absorb the pressures of this development. What's been guaranteed to Lake Melville at this point in time? Nothing. Nothing promised. Nothing committed. Nothing guaranteed.

Where is the housing capacity going to be? Where is the health care capacity going to be? Where are the investments in municipal infrastructure, commitments for roads, public safety plans? Where is the detailed plan for thousands of additional workers to be moving through Central Labrador and, most importantly, where is the money to pay for it?

To me, it sounds like we're being kind of threatened here, that if we don't do all of this and give away our crown jewel, then you can't be safe either. Well, that's not appropriate, Mr. Speaker. We cannot say that the safety of our children is dependent on selling that crown jewel out – ridiculous in my mind. What have we been guaranteed up to this point? What have we been guaranteed for protection? Absolutely nothing, I say. We talk about 5,000 workers at point; we've been through all of this. We've seen all of that, Mr. Speaker. We know we're not going to get the lion's share of those jobs.

That's not a small number though in Labrador, is it? You can't just drop thousands of people into the region and think that everything is going to be okay. Where are they going to live? Where are they going to receive medical care? What happens to rent? What happens to the availability of housing in Lake Melville? What about municipal services, roads, policing, all that stuff? What about all of the people that already live there, Mr. Speaker? Nobody seems to be considering that at this point.

These are not arguments against development at all. Labradorians know about the megaprojects. We know we're not

going to get the jobs. We've seen nothing but drugs, violence and struggle, strife, since Muskrat Falls. We've heard the speeches. We've seen the big announcements. We've seen the big ribbon cuttings, Mr. Speaker, and we know what happens when the resource leaves Labrador while the infrastructure deficit stays behind. Promises are no longer enough. We need guarantees and, at this point, Lake Melville has zero guarantees from this government.

We're entering one of the greatest times, possibly, in our history in terms of mineral development, hydro development, all of that. There is no doubt we've heard about critical minerals. We've talked about new industries, existing industries, stuff we don't even know about or predict today. It is truly an exciting time. It truly is. We know that we're at capacity. We've heard that from the experts and all that. I mean, it's a funny thing, we own all the resources, yet we don't even have enough to serve our own population, our own people. We've given everything away in the past.

We're standing here debating what a government calls a generational electricity agreement while our own utility is telling us that we cannot even deal with the constraints and the dirty diesel in some communities; that people are being made to pay outrageous prices and increasing their struggle in life. That should concern every single Member of this House. It is not something that we should be considering merely as an export, this electricity, it is in and of itself economic infrastructure.

Once we commit the power under these agreements lasting decades, future governments will inherit those decisions, future Labradorians will inherit the consequences, I say, Mr. Speaker. That's why I have been asking questions throughout debate. We've asked all kinds of questions about all kinds of things, all kinds of scenarios, what happens here and there, and we just didn't have the answers. We

just didn't get those answers. If you think about how complex this is going to be, we spent 50 years fighting Joey's simple little agreement, what are we going to do when we have to fight this one, probably hundreds of thousands of pages?

I'm not trying to be a nuisance. These are not nuisance questions, Mr. Speaker. It's not obstruction. It's not negativity. It's due diligence. What we don't have here is we don't have any independent scrutiny. This is not a debate; this is a sales pitch selling the unsellable. That's exactly what this is.

This is about, unfortunately, the '24 MOU versus the '26 MOU, and not necessarily about what we can possibly achieve as the best deal for the people of the province. The world is going to change. Everything is going to change. I say that, with no referendum – well, we knew that, because it wasn't fit to eat. The PUB, even though it has to do with ratepayers, can't look at it because they know it's not fit to eat. So we're going to be left struggling.

For an agreement of this magnitude, we should be looking for as much scrutiny and as much time as it takes in order to get the job done for the people. Instead, we're going to have to make a generational decision on a political timetable. Now, to me, that's very, very scary. I can't go back and look the people of Lake Melville in the eye and say the government told me it will all work out, so that's good enough. Negotiators told us to trust their projections. That's not good enough. Saying that we're afraid that the opportunity might disappear for something this important, that's not good enough. For something as big as this for Labrador, we can't do that, Mr. Speaker.

I don't believe that this agreement meets the standards that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians deserve. I can't ask the next generation to live with commitments that I'm not satisfied adequately protects this one. I can't look the people in the eye and tell

them that I voted for something simply because I was told I had to. I can't do that.

My decision is clear. My responsibility is clear. I will be voting against this. I will stand with Lake Melville, because what we have here is manufactured chaos, the bundling and the ambiguity and threats of we're going to lose all if we don't jump at this manufactured window. Manufactured by who? Manufactured by Carney. Manufactured by the prime minister and his quest for influence in Quebec.

The prime minister shows up with a wad of cash, and all of a sudden, because we're in a deficit, we're blinded by that. We forget our God given right as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to control our own destiny, to stand on our own two feet with pride, I say. If this was truly a nation-building project, we wouldn't be hamstrung by geography or we wouldn't hamstrung by political agendas, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just asking everybody in this hon. House, and especially those ones from Labrador, I'm saying stand up for your districts, stand up for your families, stand up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians everywhere. Let's show the world that we're ready to protect our resources, because gone are the days – the Danny days, I'll say – when we went head on to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, and stood up for ourselves.

I'm just going to say have some guts, have some faith, have some pride in us and let's look inward. Let's stand up for this province. Let's stand up for our home. Let's stand up for every salt of the earth person, every single Newfoundlanders and Labradorian who right now is struggling to live in their everyday lives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Before I get started, I really want to thank my constituents in Topsail - Paradise for their support in this process. Speaker, I thank you. I thank our colleagues in this House for their questions throughout the week. I thank the panel participants, who gave their time to be here and answer those questions as best they could.

As many of my colleagues have already pointed out, this is a better deal. It's a deal that offers more value, more power, more transmission to Newfoundland and Labrador. But what's important is this deal creates opportunity, opportunity for workers, opportunity for communities, opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador businesses and, Speaker, opportunities for young people who one day will be looking for jobs here at home.

In my District of Topsail - Paradise, we have many young working families. As the province's Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, I would be remiss if I didn't speak about what this agreement means for those young people in our province and that the education system is there to help them prepare for their futures.

Speaker, I fundamentally believe that a successful system of education exists to foster an effective learning environment in the classroom, while also preparing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed in life. It's about helping them discover their talents and aspirations. It's about ensuring they are prepared to contribute to the economic and social future of this great province.

That is why our government continues to make significant investments in education.

We've invested millions of dollars in educators and teaching and learning assistants. We've invested in hiring additional teachers and teaching and learning assistants. We've also invested to strengthen student assistant supports, helping to ensure students receive the help they need to succeed in school and beyond.

I know at the start of this new school year what some of the challenges are; we're going to continue to invest and support those challenges. Also in there, we include early child care and we have to look at issues of inclusive education, which are key.

This project represents thousands of opportunities for skilled workers throughout the province, plus it brings many indirect jobs as well as induced jobs. Just as important, this agreement establishes priority hiring that recognizes the importance of Newfoundland and Labrador participation with the Labrador Innu, Labradorians and Newfoundlanders receiving priority consideration for those jobs.

That commitment matters because our Premier and government were clear; Newfoundlanders and Labradorians must be the primary beneficiaries of our resources. However, this also presents us with a responsibility. If we are going to seize the opportunities, we must continue on building a workforce that meets the demand and we need young people to see careers in the skilled trades as exciting, rewarding and achievable. In order to do that, we need to have education and training systems that help them realize that. I'm proud to say that much of that is under way.

Our government has made skilled trades education a priority because we recognize that there are multiple pathways to rewarding careers. For some students, that pathway could be university. For others, that may be college and, for others, it may lead to skilled trades. All these pathways are valuable and deserve strong support.

We have made many investments in ensuring access to skilled trades. I am particularly proud of these efforts, as we have currently eliminated all of the wait-lists for programming in our schools, so at the start this year, any child or any student who wanted to do trades in schools are doing it. This is the significant achievement. It means more students can access what they want. It means more young people can begin preparing careers that are in demand.

What excites me most about this agreement, it is not just about energy, it is not just about infrastructure, it is not just about economics, it is about people – it's about people.

Now, we all got prepared scripts and talking points for today, but I am going to go off script a bit.

As I sat here in the House today, my colleague from across the way, from Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, actually text me, he said, you look a little heavy today. I think we all probably feel the weight of the decision we have to make today. But what became apparent to me when I listened to everyone else talk is this week a young constituent of mine passed away. Kendrick Quilantang, a nine-year-old boy, died Saturday of leukemia. Because we are here today and because it is so important, I did not have the opportunity to attend the wake or funeral, but I know he made such an impact on me.

I met him several times. I visited him in hospital. What a wonderful, young man. He was continuing to do music lessons there. Although he was in Grade 3, he was reading at a level of Grade 7 and math Grade 5. He was smart; he loved LEGOs. He wanted to go to LEGOLAND through the Wish Foundation, but of course he couldn't because of his illness. His room was plastered – plastered – with LEGOs. Now, not the LEGOs I grew up with – unbelievable, the LEGOs.

I sat with him for about an hour and half one day. I'd say I helped him put together LEGOs but he helped me. We had a great talk. As we talked, I said what are you going to be? He said I'm going to be an engineer. And we know that's not going to happen.

So what I see out of this agreement is that we have many youth out there with aspirations and I think this agreement gives them the opportunity to meet their aspirations. I think that's a key issue.

I heard from someone, he said: Decisions are easy when you care less. I know everyone in this House, this is not an easy decision, but I can say, for me, in listening to my constituents in Topsail - Paradise, listening to the panel discussion all this week, taking pages and pages of notes, I can honestly say that the decision is easier for me now. I will certainly be supporting this agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Dwyer): The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

As we all say, that's not an act, that's a hard speech to follow in terms of it puts everything in perspective in terms of real life and what we're dealing with today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. LOVELESS: Deputy Speaker, always a pleasure to stand and speak on behalf of the people, the constituents of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune and thank them, sincerely, for the honour. Let me add, another rural district where people are proud and passionate about jobs and their family's future.

This moment is perhaps the most important time in my political career and in the province's history. Our responsibility today

is enormous. Is it a difficult decision? Yes. So much so that, at the beginning of this, we saw a Labrador MHA cross the floor. That's not easy to do, but he feels, listening to his constituents, that this is not a good deal for Labrador and I respect what he did.

Is it a challenging vote? Yes, but I will be voting because my constituents expect me to respect them, to stand and vote, and I will be doing that for them and for all of us. My constituents expect me to vote the way they want me to vote and my vote is based on their feedback and what they saw and heard in the past 12 months and, in particular, this week.

Some feedback from my district that is coming directly from them: rates need to be lowered significantly to reduce the burden off them; Quebec is getting more again; the 15 per cent offer by the current government – and this is their words – is an insult, considering what they really and truly deserve; the deal is too long and no re-openers with certainty, security and protection; and – certainly, coming from my district – Unit 8 in Bay d'Espoir should be developed. It should have been done before Muskrat Falls, Deputy Speaker, and there should be a benefits package for the people in the Bay d'Espoir area and the region.

Deputy Speaker, in the 2026 DCIA, jobs reference 85 per cent of person-hours, not 85 per cent of number of jobs. Over the past six years, the now Energy and Mines Minister would not accept anything less than 100 per cent of jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Well, now he has.

Deputy Speaker, time frame to arrive at this deal. The lead negotiator this week said he dealt with it in eight to 10 weeks – eight to 10 weeks on a massive deal, the biggest in history. Very concerning.

Deputy Speaker, is it a good deal? If the deal is so good, then an independent review should not be a problem. The lead

negotiator stated on this floor that he didn't support that and that concerns me.

Much has been talked about in terms of wait until 2041, or wait until when? I don't think there should be a measured time to get it right. Why not wait for the amount of time it takes to put together a strategy that prepares us and equips us to truly, this time, deal with Quebec. I think that comes from reflecting on the 1969 deal, MOU 1 and the DCIA and build on that; a total independent oversight, a real strategic plan and then back to the negotiating table. Could we get more? Well, time is on our side, not Quebec's. It is our resource, including Gull Island.

A 50-year deal is a long time, but let's ask: Does it give Newfoundland and Labrador enough pricing protection, market access and flexibility over those years to redirect our power to different markets?

Deputy Speaker, in the news conference of fall of 2025, when then minister of Energy for Quebec, who is now Premier and fighting for her job in the election, she clearly stated that if our Premier wanted changes then Quebec would as well. We can't fault her. I believe she did a good job and did it well, because Quebec did get more, a lot more, and our Premier allowed that to happen. That is the sentiment of Newfoundland and Labrador, the majority of it.

After the discussion of the past several days and past 12 months, I want to talk about something that goes beyond any one provision of this agreement, and that is trust, broken promise, referendum and, I say to the Minister of Finance, that is not all we have.

It is about the measure of a person and that is in their word. It is about accountability, transparency and much more. During the last election, Progressive Conservative candidates knocked on doors across Newfoundland and Labrador and made it

very clear, a clear promise to the people they were asking to represent, they promised them a say.

On September 15, 2025, the Premier promised the people of the province a say on the future of the Churchill River; he promised a referendum. The Premier said that any final agreement on Churchill Falls and Gull Island would be put to the people in a referendum. Their own blue book went even further, it said they would not proceed with any deal on the Churchill River unless it was approved by the voters in the referendum. That's pretty clear, Deputy Speaker. People were told you will decide and now they won't. The promise was broken.

A few days in this House does not give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador the referendum they were promised. A few minutes of questions at the end of the evening does not give them the referendum they were promised.

If the Premier, the Minister of Mines and Energy and the full PC caucus believe this agreement is as good as they tell us it is, they should be eager to explain it. Go across Newfoundland and Labrador. Stand in front of people. Tell them exactly what has been gained. Tell them exactly what has been given up. Tell what this agreement means for their power, their resources and their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, because they are our future. Answer them until the people understand what their Premier and this PC government is asking this House to approve today; because, when a government is confident in the agreement, scrutiny should not be something it fears.

Further to the agreement itself, we were told that the previous agreement was not good enough. We were told this government would go back and get more. Who actually got more? Hydro-Québec, itself, has said the new framework strengthens its energy portfolio at a lower cost than the 2024 MOU.

Under the figures provided to us, the average price paid by Hydro-Québec moves from approximately 6 cents per kilowatt hour under the 2024 arrangement to approximately 5.5 cents. Quebec also receives significantly more power – significantly more power. Of the federal financial support identified as part of the overall arrangement, the figures before us show \$6.5 billion associated with Quebec and \$3.5 billion with Newfoundland and Labrador.

Is that fair? No, it's not.

A constituent of mine who worked for Hydro said about this deal, market-based pricing is gone. The Gull Island escalator is gone. There are no direct transmission rights for Newfoundland and Labrador to contract directly with customers in the US. All of that is very concerning.

We saw this past week, VOCM Question of the Day, 34 per cent of people were confused, 29 per cent disappointed, 24 per cent frustrated and 13 per cent satisfied. So I think the Minister of Energy and Mines's attempt before this session of saying: after the four days, the public will support the deal. I don't think that's the case. From my seat in this Legislature, the group of experts, including the negotiating team, did not give me absolute assurance that we have the fair deal that all of us deserve.

Deputy Speaker, history should make us more careful today, not less. Each of us will have to live with the vote we cast. Our constituents will know, the next generation will know it and history will know it. I know what my responsibility is when I cast mine.

Is this deal a fair deal? I don't think so, but a fair deal is available. It always was. Strong hands can only produce strong outcomes when the player at the table has a plan. We do not have that plan yet. We can build on that and we can pause long enough to do that and, this time, finally getting it right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. GOOSNEY: Speaker, there are moments in public life when you realize that what is happening in front of you is bigger than anything you could have ever imagined when you first decided to serve. This day is one of those moments because it is surreal for me to stand in this very House to speak about Churchill Falls; the name of the town where I grew up. The town I never wanted to leave.

Yet, here I am, many years later, standing in this House helping make a decision that could change what Churchill Falls means to our province, what the Churchill River means to our province and what the resource can mean for generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I don't think that young boy growing up in Churchill Falls could have ever imagined this very moment, this exact moment, but perhaps that is what is remarkable and one of the most remarkable things about public service. Sometimes life brings you back you where you started; sometimes it brings you back to the very questions that shaped you.

Speaker, I remember growing up hearing about the 1969 agreement and, even as a child, I understood that there was something deeply frustrating about having an enormous natural resource here in our own province while being constrained in what we could do with it. I remember hearing something that stayed with me for years, that there would never really be a day when we could cut a new path for ourselves and the circumstances surrounding Churchill Falls could not be changed.

That was the reality generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians lived

with. A door was closed. For decades, governments tried to find a way to open it. There were negotiations, court challenges. There were disappointments, setbacks and there were generations of people who wondered whether the circumstances surrounding Churchill Falls would ever truly change.

Speaker, I want to be very clear on something, and I want this to be heard publicly, this cannot be about partisan politics. Churchill Falls is bigger than any political party. It is bigger than any premier. It is bigger than any Member of this House and it's bigger than any government. This is about our resource, it is about our economic future and it is about whether we have the courage to change the direction of the province and move it forward. That has to be the standard we apply.

As elected representatives, we have been entrusted with something greater than any political mandate. We have been entrusted with responsibility. When we stand in this very House and debate something of this magnitude, we are not simply debating a policy, we are making a decision that I'm very well aware of that will be judged by history.

The question I have asked myself: Will the people of Newfoundland and Labrador be in a stronger position because of this agreement? Speaker, based on what I have seen, what I have heard, what I have studied, based on the evidence we have all heard this week, I am confident that this is a better agreement for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. GOOSNEY: I am confident that this agreement means we are in a stronger position.

Today, we have an opportunity to move beyond the limitations that have defined us. We have an opportunity to access new

markets, to pursue transmission opportunities, to develop new industries. But, Speaker, I believe the biggest question before us is not simply how much power can we sell, the bigger question is how much economic value can Newfoundland and Labrador finally capture from the resource we have?

The benefits can extend far beyond paying down debt. It can mean investment, jobs, stronger businesses. It can mean new sources of provincial revenue and those revenues can give this government and many future governments something Newfoundland and Labrador has often lacked, Mr. Speaker, that is choices. Choices to address our debt, to invest in health care, to invest in education, to build infrastructure, strengthen public service and perhaps, most importantly, choices for our youth, our young people, to build their lives here.

Speaker, my connection to this goes beyond Churchill Falls. I grew up there. I lived and studied in North West River. I travelled the South Coast many times. I made friends from the North Coast. I lived and worked in Labrador West. Labrador shaped me. It shaped the way I see this province. It shaped the way I understand our resources. It shaped my understanding that Labrador is not just some distant place on a map.

Labrador is a part of who we are. Churchill Falls is not simply a power project. It is part of our identity. For me, it represents a question that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have wrestled with for generations: Can we finally put ourselves in a position where our resource creates greater opportunity, greater value for our own people?

Speaker, sitting here today, I think about that young boy in Churchill Falls, the town I never wanted to leave. I think about what it means to sit in this House and to have a voice in determining what happens next.

Speaker, standing on that dock, witnessing that day that brought us here, that was about Churchill Falls. It was about Newfoundland and Labrador. It was a reminder that decisions made in this very House can shape the lives of the people we know, people we love and people we will never meet.

We should be asking what possibilities it creates for our children, for our grandchildren, for young people who will one day stand in this House, for the young person sitting somewhere in Newfoundland and Labrador at this very moment who's wondering whether they have to leave home to find their future.

Speaker, I want that young person to have choices. I want them to be able to stay, to build, to work, to start business, to raise a family and to dream. I believe this agreement puts us in a stronger position. I believe it creates opportunities that were much harder, if not impossible, to pursue before.

Speaker, I'm proud to stand here today, proud of where I come from, proud to represent my district of Humber - Gros Morne. I have thought long and hard about what it means to put my name behind something of this magnitude. When this moment is gone, when the speeches are forgotten, when the headlines are faded, the consequences of what we do will always remain. That is why I am putting my name behind this because I believe in Newfoundland and Labrador and I believe, tomorrow, we will be in a stronger position.

Speaker, we have waited long enough and now we have a responsibility to the people who sent us here and to the people who will come after us, because one day a young person will learn about this agreement in a classroom. They will learn about the decades of frustrations from the '69 agreement and they will learn about what we chose to do in '26 and, perhaps, one day, our children, our grandchildren will ask

us: What did you do when the moment finally came?

Speaker, I want to be able to look them in the eye and say we seized the opportunity. We stood up for Newfoundland and Labrador. We understood that this was not about us. It was about the people who came before us and the people who will come after us. When that door finally opened, after all of those years of being closed, we did not walk through it for ourselves – we walked through it for them.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The Grade 8 curriculum guide in Newfoundland and Labrador for the course of Newfoundland history lists the Churchill Falls deal in the curriculum objectives. So I wonder if any classes in our province are including our debate, our discussions this week.

The curriculum guide says, 4.2, the student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of economic changes in post-Confederation Newfoundland and Labrador up to 1971. In, 4.2.8, evaluate the impact of the Churchill Falls hydro development.

There is an activity suggested for the classes. It suggests to think about the impact of the 1969 Churchill Falls deal as it relates to four people: an Indigenous trapper, a project electrician, a taxpayer and the premier of the province.

I think that is a useful exercise for us to reflect on as we are here and we undertake a vote later today, thinking about the

Churchill Falls deal in those terms of those – and I know we can think of more but that is literally in the Newfoundland and Labrador curriculum for the Grade 8 Newfoundland studies course.

So when I reflect on this deal, the clearest point for me is around fairness. What does fairness in a Churchill Falls deal mean for Newfoundland and Labrador? We heard hundreds of times in 2024 how our government, we had Schedule F, as we've heard, for fairness. Just a coincidence, my husband asked me last night, did F actually stand for fairness? I said: No, it was a coincidence, I believe.

Leading up to the 2024 MOU, we know Power Advisory recommended this market-based model that was in Schedule F – that wasn't my idea; that was Power Advisory's idea – which Hydro-Québec approved in principle and signed into our MOU. Hydro-Québec signed off on that principle of market-based pricing and Schedule F, as we all say, for fairness.

That idea Power Advisory came up with and that was a recommendation by global experts, which other experts validated. I think as we think about fairness, I truly believe a big part of what Labradorians and Newfoundlanders want in terms of fairness, is that they want to gain if Quebec gains. I do know with certainty that residents of Newfoundland and Labrador will have zero tolerance for a situation where Quebec wins and Newfoundland and Labrador loses.

An industry expert called me this week. They were watching the debate, and they said, Sarah, they capped the upside. And they did. So let's say that the DCIA proceeds, the extra power is used in Labrador, which is great, but what happens then? The global price of electricity will be irrelevant for Newfoundland and Labrador for the next 50 years.

We did have experts say this week that it was a fair deal; we all heard it. We certainly

heard very clearly how the lead negotiator thinks it's a fair deal. I think their standard of fairness is not necessarily the same as yours at home, watching these proceedings in front of your computer, sitting on your couch carefully managing your small family budget, and wondering why Quebec always seems to do better than Newfoundland and Labrador.

So what happened to Schedule F, market-based pricing, and the idea that if Quebec wins, Newfoundland and Labrador wins as well, and how did we lose that? How did we get here and not have that? We heard in our first briefing on the DCIA that market-based pricing was too complicated to figure out. We heard from the oversight panel that market-based pricing was given up in negotiation. And we heard from the lead negotiator last evening who told us that they valued the whole asset at \$34 billion and then said one of the priorities was not to do anything to screw that up. The main goal was not to screw that up. It was a fair, reasonable value that was put on the contract.

The lead negotiator is clearly telling us what we have. We have a fixed price for our power in Labrador – yes, valued at \$34 billion; yes, with extra power we can use ourselves. Let's hope we use it. And when we use that power, that's it. The DCIA we have today will not see any upside for Newfoundland and Labrador if Quebec makes a killing off Labrador's river. The PCs gave away market-based pricing in negotiations – the principle that Power Advisory themselves recommended to achieve fairness for Newfoundland and Labrador, the negotiating team did away with.

I am also worried now that this is being rushed. I'm going to read you some quotes from this week from the House, from the government's lead negotiator and this is all from *Hansard*. "... this is the time.... it's only a couple times you can kick at this. Why would Quebec keep coming back to the

table? ... They will move on.” “The point of maximum leverage for the province, I believe, was right now” He said, “... if Gull is not built in this agreement and we’re waiting until 2041,” I notice that sentiment, this is not validated by Power Advisory. I added that bit at the end, but the rest was his quote.

When asked if the lead negotiator thought we should send the deal to independent review he said, “I would be doubtful that Quebec would come back if we started to go back through another process like that but that’s just my opinion.”

So our negotiating team negotiated away the upside for Newfoundland and Labrador. If Quebec gets an upside, we do not. Industry experts do not agree that this deal has to be done now. We’ve also heard in a good negotiation both parties come away equally unhappy. Is Quebec unhappy? I don’t think so.

Finally, I ask, can you trust this government? They’ve repeatedly promised you things that they haven’t delivered on. Why would you trust them to deliver on this?

I do not believe fairness, as has been negotiated in this DCIA, meets the tests of what Labradorians and Newfoundlanders want and expect from a fair deal. I believe our constituents want a deal where Newfoundland and Labrador benefits and also that Newfoundland and Labrador benefits when Quebec benefits.

Sure, an accountant from Toronto can say that this DCIA is a fair deal. Fair from an accounting perspective, sure. Is it good enough for you? Is it good enough for Newfoundland and Labrador and the history that we have with Churchill Falls? Are we happy with letting Quebec win if electricity prices skyrocket? If that happens, we get the same: no upside.

I ask all Members in this House of Assembly, specifically the government, in

two to three generations time, would you want your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren learning about the Churchill Falls deal? If electricity prices skyrocket between now and then, they’ll be reading that the government in 2026-27 gave away their resources and they will know that their grandparent was a Cabinet Minister, a Member of government at the time.

If you support this DCIA, as it is, your great-grandchildren’s Newfoundland and Labrador’s history textbook might reference this debate. It might have a picture of it with the Premier and the lead negotiator for Churchill Falls and what will the heading be in 2051? There might be something about how the government gave away market-based pricing. The students in the classes in Grade 8 might have an activity to consider about what fairness means to Newfoundland and Labrador versus an accountant in Toronto.

Speaker, I will not be supporting the DCIA, and I will certainly not be walking out this evening. I am not saying throw it away – I’m not saying throw it away. If I were in government, I would be insisting that government send the negotiating team back. Tell them to come back when they have market-based pricing. When Quebec gets an upside, we should get an upside, as Power Advisory originally recommended.

I ask Members of the government, what do you want your personal legacy to be? Premier, what do you want your family’s legacy to be? If electricity prices skyrocket in this uncertain global economy, Newfoundland and Labrador will not benefit with this DCIA. I plead with government, send the DCIA and negotiating team back. We need to ensure that if Quebec wins, Newfoundland and Labrador wins. That is the right thing to do.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Speaker, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to speak during this historic, extraordinary sitting of the House of Assembly, and it is very humbling because of the significance and the impact that this definitive agreement will have on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians today and in the future.

History remembers moments when people choose not just to manage their future, but to transform it. These moments are called a renaissance, a rebirth, a moment when new possibilities come into view, when confidence returns and when a society rediscovers what it can achieve. Newfoundland and Labrador stands at one of those moments.

For too many years, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have packed their bags and left family behind in search of work. For too long, families have made sacrifices, celebrating milestones over Facetime or missing birthdays while their loved ones worked away.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask if there's any side conversations that you take them outside.

Thank you.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: This agreement gives us a chance to change that story. A true renaissance is not only about creating jobs for those here; it's about creating a reason for our people to come home. Imagine the impact when a young family returns. That's more children in our schools, more customers for our local

businesses, more volunteers in our communities and fire departments. That's how communities grow. A renaissance is measure not only in megawatts, but in jobs, families reunited and communities growing strong again.

What is this agreement about? This agreement is about hope and renewal. Many of my constituents in the District of Harbour Main are electricians and ironworkers, welders, apprentices, crane operators, small contractors. This agreement is about hope and renewal for them.

This isn't just about building generating stations; it's about building careers, apprentices becoming journeypersons, local businesses growing and young people seeing the opportunity right here at home. Reliable, affordable power can unlock new industries and support existing ones. This agreement is about renewal, a moment when new possibilities come into view, when confidence returns in our province and when a society rediscovers what it can achieve.

For the people I represent in the District of Harbour Main, a renaissance means ironworkers who don't have to leave, apprentices building their careers here, families staying together and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who left having a reason to come back.

The word "renaissance" reminds us of a time in Europe when people dared to believe in innovation, opportunity and a promise of a better tomorrow. But here in Newfoundland and Labrador, our renaissance isn't painted on cathedral ceilings, but it's built with hard hats and welding torches and cranes. It's measured in apprentices becoming journeypersons, in small businesses expanding and in families reunited. That's our renaissance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I proudly represent a district with some of the finest tradespeople in Canada, like ironworkers, electricians, welders and crane operators. For them, for their children, this agreement is about opportunity. Careers built here, not goodbyes at the airports.

This new agreement is expected to generate tens of billions of dollars in value for Newfoundland and Labrador. That revenue is the foundation for new jobs, stronger and safer communities, opportunity and renewal for our people.

When it comes to seniors, I've spoken with so many seniors in my district and they've asked a fair question, how does this help me? How does this agreement help me? The value of the agreement isn't just measured though in jobs today but in the strength it can bring to our province for decades to come.

Stronger revenues mean a stronger ability for future governments to invest in the services that seniors rely on: health care, home care, community supports. This new agreement is about creating a stronger financial future for our province, which means more capacity to invest in the services seniors rely on every day. Living in a province with a stronger economy, vibrant communities and the confidence that we can continue to invest in services and supports will allow every senior to age with dignity and independence.

When I speak about stronger public services, I'm talking about the things that matter most to seniors: shorter wait times and improved access to health care; stronger home care so seniors can stay in their homes longer; well-supported, long-term facilities; access to mental health supports and community-based programs that reduce isolation and loneliness, like recreation programs or transportation services that keep them connected. Those investments only happen if we have a

strong economy and strong provincial revenue.

Speaker, the question has been asked about is Quebec getting more? I will say, wholeheartedly, that that is not true. We do know that major projects only move forward when both sides see benefits. There has to be negotiation but if you examine this agreement with objectivity, it is irrefutable that Newfoundland and Labrador gains significantly more power, more value and more transmission access in this new agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: It's important to note and to discuss Canada's investment in this project. This matters because Newfoundland and Labrador isn't going at it alone. With the Government of Canada stepping in with billions in support, it sends a signal that this project is worth betting on.

For the people I represent, it's not just about financing; it's about confidence. When governments are prepared to invest at this level, apprentices get hired, contractors expand, workers have confidence that the jobs they're training for will be here for years to come. For generations, Newfoundland and Labrador has watched opportunity leave our shores. The Government of Canada is investing in bringing up opportunity here, and that's a vote in confidence in our people, our resources and our future.

It is important to also note, we finally have governments working together side by side, politics aside, the federal Liberal government and a provincial PC government. That is exactly what the people who elected us want to see. They want to see political parties working together for the good of the people, regardless of political stripe. They want to see their elected representatives govern by collaboration.

Speaker, I heard a lot about trust, whether we can trust our government institutions, whether we can trust the process. These are legitimate questions, but in a democracy where the rule of law is so important, we must also objectively examine the substance, the facts and the evidence before us. We have to ask the relevant questions of this new agreement. What are the financial benefits? What are the protections? What are the risks? What does the agreement deliver for our people?

Those questions have been answered and they have been answered by our experts who have come here. But we must ensure that our decisions are based on the evidence and the fact before us, especially in today's global climate where the rule of law is tested every day.

With this new agreement, Speaker, we will finally be masters of our own house. I absolutely believe that Newfoundland and Labrador will finally benefit from its own resources. To me, being masters of our house means making decisions that give us a strong future, and that is exactly what this new deal will do.

I proudly stand in support of this resolution.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

There are a lot of numbers in this agreement. There are megawatts, there are billions of dollars and there are projections stretching decades into the future, but before I get into any of that, I want to talk about something much simpler and that is trust. Because, ultimately, every number we have been given requires the people of our province to have confidence in the people presenting it. This government has given

people plenty of reasons to question that confidence.

They promised a referendum, not a vague commitment to consultation, not an information session as what we witnessed here this past week – a referendum. They told the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that they would have the final say on any agreement concerning Churchill Falls and Gull Island, but they changed their minds. They told us that there would be no rush. The Premier himself said there was no such thing as an arbitrary deadline. He said he would not be pushed, he would not be forced and he would not be rushed when it came to the resources of our province. Then, they changed their minds.

They demanded independent scrutiny when they were here in Opposition on this side of the House. They told the people of the province that openness and independent reviews were essential. Now that they are government, they are asking us to approve the final agreement without submitting that final agreement to the same kind of independent review they once demanded.

Speaker, people have every right to ask which version of this government are we supposed to believe, the one that made the promises on the campaign trail last fall or the one that broke them once they took office?

That brings me to something else that people in this province have every right to remember and that's Muskrat Falls, because this is not the first time a PC government has stood in this House and told the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to have confidence in a massive hydroelectric project. Some of the faces involved today are familiar, as we well know.

Jerome Kennedy was the minister of Natural Resources when Muskrat Falls was sanctioned. On November 21, 2012, he stood in this very Chamber and said,

“Muskrat Falls is a project that will pay for itself.” Those words are in *Hansard* forever, for anybody to look up. We all know what followed.

The cost of Muskrat Falls ultimately doubled in price from \$6.2 billion to roughly \$13.5 billion, and a LeBlanc inquiry. The financial consequences became so significant that our government had to develop a multi-billion-dollar rate mitigation plan with the federal government to prevent the full cost of Muskrat Falls from being passed on to the ratepayers through electricity bills to the people of this province.

Today, roughly \$500 million is spent every year to avoid our power rates from doubling. That history matters, not because Churchill Falls and Muskrat Falls are the same project, because they aren’t, but because history should teach governments humility. When they ask the public to accept enormous projects stretching decades into the future, it should teach us to ask questions, it should teach us to demand scrutiny and it should teach us never to dismiss concerns simply because the people in charge tell us that they have everything under control.

So imagine the concern when we see familiar faces to return to another enormous, consequential hydroelectric negotiation. Mr. Kennedy was appointed as a member of the government’s negotiating team after the Churchill River Review Committee report was released. It was an appointment that was never officially announced through a government news release.

Speaker, I don’t raise that to make this personal, I raise it because this PC government is asking us to trust the process. When a government asks for trust, people are entitled to know how the process works. Who is advising the Premier? Who is negotiating? Who is making the recommendations? Who has influence over the decisions? Who is calling the shots?

Most importantly, who is accountable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? Because accountability has been a recurring problem throughout this process.

The Premier appointed a Churchill River Review Committee. He initially indicated that its members would be made publicly available when the report was released – that did not happen as originally described. The members of that committee were not made available to the public to explain and defend their findings when the report was released.

The concerns go beyond that one committee. Our briefing identified serious questions about the independence and transparency of the government’s oversight structure. The Churchill River negotiations oversight committee was appointed by the Premier. It reports to the clerk, who reports to the Premier and its materials are confidential, hidden from this House and the people of this province.

If these committees and advisors are important enough to help shape decisions concerning the future of the Churchill River, then legitimate questions about their work should be answered; not simply behind closed doors, not within the Premier’s office and within the Cabinet, publicly, because the Churchill River does not belong to the Premier’s office. It belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and they are entitled to understand the decisions being made about it.

Speaker, we also have to look at what this government has said needed to change and compare that with what actually changed. The 2024 agreement contained market-based pricing projections for Churchill Falls. This agreement replaces that approach with a fixed-based price adjusted by CPI. The 2024 agreement contemplated a 2 per cent annual escalation in Gull Island revenues. That protection is not retained in this PC agreement. Now, some of the additional power being promised for Newfoundland

and Labrador depends on generation that does not yet exist and has not yet even been deemed feasible.

When government says, trust us, this is better, we are entitled to ask: Better how? Better for whom? What protections have we surrendered to get there? Those are not unreasonable questions. They are questions that we were elected to ask.

Speaker, after everything we have heard, I keep coming back to one question: Who is calling the shots because the people were promised a referendum, but we know that's not going to happen? They were told there was no deadline. Now, there is urgency. They were promised independent scrutiny. Now, the final agreement will not receive the kind of independent review this government once insisted was essential. People ask questions and too often are left looking for answers.

This week, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who dared to question and participate in meaningful discussions on this agreement were called do-nothings by the Minister of Energy and Mines. So what are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians supposed to conclude? If this government is confident in this agreement, then show that confidence; answer the questions; open the process; let the people who advise you explain their work, explain why the promise changed, explain why protections that were once important before are no longer there and explain why an agreement that will affect generations has suddenly become so urgent.

Speaker, Muskrat Falls taught this province an expensive lesson that we are still paying for. It taught us that confidence simply isn't evidence, that a projection is not a guarantee and government telling people not to worry is not a substitute for scrutiny. We should remember those lessons now because the decisions that we make in this House will not only belong to us, as many people before me have said, our children

will inherit them, our grandchildren, and long after everyone is gone from this Chamber, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will live with the consequences. They deserve answers before the decision is made.

I will say in all my time since elected in 2015, what I've witnessed this past week was the most anti-democratic process I have ever seen and witnessed and been part of here in this Assembly. I will not apologize for demanding answers. I also encourage the Members across the way, those in the backbench, those in the front bench, vote in good faith because your constituents are watching and you will answer to your constituents.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two former Cabinet ministers of this House: Mr. Paul Shelley and Ms. Kathy Goudie.

Thank you for joining us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I move that this House do now recess now for 10 minutes.

SPEAKER: This House will now recess for 10 minutes. We will return at 15:14 p.m.

Recess

SPEAKER (Dwyer): Order, please!

Are the House Leaders ready?

L. PARROTT: Yes.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. BUTT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

As we reach the end of this special sitting, I want to bring this debate back to the people I represent in the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate. The conversations I've had at home have been practical. People want to know whether this is a good deal. They want to know what it means for their electricity bills. They are concerned about the cost of living. Many have also told me they do not want the referendum and many have also told me they just need more information. Those are fair questions.

That is one reason why this sitting has been important. For three days, this House has been focused on this agreement. Members had the opportunity to question the negotiating team and other experts to hear different perspectives and to put details under a microscope, but after all the technical discussion, people still want to know what it means around the kitchen table. For my district, I think one of the biggest opportunities is jobs.

Lewisporte and Twillingate have a large number of rotational workers. We all know families whose lives are built around flights, long stretches away from home and weeks spent working in another province. Those workers are skilled. They are experienced. They have helped build projects across this country.

Imagine what that would mean if more of them could bring that experience home. That is where the power pillar of this agreement becomes very real.

More electricity available to Newfoundland and Labrador can support new mines, industrial projects, transmission infrastructure and economic development. Those projects require people. They require trades. They require contractors, suppliers, transportation and local services, and our region already has the foundation to go on.

In Lewisporte, DieTrac Technical Institute offers training in areas such as powerline technician, carpentry, welding, steamfitting and pipefitting, heavy duty equipment technicians, construction and electrical work – a shout-out to my trades family.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. BUTT: Those are not abstract skills when we talk about major projects. Those are exactly the kind of skills a growing province needs. We should be creating a pipeline from training to employment, from employment to a life here at home.

I want the young people in Lewisporte - Twillingate to see the opportunity in Newfoundland and Labrador before they even consider leaving. I want the rotational worker who has spent years travelling back and forth to be able to look at projects ahead and say, maybe, I can finally work closer to home. That is a powerful measure of whether economic development is working.

There is another side of this agreement, and that is value. People in my district are concerned about affordability. Electricity rates matter. Grocery bills matter. Fuel matters. Every household knows the pressure of the cost of living.

People expect government to use the value generated by our resources responsibly. They want it to strengthen health care. They want better roads. They want reliable public services. They want a province that can invest in communities without simply passing on more costs to families. That is why getting greater value from Churchill Falls matters.

For too long, the very name Churchill Falls has represented the opposite, enormous value created from Newfoundland and Labrador resources without Newfoundland and Labrador receiving the fair benefit it should have received.

This agreement gives us an opportunity to turn that page. More value for Newfoundland and Labrador, more power for Newfoundland and Labrador, more ability to move that power and use it to create opportunity, a stronger position to which to build our own economy.

In Lewisporte - Twillingate, we can see how that broader economic story can connect with what is already happening. The fishery and tourism remain two of our most important industries. At the same time, the recent Lewisporte wharf redevelopment creates an opportunity to strengthen the community's historic role as a gateway to the North.

There is a potential in ferry and pasture activity, regional transshipment logistics and transportation. When major development happens in Labrador and elsewhere in the province, communities such as Lewisporte should be thinking about how we can participate in the supply chain, how businesses can benefit and how our workers can connect to those opportunities. That is how major agreements become a provincial opportunity, rather than a project that exists only a map.

Deputy Speaker, I also understand why people want information. This is, without a doubt, a large and complex agreement. Nobody should expect to support something simply because the government tells them to. That is why questions matter. It is why public engagement matters. It is why this Legislature has spent these days examining the details.

At some point, though, elected Members have to make a decision. I have listened to the people in my district. I have considered information before this House and I believe this agreement creates an opportunity that Newfoundland and Labrador should seize.

I support it because I want our resources to deliver great value to our people. I support it because more power can unlock new

projects and new industries. I support it because I want the revenue generated for our resources to help strengthen health care, roads and the services our communities depend on. Because I support what I think the next generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to have, something generations before them often did not have, the choice to build their careers at home.

If we get this story right, the story of Churchill Falls can become a story about what Newfoundland and Labrador hasn't lost. It can become a story about what we've learned, what we have changed and what we will build next.

Deputy Speaker, for the people of Lewisporte - Twillingate and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I believe, with this new and better deal, the next chapter will bring practical benefits that everyone can see: jobs, training, stronger communities, a new reason for people to stay and come home. That is why I support this resolution.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Over the course of this information session, we've heard a great deal about the size and significance of this tentative agreement. There's no question about its significance. What we decide here will have far-reaching effects, past this current government, far beyond the current Members of this House of Assembly and far beyond the next election. This is a multi-generational agreement that will impact my children and their children and the children after them. I've been thinking about this over the course

of the week and what that impact will have on them.

There are benefits contained in this agreement. Where something is positive for Newfoundland and Labrador, we should be prepared to say so, but the test is not simply whether there are some benefits. The question is whether this agreement, taken as a whole, adequately protects Newfoundland and Labrador for the next 50 years.

Before coming into this House, I held a town hall session to hear directly from people I represent. Some of the concerns I'm raising today and throughout this week came directly from those discussions. One of the biggest was the length of the term of this agreement, 50 years. People understand that major energy projects require long-term agreements, but what they want to know is what protections do we have if the world changes; because, if Churchill Falls has taught us anything it is that the world can change dramatically over the lifetime of an agreement.

My first and most important concern is market-based pricing. This is not a small technical detail; this goes to the very heart of what Newfoundland and Labrador learned from 1969. The problem with the original Churchill Falls contract was not simply the price on the day the agreement was signed, it is what happened to that price over time. The value of that power changed, the market changed, the world changed, but Newfoundland and Labrador's ability to share in that increased value did not change. That is why market-based pricing matters so much.

The 2024 MOU contained mechanisms intended to connect what Newfoundland and Labrador received from Churchill Falls power to market value, replacement costs and fairness. The 2026 agreement moves away from that approach in choosing a fixed base price adjusted annually by the consumer price index. In a word, a cap.

Deputy Speaker, inflation is not the same thing as market value. People have said that here today. CPI does not tell what the electricity is worth. Over a 50-year agreement, why would we give up a mechanism designed to protect us against precisely the uncertainty, just because it is difficult?

That brings me back to the concern that I heard at my town hall session about the 50-year term. The 2024 MOU included strategic off-ramps in 2051 and 2061 that provided opportunities to respond to changing market conditions. That flexibility mattered to the people of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville and to me. I do not see off-ramps in the agreement before us today. Nobody in this House of Assembly knows what electric markets, technology or demands will look like in 2051, or what a megawatt of firm renewable power will be worth. That uncertainty is not an argument for giving away flexibility, it is the argument for protecting it.

Deputy Speaker, I understand why Quebec would prefer the certainty of a fixed-price arrangement and why even a separatist party in Quebec is now in favour of this new agreement. As they say in hockey, the ice is tilted in their direction. If the market value for electricity grows faster than CPI over the life of the agreement, Quebec gets the benefit from that growth, not us.

I understand why that would be attractive to Quebec, but my responsibility is to ask questions like whether the PC deal protects Newfoundland and Labrador's interests. The answer to that is no. For me, the loss of market-based pricing alone is enough that I cannot support this agreement. My second concern follows along with that directly.

The 2024 agreement contemplated pricing that was projected to produce a 2 per cent annual escalation clause in the Gull Island revenues. That escalator is no longer there. Again, this cannot be about what the numbers look like today. The people sitting

in the House of Assembly decades from now should not be asking why the people sitting here today failed to protect the future value of this resource.

Speaker, there are benefits in this agreement, and I acknowledge them, but we also need to be clear about what the agreement actually guarantees. More power for Newfoundland is obviously good – obviously – but we need to distinguish between additional power that is firm and guaranteed, additional generation made possible by advancements in engineering and turbine technology and the power associated with projects that don't even exist yet.

The figures provided to us say Newfoundland and Labrador's allocation increase from 1,090 megawatts to 2,750 megawatts, but 400 of those megawatts of the increase are associated with a project that has not even passed its feasibility stage. That distinction matters; potential power is not that same as guaranteed power.

My final concern is why are we rushing towards the conclusion when important questions remain unanswered? The Premier told the people of this province he's under no deadline. He said he would not be pushed. He would not be forced. He would not be rushed. Yet, here we are.

Even some of the public figures from Hydro-Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro do not appear to align. I'm not going to pretend to know the explanation when we have not been given one, but this is precisely the point. When figures do not reconcile, we should get the answers before making a decision that will last generations. There should be no artificial urgency around getting those answers. The Premier himself told the people of this province again and again until he changed his mind, which we have seen far too often lately.

Deputy Speaker, I come back to where I started. There are things in this agreement that can benefit Newfoundland and Labrador. Why did we give up market-based pricing and flexibility contemplated in the 2024 agreement? Why did we lose the Gull Island escalator clause? What protections do we have for 20 or 30 years from now if the world doesn't look like what we project it today?

These questions are what people in my district are asking. They're reasonable questions because 50 years from now, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will not care very much about who won the political argument in this Chamber in 2026 but they will care about the agreement that we leave behind.

Speaker, when I consider the loss of market-based pricing, the loss of the flexibility to respond to market conditions, the loss of Gull Island escalator and the uncertainty surrounding power being promised, the questions remaining unanswered, I do wish the government had a better deal with market-based pricing to protect our future generations, for sure.

Like many of my colleagues in this House of Assembly, I have two children, two little girls, six and five years old. Children give us a perspective on the future. All Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want the next generation to be better than the previous one.

I'm sure that all Members received messages from hundreds of people because we're hearing it from this side as well. Some may say that the people with diverging views from ours or yours are do-nothings, but I can honestly say that's not the viewpoint that I have on this side or any of my colleagues on this side hold and I'm sure some on the other.

I will promise to my constituents that I will not be one of those say-anythings to get elected. I will not walk away from my

responsibilities. I will be standing in my place and voting on the principle that Newfoundland and Labrador needs to make sure that we can participate in any upside that market-based pricing provides, finally giving the people of this province what they have been waiting for and asking for since 1969.

Promises matter. Integrity matters. Facts matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being; Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation; Poverty Reduction; and Persons with Disabilities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker.

After days of listening to every expert sit in this House of Assembly and tell Newfoundlanders and Labradorians this is a great deal, I come back to a very simple question. What does this agreement mean for the people we represent?

For me, the answer starts with work. I know the value of a hard day's work. I know what it means to put on a pair of work boots in the morning, earn your paycheque, provide for your family and take pride in what you've helped build.

For generations, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have done exactly that. Too often they have had to do it somewhere else across this country. We've had to watch our skilled workers leave to go to Alberta, Ontario, right across Canada. We have watched families organize their lives around rotational schedules because the opportunity just was not there at home and many people followed them across this country.

This agreement gives us an opportunity to change that story. It is built around the straightforward principle. Newfoundland and Labrador must be the primary beneficiary of its own resources. That means more value for our people, more power for our province, greater access to transmission and markets and the opportunity to turn that power into new economic activity right here at home.

More power is not an abstract concept. Power means the ability to develop. It means opportunities for mining. It means supporting our oil and gas industry. It means construction and industrial development. It means creating the conditions for projects that employ electricians, heavy equipment operators, welders, pipefitters, carpenters, engineers and countless others throughout this beautiful province. Then those projects move. The benefits move right through our communities. They support local businesses. They create demand for housing. They create careers for young people. They generate revenue that helps government provide services people expect.

That matters enormously in my district. Health care is one of the main issues I hear about most. Our community serves as the hub for people from surrounding rural areas. They need reliable health care infrastructure. They need doctors, nurses and many other health care professionals. They need a system that can recruit people, retain them and give them the tools and facilities they need to do their jobs so they can take care of the rest of us. Those things require long-term financial capacity. So do our roads, our schools and affordable housing.

This agreement is not a magic wand by no means, and we should never pretend that it is, but it gives Newfoundland and Labrador a stronger foundation from which to tackle those challenges head on. It creates the potential for revenue, new investment and greater financial stability. It gives us an opportunity to deal with our debt we carry,

while still building the province that we want our children to inherit. The generational piece matters to me because of my sons Declan and Xander. The decisions we make in the House are not only about the next election, the next budget or the next year. On a file of this magnitude, we have to think about the next generation and the next generation after that.

The original Churchill Falls story taught this province a hard lesson about what happens when the long-term value of our resources does not flow fairly to the people. We cannot rewrite history, but we can decide what we do with the opportunity in front of us now, to make new history.

Over the course of this sitting, Members have had extraordinary opportunities to ask questions. We've heard directly from the people involved in the negotiations and from independent financial, commercial and technical expertise, the best in the country, some of the best in the world.

We have been able to test the agreement, challenge assumptions and put concerns on the record. That is what this legislature should do. At the end of that process, I believe the pillars remain strong: more value, more power, more access and more opportunity to Newfoundland and Labrador for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

For me, the test is whether this can help create a province a young person does not have to leave to find the future. The future is right here. I want our young people to train here and work here. I want someone entering the trades to see major projects on the horizon and know there is a career waiting for them right here at home.

I want workers who have spent years flying west to have real opportunity to bring their skills back to Newfoundland and Labrador. And we have the best skilled tradespeople in the world. I want future generations to be able to put on their work boots here in the morning and keep those work boots right

here on the ground in Newfoundland and Labrador where they belong.

Mr. Speaker, I know trades workers in my district and across the province who cannot wait for these opportunities and the chance to come home. I speak to them every day. I was one of them. I know the difference these jobs will make for the thousands of skilled trades workers that are currently unemployed. Including in districts like my colleague opposite in Burin - Grand Bank. Tons of those people have reached out to me as well. For that reason alone, he should stand with us and support this new, better deal for those that are looking for a better future.

That is the future I see in this agreement. It is a future where there is more control over our energy, more ability to develop our resources, more revenue to strengthen the services our families depend on and more opportunity for the people of this province.

Speaker, we have spent four days examining the agreement. Now we have a decision to make. I will support this resolution because I believe Newfoundland and Labrador should receive more from what belongs to Newfoundland and Labrador. I will support it because I believe our resources should build our communities, strengthen our public service and create jobs for our people right here.

I will support it because I believe that the agreement will provide more value, more power and give the next generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorian a stronger chance to build a prosperous life right here at home where they can raise their families.

Speaker, I have worked across this country and I've also worked internationally. We have had some great resources in this province, but contrary to popular belief, it is not our hydro. It is not our minerals. It is not our oil and gas. It's not even our fisheries and forestry. It is our people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Our people, like my friend David Thomlyn, who was forced to leave his family and go to work down in South America many years ago. Down there, David got very sick. He got very, very sick, 10,000 miles away from home, all alone because he had been forced to go away for work.

Well, three flights later and about a day later, he came back home to find out he was in kidney failure. After dialysis for a couple of years, I'm so happy to announce today that this is the week of his two-year anniversary for his new kidney, and he's happy and healthier than ever.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Mr. Speaker, David Thomlyn represents so many other people that leave this province to go away for work. He should have never had to be forced to leave. A hard-working tradesperson like that with a family right here in St. John's should have been able to stay right here in Newfoundland and Labrador to work. That's why I'm here today to speak out on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that had to go away or will have to go away.

If you stand today and vote against this deal, it's a vote to continue to endorse the 1969 deal. History will remember this, Mr. Speaker. History will remember that the 1969 Liberals locked us into this deal but the 2026 Liberals will keep us locked into this deal today.

I say we move on; we move forward. We move forward for those Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are in school right now wondering what they are going to do for their future. We have a plan. We will keep you working.

Mr. Speaker, I say to Newfoundland and Labrador today, let's keep our finest resource right here at home – our people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I have been elected five times as the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair and it is always a deep honour to represent the people of my district. It's a privilege every time I stand in this House, but at moments like this you also feel the weight.

When I look back over my experience during my 13 years here sitting on both sides of the Chamber, sitting where you sat, conversations from people's kitchen table and bringing them to the decision-making level at the Cabinet table, my history and career here has been very varied. But, Speaker, I never forget and never will forget where I came from.

I am the proud oldest granddaughter of trapper Ben Powell, a man who raised me with a solid work ethic, solid values and to always stand for what is right, even at times when that means standing alone.

Labrador is where generations of my family have toiled to make a living; making a difference for their families, their communities and the region. From my earliest memories, I had an understanding of the effort that it took to make a living in a harsh climate, in a place where they didn't have the services that so many took for granted. Labrador is just not a place on a map for me, Speaker, it is my home.

In August, the prime minister painted a picture that spoke of the scale of what Labrador hydro and wind power represent when he said it would be enough electricity to power Canada's three largest cities: Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. It is an impressive nation-building project from a Labrador resource, a world-class asset that

sits in our backyard. People got excited. But, Speaker, the people that I represent, who should be standing to gain the most, generally, history has proven, lose the most.

Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, the people that sent me back to this House in October for the fifth time, the picture is very different there. There are power-generating plants that serve 18 communities. They all run on diesel – two currently on mobile units for the past seven years.

When Muskrat Falls was developed a decade ago, folks in my district were hopeful that they would be connected to hydro, that they would enjoy the rates that were available to people in Labrador West and Upper Lake Melville, who were connected to the Churchill Falls grid. Yet, the power lines bypassed all those communities. None of the power was made available to promote mine developments in Western Labrador and not one kilowatt came back to Labrador. This entire power resource, born on Labrador's Churchill River, was transmitted entirely to support the Island's power needs and for export to Nova Scotia.

Speaker, I have heard loud and clear over the last number of weeks from the people from Labrador that, this time, any new development, their needs must come first. It's been very clear to me and I know it's been clear to my colleague from Lake Melville.

We have had our differences in this House of Assembly, Speaker, but one thing that we are united strongly on is that Labradorians and the people we represent will always come first.

Labrador is not a buffet table where governments and companies come and take what they want without leaving something behind. We must ask: What does this DCIA we've been hearing about this week – I can't call it a debate – what does it provide for Labrador? I ask myself: What

does it provide for Cartwright-L'Anse au Clair? What will I point to in 10 years' time? What will my people that I work for say they benefited from? I ask my colleague for Torngat Mountains: What is in this agreement for the people of your district, who are also on generators? What will she point to 10 years from now?

Speaker, the Premier did not go to the place that is making this project possible, the place where the transmission lines carrying the power bypass community after community on its way to the Island. What did he do? He set up a team, three Conservative MHAs, and called it Team Labrador. They were already playing shorthanded before we got to the beginning of the discussion.

If the Premier was committed to ensuring that all of Labrador would benefit from this project, he would have headed up the team himself. He would have put key ministries in charge as a part of his group. The province's top officials would have ensured there was a plan that would have been acted upon. Instead, he did not even listen to a Labradorian in his own caucus, and that confirmed solidly for me and the people I represent, that Labrador will continue to remain an afterthought with this PC government.

Labrador does not need a public relations exercise posing as consultation. We don't want any more of someone just checking a box. We want commitment and we need it from the top.

When the Premier addressed the House on Monday, he didn't talk of a plan for coastal Labrador to connect communities to hydro power to replace environmentally damaging diesel with clean power. He didn't say we will use 60 megawatts of the extra 2,750 megawatts to power coastal communities and replace the gas turbine in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Just 2 per cent – the power I am talking about is 2 per cent of the extra.

It is simply incredible that we can talk about energizing data centers, but we don't have a vision and a determination to say we will use 2 per cent of this new power to connect the coast to hydro power.

Speaker, this is out-of-sight, out-of-mind element to his way of thinking, the view that what does it matter, there is only a few thousand people in coastal Labrador? It is wrong, Speaker, and it is why we have a history of past grievances.

A PC government before my time – I was a little girl, maybe – they tried this approach in the mid-70s. The PC government of the day did not want to build a transmission line to connect Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Churchill Falls power. It was key Members of Frank Moores Cabinet that said it was too expensive. The people in whose front yard where the power was generated would have to wait.

Do you know what happened, Speaker? The people stood up. The leaders stood up and the people stood behind them. Local opinion and pressure prevailed and the transmission line was built. I will tell you, the people are ready to stand up again. We got nothing from the first iteration of Churchill Falls. One group got something from the second iteration.

This is our time, if a project is to go ahead. We will no longer accept living in the shadows, Speaker. People in Labrador want a deal that will address their concerns and their needs, and it has to be more than jobs. It turns my stomach day after day in this House, people talking about how we're going to get jobs. It's like throwing a dog a bone. We're talking about over \$200 billion and jobs is enough? No, Speaker, it's not enough.

It's obvious jobs and careers are important, but folks from the Island and elsewhere will go back to their communities and the land and the environment will look the same. I do not see a deal that creates lasting benefits

for people in Labrador; one where people can look back generations from now and see something from the massive destruction that will come from their lands and say this is what we gained, and it was worth it. I don't see that. I do not see an infrastructure plan.

Speaker, my view hasn't changed, in case someone's getting up after to say I had a different tune in January '25. I brought *Hansard*; I'm happy to table it with my remarks.

Tonight we will vote and, each of you in this House, I ask, how do you want to be remembered? In the way that you voted for a 50-year deal with no off-ramps, with no fairness clause, with no market-based pricing. The price goes up, Quebec gains, we stay the same.

We've lost control of Gull Island. I see a price for Quebec that is about half of what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will pay. I see a better deal for Quebec with cheaper rates, more power and more money. I see a federal government that got involved because they needed to change the election results, Speaker. That is why they threw a little money this way and most went there.

Premier, you have a long list of broken promises in a short time, but you can make a difference. It's not too late. We've debated MOU 1. We've debated an MOU two. There can be an MOU three. Go back, Premier, give us 12 more months. Why is this so weighty, Speaker? The little girl who started kindergarten last week will be a grandmother and we will be long gone by the time this is over. That is why the decision here tonight is so, so important.

I'll end with an email I just received from a member in Labrador, not in my district: Tonight your vote belongs to the people who sent you to the House. Demand independent scrutiny. Demand a referendum. Newfoundland and Labrador

will remember who stood up when it matters most.

Speaker, nobody in this House, not one Member, when you're asked about this in years to come, will say I didn't fully understand what I voted for. That will not give you an out. In the words of Martin Luther King, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. BARBOUR: Speaker, after examining this agreement, I want to begin my closing remarks with the principle that guides me, both as MHA of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows and the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change: Development and environmental responsibility can work together. It is important to find a balance and we should.

We should want to develop our natural resources and create the revenue needed to strengthen health care, education, infrastructure and services people depend on, but we should also insist that development proceed responsibly.

I believe the agreement before this House gives Newfoundland and Labrador an incredible opportunity to achieve all of these things. For more than half a century, Churchill Falls has represented something very different to the people of this province; it has represented a resource developed here while most of the benefit flowed elsewhere. We should not dwell on this past. We should learn from it. I have faith in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this agreement provides Newfoundland and Labrador with something we have

sought for generations: more value, more power and more transmission.

More value means Newfoundland and Labrador receives greater benefits from the resources that belong to its people. More power means we have a greater ability to decide how our electricity is used. More transmission means greater ability to reach markets beyond our borders. That gives Newfoundland and Labrador choices. Having choices is really important because we are not simply making a decision for Newfoundland and Labrador in 2026, we are creating choices for Newfoundland and Labrador in 2036, 2046 and beyond. As the Environment Minister, I understand the importance of assessing major projects and ensuring these proceed responsibly.

Speaker, 20 years ago I started my career with the Government of Canada working with Indigenous affairs and northern development Canada working on major projects across the Arctic. This included mines, so this is a full circle for me. I heard the debate over the last few days. As these things were talked about, there were important things asked and answered. Just recently, the Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada announced a new co-operation agreement on Environmental and Impact Assessment. It is straightforward, "one project, one review," and the objective is to create greater certainty and establish a more effective assessment process, but let me be equally clear about what this does not mean.

Efficiency does not mean lowering environmental standards. It does not mean avoiding assessment. It means governments working together so companies, communities and Indigenous peoples have a clear, more predictable process. That is responsible development and I believe that is exactly the approach Newfoundland and Labrador should take and is taking as we consider the opportunities ahead.

Speaker, there is another reason I believe this agreement matters. The Churchill River is a renewable energy resource. As the world seeks more clean, reliable electricity, Newfoundland and Labrador has something increasingly valuable, but having a resource is not enough. We have to be able to use it and we have to ensure that it develops products and lasting benefits for our people.

The agreement before us gives Newfoundland and Labrador more power and greater access to transmission than the old MOU. It also gives the province the choice to retain power for our own economic development or gain value by selling it. Think about that and what that means.

I want the next generation to inherit more than just electricity; I want them to inherit options. The option to use clean power and to develop industries, we cannot even yet imagine; the option to attract investment and create employment; the option to sell power into valuable markets; and the option to use greater provincial revenues to strengthen the communities in which we live.

I want them to inherit an environment that was treated responsibly while we pursued those opportunities. We must remember we are one with the environment. Our connection as humans and as part of the food chain, our environment is valuable beyond measure. I know this, growing up connected very closely with our land. We must strike a balance with protecting our environment for now and for the future, while also developing our economy hand in hand, all of us together.

Speaker, as the MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, I know first-hand the challenges that many rural communities have faced over the last several decades. Since the early 1990s, much of the Great Northern Peninsula has experienced population decline as too many people have had to leave home to find work and opportunities elsewhere.

That is why this agreement matters. It is not just about Churchill Falls; it's about creating the conditions of economic growth across Newfoundland and Labrador, including the rural regions like the Great Northern Peninsula. Our district serves as an important gateway to Labrador. The St. Barbe ferry provides a transportation link between the Island and Labrador, and the St. Anthony Airport provides a vital air connection into Labrador as well.

As development opportunities grow in Labrador and across the province, those connections become even more important. This agreement has the potential to bring new jobs, new investment and new economic activity. More people working means more people travelling, more demand on services and greater opportunities for businesses throughout our region. It creates a possibility for stronger transportation links, expanded ferry and air services and renewed confidence in communities that have been waiting too long for growth. We could do all this while protecting our responsibility to the environment and for future generations.

Speaker, in addition to being the MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows and a minister, I have another role and that is as a mom. Being a mother has given me a very personal perspective on this agreement. Like any parent, I want my daughter to have a chance to build her life here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. BARBOUR: I see the Churchill Falls agreement as an important step forward in creating that future. That is why I support this agreement. I support this agreement for a bright future for our children and generations to come, and that is why I believe Newfoundland and Labrador should move forward with this new, better deal.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker.

There's an old expression, and it's wishing your cake was dough. Essentially, it means that after the cake is baked, you wish you had your time back to put in some different ingredients. I can't help but think about that expression when I think about and see and hear the public's sentiment towards this current government.

I came here with an open mind this week, this in spite of the restrictions on the format, dictated by the Conservative government, and in spite of our inability as democratically elected representatives to ask the elected accountable people who are in charge the questions that need to be asked. Like everybody here, I truly want what's best for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want the extra money for our coffers. I want the extra jobs and the spinoff industries that will come with this. I want it as much as they do for my children and my grandchildren. It's all very attractive, but we need to make sure that what we're signing on to is in the long-term best interest of everybody, not just in this House today, politically or whatever, but for the long term.

Over the last three days, we've heard from people who have a wide variety of levels of expertise and experience, and what I heard did answer some of my questions. I'm grateful for that, because I had a lot of unanswered questions, but there are still many more unanswered. It also raised concerns for me and raised many red flags. Now, some people suggest that 2024 and 2026 agreements are essentially the same. The numbers are bigger now, and that is because the federal government has infused a lot of money, but the disparity

between what Quebec will get for this deal and what Newfoundland and Labrador will get, well that gap has also widened.

Sure, there's more power on top of what we've already got, but Quebec is getting five times what we are now getting in extra power. And while I agree there are similarities, there are two fundamental differences that stand out to me: the removal of market-based pricing for Churchill Falls and the removal of the escalator clause for Gull Island. We will return to that in a moment.

But let's look at what I heard that concerned me. The head of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Jennifer Williams, was here this week; she was also here two years ago when she was still the president. At that time, she said in this House of Assembly, multiple times, that the 2024 deal was the best we could have achieved. She said that; check *Hansard*.

She is now saying the same thing about the 2026 agreement. It is confusing because in 2024, when I was in government and part of Cabinet, she told us that was the best deal we would ever get. She never once expressed any concerns to me about it in all the questions I asked her. That concerns me. She was quite excited about it, as a matter of fact.

When J.P. Morgan was here two years ago, at no point did they express any concerns in this Legislature about the cost structuring that was in place for the 2024 MOU. I personally asked J.P. Morgan representatives at that time if this was a good deal for Newfoundland and Labrador and they said yes. Yet when different people from the same company came here this week and were asked about it, they expressed concerns about the 2024 structure.

I wonder why they didn't bring that up in January of 2025 in this House. That is very concerning to me because that was the

outside independent view that we were looking for. We find out two years later that they actually did have concerns.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, trust is a huge part of this. As I said then, it was a politician who signed off on Churchill Falls in 1969, a politician who signed off on Muskrat Falls just about a dozen or so years ago and a politician, the current Premier, who will sign off on this deal. He has the final say.

So let's look back on what's transpired over the last 10 years or so. Back in May we found out that the Premier had secretly hired Jerome Kennedy four months earlier. The Premier tried to pass it off by saying they hire people all the time. Again, showing a complete lack of transparency not informing the public that one of the chief negotiators had been hired – unbelievable. Mr. Kennedy was here this week; he's the former Natural Resources minister who actually signed off on Muskrat Falls and said, completely incorrectly as we know all too well, that it will pay for itself.

Muskrat Falls is not paying for itself. The project actually cost us more than \$500 million a year, every year. And that money is just to keep our electricity bills from doubling because it seems the Conservative government of the day did not make it clear to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that they, the ratepayers, were on the hook for the irresponsible decision.

It is all because Danny Williams at the time, the former premier, wanted to go it alone. He wanted to avoid Quebec.

By the way, the Conservatives talk about the \$3.5 billion that the federal government are infusing into this current project as though the federal government has never invested any money in Newfoundland and Labrador. Let me remind them, and everybody at home, that it was the former Liberal government just a couple of years ago that had to negotiate a \$5.2-billion rate

mitigation deal to keep our electricity bills from doubling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

F. HUTTON: Mr. Kennedy said he made that decision about Muskrat based on the information before him at the time. That is how we are going to make our decisions here today.

The current Conservative Premier promised a referendum. He broke that promise and, by extension, so did each and every Member across the aisle who campaigned on that pillar, on that platform. It's in their blue book. It is in their mandate, if they are a Cabinet minister. They broke that promise to their constituents and the people will remember.

The Premier said, very clearly, that people would get their final say on any deal with Quebec. The promise has been broken, a breach of the public trust, and the Premier has essentially dismissed their concerns saying that he understands some people are upset. I'm not sure what his political advisors are telling him, including one that is being paid from MCP, but I can tell you, they are not happy and they will remember. All that is another strike against the Premier's credibility and accountability.

In place of the referendum, he promised a debate. That did not happen. God forbid you criticize anything you do or you will be called a do-nothing and get chastised by the Energy Minister.

L. PARROTT: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

F. HUTTON: Just as their ministers have chastised anyone who dares to question them or raise a concern.

Mr. Speaker, to further erode our trust in this process, since the day after their agreement was announced, we tried to get the graph that shows what happens with Gull Island. We asked at the initial briefing. We asked at the second briefing. We asked another time. We finally got it 7 on Tuesday night, after J.P. Morgan and after Power Advisory had left.

The reason was that the current government did not want people to see it, that the price goes down. We are actually going to be getting less money in 2077. That's not being transparent, Mr. Speaker. It's being secretive. They did not want the people to see it.

We also learned this week that it was actually the negotiating committee who recommended people for the Oversight Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

F. HUTTON: All those connections to Muskrat Falls, all this secrecy.

Don't forget that the Premier promised that we would be able to hear from and question members of the Independent Review Committee. He made that promise. I was in the lobby when he said it. A few days later –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: I remind Members of the House that if you have any conversations, I'd like you to take them outside. As the Speaker has already noted, this is a very important discussion in the House today. Everybody deserves their 10 minutes and I'm going to offer that to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island equally as everybody else has gotten today. So I would ask if anybody has any sidebar conversations that you take them outside of the House.

Thank you.

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's unfortunate that you've had to do that several times today.

Don't forget the current Premier promised that we'd be able to hear from those Independent Review Committee members. We never heard from them. We're never going to hear from them. He broke that promise as well.

I've got stacks of emails here from people that I wanted to read, and I'll read one. It's from Tom Strickland in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, people who contacted me about this: I find it disappointing that the Churchill Falls project may proceed without most Newfoundlanders knowing what it's really all about and what this deal entails. I personally would like to see an independent commission. I could read many more. Where is our referendum that you promised, Premier?

Broken promise after broken promise, lack of transparency, no independent review, conflicting testimony from witnesses who appeared at both sessions, and a take-our-word-for-it-or-else attitude from the Premier and his Energy Minister and others. A complete 180 from everything they said before winning the election a year ago. It has all raised too many red flags for me.

One Member opposite said today if we vote against this, we're keeping us in 1969. I'm not voting against it to keep us in 1969. I'm voting against it for making the same mistake. I'd rather be remembered for that than for making a quick political decision and not doing my job, which is what they did the last time by not voting. I won't be a do-nothing, to use the Minister of Energy's words.

Unlike the minister and the Premier and some Members opposite who walked out the last time we voted, I will stay and vote tonight. My voice for Conception Bay East -

Bell Island will be heard loud and clear. I'm voting against this resolution because I simply cannot trust the Premier. He is not keeping his word. He has a long list of broken promises, including this one on Churchill Falls. It's too important, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I stand concurrently on a point of order and a point of privilege, article 49. As the Member just spoke, two times he insinuated that I called him a do-nothing. As a matter of fact, he went on to call myself and the Premier do-nothings, when he said I will not be a do-nothing unlike the Premier and the minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker ruled a while back, on June 2, I believe, in *Hansard*, based on a point of privilege that the leader of the Liberal Party put up that we could not manipulate ads on our own political pages, which is exactly which the Leader approved, when they put up an ad that misled the public about something I said in this House. I'm not looking for an apology; I'm looking for punishment.

It's unbelievable that they would stand in this House and make accusations like that. I've received death threats, I've received threats against my children and they think it's funny. The Leader of the Opposition came in here and cried one day because his family, his children seen a picture of him, and he made accusations against us.

If the Member over there wants to stand and say that I called him a do-nothing, or call me a do-nothing, I suggest he stands and apologizes and corrects the record. They

take it off their webpage and they stop with the games that they've been playing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I'll just respond to that. We've almost gotten through this day. It is a very, very important day. Clearly, they're feeling the pressure because the province is a little bit bottom up right now with this decision and the 50-year decision that is going to be voted on.

But, Speaker, we don't need to debate on this floor what someone said or did because *Hansard* clearly shows what is there. I watched the CBC story that night when I got home, so I don't think there's any point of order here. I don't think there's anything to be gained by going back and forth with history, Speaker. It's just not appropriate today. It's disrupting the important time that we have here.

SPEAKER: I will take the point of point of order and point of privilege under advisement. I will discuss it with our Table Officers and I will come back with a ruling.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services; Mental Health and Addictions; and the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

I have the distinct honour to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis as their Progressive Conservative Member and I'm proud to stand today and represent my constituents during this important special sitting of the House of Assembly.

As a Member of this House of Assembly, I represent a district with many residents who work in the skilled trades. Too often many of those workers have to travel outside the province to find employment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

That is the very last time I'm going to say that today – the very last. I'm going to name people. The next time I hear a sidebar conversation in this House – I think it's very disrespectful and it's from people who have already spoke and had their 10 minutes and I protected them for their 10 minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) one side.

SPEAKER: I'm talking to everybody. I looked over there first. If you're going to challenge the Chair, let me know ahead of time.

This is unbelievable. This a very important debate and I don't think people are understanding the gravity of it. This could change the course of history for years to come. So I ask that if you expect respect, then you offer it.

I call on the Minister of Health and Community Services; Mental Health and Addictions; and the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services to continue.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Too often, many workers in our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador have to travel outside of our province to find employment. I think that this is a story that every Member of this House knows. I know it; I've lived it. My late father, my brother Raymond and my son Zachary, all had to travel outside the province at some point during their working career in order to find employment.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is our home, and I would much rather see our family, our friends and the people of this province travelling within it to build their careers and their families. This is a new and better deal that will provide us the opportunity to break that cycle, and I firmly believe that. It represents more jobs, more economic growth and more opportunity for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It will certainly bring in billions of dollars in investment, generate thousands of jobs and create opportunities for businesses and workers right across our province. When the prime minister was here for the announcement, he described this \$70-billion megaproject as the largest green energy project in North American history. Its impact on our workforce will certainly be felt for generations. Young apprentices may begin their careers on this project and spend their entire working lives helping to see it through.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be able to build a life and a future around the opportunities that this particular development creates. It has been said here many times today we have many skilled and capable workers who are ready to contribute when this construction begins. I've spoken to many people in my district who are excited about this new work that's coming here.

At the same time, we must realize and continue to encourage more of our young people to enter the skilled trades and ensure our education and training programs are equipped to meet that demand. We have had those conversations, and I know that those are ongoing to support those young apprentices.

Through this agreement, we have the opportunity to build their futures right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, the opportunities before us certainly extend far beyond employment and economic growth. They represent hope for the future.

They represent hope for Newfoundland and Labrador – people in Labrador and on the Island of Newfoundland. They represent hope for our children and our grandchildren, as has been said many times here today. The opportunities represent confidence that future generations will have every reason to build their lives here at home.

MHAs here today have spoken about their family members. My colleague from Conception Bay East - Bell Island spoke about his grandchild. My colleague, the Minister of Environment, spoke about her daughter. We've all spoken about our family members. I'm very proud, as a grandfather, to speak of my granddaughter Bobbi, named after my late father.

She will celebrate her first birthday in a couple in a couple of weeks. To know that this has a huge impact on her, as a politician, as a father and a grandfather, I will do everything to support her and to all people of this province while supporting this deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is certainly tremendous value in what that confidence means for our province. For far too long, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have felt that they needed to leave home to pursue any opportunity for employment.

I, like many others, watched my child having to leave to go to another province to find work. Communities have worried about declining populations and uncertain futures. We've heard that many times in this House of Assembly since I came here in 2021.

Agreements like this will certainly help change that conversation going forward. They send a message that Newfoundland and Labrador is a place where people can build careers, raise families, start businesses and invest in their communities. They give employers greater confidence to

grow. They encourage young people to see a future here at home and they create opportunities that reach well beyond the construction site itself.

That kind of confidence is difficult to measure, but it is one of the most important foundations of a strong and prosperous province.

There is another important reason why I support this resolution. As the Minister of Health and Community Services, I know that a stronger economy certainly gives government greater capacity to invest in public services that people depend on each and every day. Additional revenues generated from this agreement will help support stronger health care across all corners of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, at some point during their time in this House, each Member of this House of Assembly has spoken about the issues that their constituents face in health care. It was said today by our colleague from Burgeo - La Poile. This agreement will certainly address those issues going forward. As the Minister of Health and Community Services, being responsible to all people of this province, I'm excited as to what this agreement can certainly do to help support people as we move forward.

It's no secret that we must continue supporting new medical equipment, facilities and highly skilled professionals who provide care to our residents. It is crucial that we retain and recruit more doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, health care professionals and mental health care professionals. We need to continue with our efforts to improve community care and reduce the pressures on acute-care facilities. All of these priorities require resources, and the best way to generate those resources, Mr. Speaker, is through a growing and successful economy. Simply put, we need to grow our way to a stronger fiscal position.

At the same time, we have to recognize that projects of this scale require careful planning and preparation. As we prepare for that development, we have an opportunity to proactively work with all communities and all stakeholders in Labrador to ensure that the Big Land is properly prepared for what comes next. That is a priority, Mr. Speaker, and I know that work is already under way by our hard-working Minister of Labrador Affairs.

Some have argued that this deal is too long. I've heard both sides, and I respectfully disagree. This project is about optimism. It's about building a stronger future for Newfoundland and Labrador. More value, more power, more jobs and more transmission. That's four for four, Mr. Speaker. It's batting a thousand.

It's an opportunity to grow our economy, to create lasting prosperity and ensure future generations benefit more fully from one of North America's greatest green energy projects. Mr. Speaker, it also represents an opportunity that will enable us to build stronger public services including better health care in the years to come.

I'm very proud to stand here to speak to my district and to speak to the Department of Health and Community Services and the wonderful team that works there. This agreement will certainly benefit both. So on behalf of the people of Cape St. Francis, I look forward to casting my vote in favour of this resolution before us.

I thank the Members opposite for their time and their attention today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Lane): The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it's always a pleasure and an honour to stand in this hon. House on behalf of the people of Humber - Bay of Islands with such a great pressure on all of our shoulders here to try to make the right decision.

I'm just going to give you a bit of a history. I first got elected in '89, stepped aside for Premier Wells at the time because, the main reason, the Humber - Bay of Islands north and south shore had 5 per cent of water and sewer; the people of the Bay of Islands are my concern. I stayed out for two more elections. I ran again in 1999, and the rest is history. Then, again, I'll give you a bit of background. In 2019, and everybody knows the history, I voted to keep the Liberal government in power because people didn't want an election.

I just want to say, I vote for what I think is right. I take my personal views away and I look at the facts and I vote for what I think is right. I answer just about every question that people ask me from the district. People will see me leave today, I was out talking to people, explaining the information that we have been given.

I just need to clear up a few things. I know it was brought up a couple of times about the Oversight Committee being appointed by the Premier, I just want to give a bit of detail. Back in 2025, when we had the debate, I started the idea of setting up an oversight committee – the Leader of the Third Party and, Mr. Speaker, you were a part of it. What happened then, part of the deal was that the Consumer Advocate would put names into Cabinet, but Cabinet had the final decision. So this idea that the people like Mr. Jardine and Julia Mullaley and others weren't capable people, they were.

Just to give you an example, and you hear this so much here about attacking people, Julia Mullaley was clerk of the Executive Council under the Liberal government. The Liberal government put her in the biggest role in government, so she has to be

qualified. Then she went into the Auditor General.

I knew Mr. Jardine back in the '80s; he was in Corner Brook. He's a credible man. So the idea that there are people here saying you appointed them, they're connected, Julia Mullaley will not sell her soul for anybody. Mike Jardine is not going to sell his soul. I know it. I know the guy.

This is my background on this information here, Mr. Speaker. Anything that I say here tonight and anything that I'm doing is for the people of Humber - Bay of Islands and the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have to remember, this is an MOU, just like in 2025. This has to go up for definitive agreement yet. This is what we debated in 2025 to send up for the definitive agreement. This is not the final agreement.

I'll get to the points later, but I know right at the beginning when this started, I was talking to the media. The media asked me how are you going? I said, well, I don't know yet, but there is one thing I'm going to say, I'm going to be after the government, the Premier and the minister to look for some way that we can make this stronger. I heard the Premier say, and I spoke to the Premier personally, that he is going to bring this back to the House and the House Leaders will work out the details of how this is going to run. That was the commitment the Premier made to me.

The second thing, and I'm going to read this. I heard it all day today, some strength on the oversight. Myself and the Leader of the Third Party, we met with the Premier, we said we'd like to see it. Here's what the Premier committed in writing to us, through the Leader of the Third Party and me forwarded the copy: I like your idea of involving the Public Utilities Board. As I said in the media and House, the current members of the Oversight Committee, Dan Levert, Julia Mullaley and Mike Jardine,

have agreed to stay on as part of the oversight process for the definitive agreement. Asking the PUB to be involved is a practical way to strengthen that committee and alleviate skepticism and trust of the public. I have asked the clerk of the Executive Council to ask the chair of the Oversight Committee to work with the PUB on how this could be done.

Mr. Speaker, that is, again, a commitment to have oversight of this process. That's a commitment in writing. So when people want to criticize people on the Oversight Committee, here's another commitment that was made here to strengthen it.

Just for the record, in 2025, they did the same thing. I voted for it in 2025 because we were told this was a good deal. I have no bias in this because I voted for it in 2025. I will decide tonight how I am going to vote, but I can tell you my goal was to work to make it stronger.

I took a lot of notes. I have about 25 or 30 pages of notes and I listened very attentively. Sometimes people think I don't, but I do. I take a lot of notes. One thing I heard here today, we are rushing.

Mr. Perry: This is not rushed, many proposed it before, a strategy was developed. What they said in this House is that they took the MOU from 2024 and they built on it. They are not saying the MOU that was put in from 2024 was no good. They built on the MOU to make it stronger.

He had a hard set of negotiations and he had complete flexibility from the Premier. So the idea that they didn't have the flexibility, Mr. Perry here said, they had complete flexibility from the Premier. I took the note and I understand – if I am wrong, I stand to be corrected – Mr. Perry said if negotiations go past December 31, they got until March 31 to have a final agreement.

So this idea of rushing, from the statement that was made, which I took in the note and

I understand to be true, the question was asked: What's the difference between the deal in 2024 until now? It is \$49 billion now, compared to \$34 billion. That is an \$8-billion difference. Speaker, 2,700 megawatts from 2,000 in 2024, and the escalation formula was up to 2041.

Again, I heard it. This is not criticism but I just want to put it on the record. We heard a lot today about the market-based agreement; it was frustrating to a lot. Ms. Williams said no formal agreement was included in the MOU. So my understanding of it, and she was asked several times from the Leader of the Opposition about the market pricing, the person who was negotiating in 2024, who is here again today, who I have a lot of respect for – I have a lot of respect – she said it was never in negotiations. We heard today a lot about the market-based pricing and the person said it was never put in the agreement. So there is a misunderstanding there somewhere.

Then, all the time you say we prefer this and why didn't the government do this and if the Oversight Committee at the time had to see it in it, they might have suggested it, but we were told by the officials that it wasn't in and the professionals that came in later said it's better not to have it in.

This is the kind of information that we have to go on. This is the kind of information that people like me rely on the experts, who we ask questions to, to form a decision. I'm not saying anybody's wrong or right, but I'm going on the experts that were here in 2025, and I voted for it, and here in 2026.

This whole idea of someone, Ms. Williams or others, saying that it was a good deal in 2025. It was a good deal. I relate a lot of things to sports. I played basketball and I had a good game, but there are other days I had a better game. So when they went back this time with the federal government involved, there were more concessions made, there was a better deal made.

There's nothing wrong about that. They came back and said, we lived up to the 2024, we built on it, the federal government got involved and we got a better deal for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's not bad. That should be told as a positive attitude.

I see my time is short, Mr. Speaker, and I'll just say to people: Let's do what's best for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is what we said an MOU and then hopefully it will come back to the House of Assembly (inaudible).

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation; and Labrador Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

As we come nearing the end of the debate, I want to speak about the place where all of this begins, the centre of this new development, this new project: Labrador.

The Churchill River is in Labrador. Mishtashipu, the Grand River, as it's called by many Labradorians. The communities that live closest to these developments are in Labrador. Many of the workers that will build the projects will be Labradorians, Speaker. The impacts, the opportunities and changes that come with development will be felt directly by the people of Labrador.

Speaker, my position is straightforward. I got elected in 2019; I focused on my district; I focused on Labrador. When we got into government, I had ministerial responsibilities. But at the end of the day, a provincial project in Labrador must benefit

Labradorians, Speaker. That is what we are saying, this new government, our government. Our government has been in power for less than a year, after 10 years of Liberal government.

If Labrador is going to help create prosperity, Speaker, Labrador must share in the prosperity. That's a given. That's where I'm coming from, that's where I'm standing.

There are many people here on this side that have lived and worked in Labrador. The benefits shouldn't be just during construction; not just through the few years of employment; not just through promises that may come. The people of Labrador must see lasting benefits in their communities through improved infrastructure, services and quality of life. These benefits must extend over generations, not just during construction.

It's only then I believe that Labradorians will feel like they are truly equal in citizenship with the residents who live on the Island portion of our province and that's not sour grapes. That's exactly how Labradorians feel. It is especially true for Happy Valley - Goose Bay, North West River, Mud Lake, Rigolet and Cartwright, which will shoulder the greatest impacts.

Our government is committing to ensuring that Labradorians benefit long term and we mitigate the impacts with real action. Not even a year into government, people are seeing our real action.

Growing up in Labrador as a little girl, who was given the opportunity to hunt and fish with her daddy, I never knew what being treated as an equal would inspire me to. It has prepared me for government and for this day. For me growing up, it wasn't about gender, it wasn't about being Indigenous. It wasn't being about somebody who had European genes as well. My dad and my mom allowed me to be what I wanted to be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. EVANS: Speaker, I will not back down when it comes to Labrador. Labradorians know that. I think after seven years in the House of Assembly, people know that about me. I don't have to explain myself anymore.

I know the enormous contributions Labradorians have made to Newfoundland and Labrador. Our Labrador hydroelectricity resources that will continue to generate well for generations to come for the whole province. Our Labrador mines that create jobs, exports and revenue for the whole province for generations to come. Our Labrador natural resources that have helped build this province and will continue to do it for decades. Our bountiful Labrador fishery grounds that were forgotten during the cod moratorium. Our Labrador fishing grounds helped build this province. The floater fishery, schooners that came up empty to Labrador waters and returned home full to benefit the people of the Island, then came the longliners.

Labradorians know what it feels like to look at the resources in Labrador and ask a very reasonable question: When will Labradorians see more benefit at home? Our government knows that question cannot be ignored as we move forward to the new Churchill Falls agreement and the development opportunities associated with it.

So what are we considering, this new government? Compared to the 2024 MOU, we're looking at this new agreement is about more – more power, more transmission, more value and more options, Speaker.

Four days we sat and listened, and do you know something? If you look at *Hansard* and if you review the video, Speaker, the truth is, it is about more. The new deal will bring more in many ways. At the end of construction, Labrador jobs will not dry up. There will be many more jobs created due to the new electricity, the new energy products that will generate new, lasting jobs, and that's not going to just be the mine

expansions that bring those new jobs to Labradorians. Labradorians are going to have a lot of opportunity. It's about creating long-term jobs, Speaker, economic development for Labradorians. We will not forget that.

At the beginning of the project, during the project and after the project. That is our commitment. From a Labrador perspective, each of the outcomes must contribute to a broader goal, more benefits for Labrador – our fair share.

Our fair share, that's all we hear about. Labradorians never get their fair share. Speaker, we know the scale of what a new, better deal will bring. There will be more construction, more jobs, leading to long-term jobs. There will be opportunities for Labrador businesses, families alike, but there are going to be impacts and pressures.

My government recognizes there's going to be a demand for housing. Yes, we know that. I look to the Minister of Health who was the Minister of Social Support and Well-Being; and Housing. I look to the new minister. We are not working in silos. This government is working together to prepare, not just for this project, but for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are going to be pressures on roads in Labrador, municipal infrastructure. We heard from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Speaker. There's going to be increased demand for health care and other public services, but do you know something? We don't even have adequate health care, but I tell you, the steps that we're taking within this next year, air ambulances that move patients from Labrador down to the Island for the additional care they need. That's happening. We are investing in long-term care for our seniors, not just to free up the beds in the hospital, but to make sure that our seniors are looked after, treated with respect. That's what this government is about.

We're going to be proactive and we're going to actually live up to that for Labradorians. We're not going to wait until construction is under way and then discover that the communities in Labrador are struggling to keep pace. We know that. We're going to be proactive. Not this new government, we're not going to be reactive.

Major projects must be accompanied by major planning to support Labrador. What does that planning look like? We're actually going to talk to people in Labrador. What a novel concept. That was the purpose of what the Premier put forward. Speaker, it's going to be government that's going to do that.

We're going to make sure that our infrastructure is better, our services are stronger, our communities are better off for everybody, and our people will have opportunity once the construction is over, Speaker. We're going to invest in the future, not just the jobs.

Muskrat Falls was good. People got a taste of high paying jobs, Speaker. But when that was over, people were left with big mortgages, big truck payments, and also a taste for what life could be like.

When this new deal goes ahead and we actual do this, Speaker, it's going to generate electricity that's going to fuel the benefits for Labradorians. Speaker, I'm committed to that. That's who I am and everybody knows that.

Our infrastructure is going to be better, our services are going to be stronger, our communities are going to be better off for everybody. That's what we're going to do.

When I look around here and I see people who lived and worked in Labrador and support us, I see a caucus that's supporting Labrador. Ten years of Liberal government. Man, I went into Health, I got to tell you something right now, it was really hard not

to heckle when the Opposition was asking questions – 10 years.

Do you want to know something? It's easy to be upset. But I tell you right now, I'll just say to the people out there in Labrador: I am committed to making sure that Labrador will be prepared for this development and that Labrador will be supported.

I'll tell you why I feel like that. It's because my caucus in this new government with the leadership of the Premier is going to make sure that happens, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I believe everybody, with the exception of the two leaders, have spoken on this side now. Am I correct? Okay.

The hon. the Deputy Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

We've been keeping track of that on this side, so thanks for that.

It's the longest time I think I've sat in the House and not spoke much since I've come in here; I've been in here a lot of years. But it is good to get up and speak on an important historic debate that will change – a generational debate, actually, Speaker.

I'll start off and ask: Are we willing to sit idly by while another generation suffers? That's the question I have and I'll give you an answer at the end.

Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to reflect on the process in which all hon. Members have been participating in over the last few days and, ultimately, on an important decision that is now before this House.

I want to begin by thanking the hon. Premier who tasked the Government House Leader

and myself with organizing this special sitting in consultation with other parties in the House. I want to also thank the many experts who joined us here this week for their time, their expertise and their willingness to participate. They came here to share their knowledge of this new agreement and, more importantly, to answer the questions being asked by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because, Speaker, that is what this House is about. This is the House of the people's representatives and we made every effort to ensure that there was an opportunity for representatives from all 40 electoral districts to participate. You have seen that here today.

Shortly after our party won the last election, we fulfilled one of the earliest commitments we made to the people of the province; we promised to review the previous governments old '24 MOU. We established an independent review committee to do the work. That committee submitted its report earlier this year and concluded that the 2024 MOU was not in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Instead, it recommended a process to secure a new and a better deal.

Our government accepted that advice. We used the committee's recommendations as a framework for a new round of negotiations. As the Premier said, we set the table. We opened a new round of discussions with Quebec and this time Quebec came to our table. What followed were some of the most substantial discussions between the two provinces in a very, very long time. Those discussions also included an active involvement of the Government of Canada. Once the federal government came to the table with significant financial and other supports, and once these projects were recognized as projects of national importance, it became important to move the process forward in a calm manner. That, Speaker, is what brought us here this week.

Our government wanted to make sure Members had sufficient time to raise their concerns and, just as importantly, the concerns and questions they heard from their constituents. We brought expert panels directly onto the floor of the House so Members with technical questions could get answers from people with a deep knowledge of this agreement.

After the party leaders and critics made their opening remarks, the rules provided more than 19 hours for Members to question the panel of invited guests. For Opposition Members who wanted to participate through a more traditional parliamentary process, there were also 30-minute Question Periods each day where they could put their questions directly to government and, of course, every Member of this House has been allotted time for closing remarks. Now, finally, Speaker, we will vote on the resolution in a short while.

This is a significant process. It has given Members the opportunity to scrutinize this agreement, ask questions and speak on behalf of the people they represent. It has allowed us to consider what this agreement means beyond this Chamber for investment, for jobs, for communities and for the long-term future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to thank every Member who participated and it is my hope that when all is said and done, this House can reach consensus and move forward together to the next stage in securing Newfoundland and Labrador's future.

Speaker, I want to turn now to the agreement itself. This new deal is not only better than the old '24 MOU; it's better in every way. It allows us to finally turn the page on the disastrous '69 Churchill Falls agreement. It means more value, it means more power, it means transmission.

Speaker, I think we need to talk about those numbers eventually, what they mean to

people of the province, communities we represent, because ultimately that's the test.

I represent the District of Conception Bay South and anyone who has watched CBS over the years knows that our community is growing in a big way. Our population is growing. Families are moving in. Businesses are opening and expanding. New neighbourhoods are being built. There's a tremendous confidence in our community.

I am proud of that growth, but I also know something else, growth requires infrastructure. Where more families moving into communities, we need schools that can accommodate their children. We need health care services to keep pace. We need roads and municipal infrastructure. We need recreation facilities and public services. Those things don't happen for free and that is why economic growth and the revenues generated by major projects matter.

In my district, we're advancing to replace the Frank Roberts Intermediate. We're advancing a new urgent care centre in Conception Bay South. Those are important investments for a growing community. They are the kinds of investments people expect government to make and, Speaker, as CBS continues to grow, there will be more demands, more infrastructure will be needed, more services will be needed, more investment will be required, and CBS is not alone. Every Member in this House can identify infrastructure their communities need, a school, a road, a health care facility, housing, municipal infrastructure, a recreational facility, and the list goes on.

When we talk about getting greater value from Churchill Falls, this is the part we're talking about. It's about having economic strength to invest in our communities. It's about making sure that our province grows, government has the ability to keep pace and it's about taking the value generated from our own resources and putting that value to

work for the people who own those resources.

It's about giving us greater capacity to invest in infrastructure and public services right across this province. That's how you build an economy. That's how you support growing communities like Conception Bay South, while also creating new opportunities in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador because our objective from the beginning has been clear: Newfoundland and Labrador must be the primary beneficiary of its own resources.

Speaker, I have been around this House for a while. I have seen good times and I have seen challenging ones. I know governments can only invest in things that people expect when we have an economy capable of supporting those investments. We have an opportunity here to strengthen that economy for decades to come; more power to grow, more transmission to reach markets, more value coming back to Newfoundland and Labrador, more opportunity for our workers, businesses and communities and, ultimately, greater capacity to invest in things that matter to people: infrastructure for growing communities and stronger public services through Newfoundland and Labrador.

I believe we have reached a new and better deal with both the federal government and Quebec to develop the Churchill Falls and Gull Island. A deal that guarantees Newfoundland and Labrador will always be the primary beneficiary of its own resources. I also believe this House has been a real opportunity, through a special sitting, to ask the questions, scrutinize the agreement and bring forward the views of the people we represent. We had a debate. We've asked the questions. We have heard from the experts.

Before I finish up, there are a few things I think I just want to add into my closing remarks. For three days I've sat in this House, we have all sat here – not counting

today – and we have heard expert after expert after expert from all walks of life, from J.P. Morgan, from Power Advisory, the negotiating team, the Oversight Committee, the board, and every single person – every single one of them – every one said it's a better deal. Some said it is an outstanding deal; some even went further than that. That is what we should be looking for.

I don't think the best is out there; there will always be something better. Everyone will always look for that something better. I think this is a good deal for the people of the province. We have heard it from these people and I trust their advice, because everyone is an expert, but these people are experts in the field. They have been there. They know their stuff.

There's no disrespect to other people out there who got expert opinions. I would like to hear from the people who are in the room that were part of it. That's what we are doing. It is a hearing. It is more like a hearing. I think from what I heard from the people I have spoken to, people like this process. They thought it was effective. A lot of people have watched it. They appreciated the answers they got and, as a matter of fact, I think it helped a lot of people form their opinion.

I also respect people on the other side that don't agree. That is fine. We live in a democracy. You don't have to agree with our side. That is what we live in. That is why we are so lucky to live in the place we live, but everyone should be respectful of each other's opinions, each other's positions, each other's reasons for making the decision they're making. I don't make this decision lightly. I don't think any of these people around me make it lightly. I am surrounded by 19, 20 counting myself – I will count to 19 – sensational people. I am proud to call them my friends, proud to be colleagues. We are all supported by our Premier and he is a friend of mine and a friend of all of us.

I've got a lot of titles, and the title that I take the most pleasure in is I'm poppy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: I got three precious grandchildren that I spend a lot of time with. I'm missing them this week like you wouldn't believe. I will be supporting this deal because that's a bright future for three of them and all the rest of the children and young people coming up through this province. I think that we're all on the same page; I think we're looking for a great deal and a great future.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Not to participate in the debate, but poppy is my favourite title too, I've got to admit.

Given the hour of the day, we're going to recess now until 6 p.m.

The House is now in recess.

Recess

The House resumed at 6 p.m.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Admit strangers.

The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader and Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you very much, Speaker.

First off, I would like to extend a very special thank you to all of the experts that attended the House this week.

I think all Members now have a better and deeper understanding of the new deal that is in front of us. I think we all have a better understanding of exactly what the stakes are, but, also, I think all Members now have a deeper understanding of the road that we took to get right where we are today.

The report of the independent Review Committee laid out a comprehensive blueprint for our province and it defined what our province needed to achieve in order to obtain a new and better deal. As the negotiating team made clear, we used this blueprint to deliver a deal through what was a very gruelling process. We had a counterparty in Quebec that was determined to give nothing up easily. Every single inch, every single gain, we fought hard. Hard won and hard earned, all by our negotiating team.

Today we're sitting in front of not only a new deal, not only a better deal than 1969, not only a better deal than the 2024, but a deal that will redefine the future of our entire province. We pushed Quebec to agree to hundreds of megawatts of more power. We pushed Quebec to agree on transmission, 985 megawatts, including the most lucrative US markets. We pushed Quebec to agree to give us optionality. We pushed Quebec to give us the premium tranche; billions more for our province because we can charge 150 per cent premium on Churchill Falls power.

We also got the Carney government to come to the table with over a billion dollars for new wind projects, over a billion dollars for new transmission and a loan guarantee that will ensure Gull Island actually gets built. When Gull Island gets built, not a single dollar of Newfoundland and Labrador tax dollars will be exposed, not one nickel, because Quebec assumes all responsibility for all overruns.

This is the deal. It is new and it is better. We took a team of experienced and talented people and we worked around the clock to

deliver on the deal that has been in front of everyone this week.

Speaker, it is a deal that will transform the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, not just for the trades workers who will build Gull Island, but for the future workers in the mines that will open up because we finally have the power to do it, the businesses that will supply those companies and the communities, like Happy Valley-Goose Bay, who will receive an influx of new housing and new services; because, our government will always stand with the people of Lake Melville and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. They voted for a PC government, they voted for a better deal and that's what we're going to deliver.

Yes, we're going to deliver for the families who will save 15 per cent on electricity bills for the Churchill River Electricity Rebate, but that's just a start; also for the families who will see the new doctors, new nurses, new police officers, the better hospitals and schools, lower taxes, the better supports for seniors, better roads and reduced debt.

We can do these things because we will receive \$18 billion in nominal value by 2041, and \$273 billion by the end of the contract – new dollars, very necessary dollars. There is not one critic in this Chamber or outside of the Chamber who can point to an alternative that will generate this kind of revenue, not one, and yet they may be comfortable with the status quo, a lot of people in this province are hurting. They deserve hope. They deserve help. They deserve a brighter future. This deal is the key that will unlock all of that.

Speaker, I'm honoured to be the Minister of Energy and Mines. I'm honoured to be a part of this government, a Progressive Conservative government working to get this deal approved. This is steadily increasing financial value every single year and optionality that gives our province the control over our resources, every single one of them.

The day will come when a new government will benefit from this new freedom and the ability to invest in its priorities. No matter what party holds power, no matter who people vote for, all of us will benefit from living in a province with less debt, better services and a lower cost of living. That's what doing something gets you, Speaker.

Our government will never be content with the status quo. I look forward to the day when we open our first new mine with the Churchill Falls and Gull Island power. I look forward to a day when a future Finance minister can say Newfoundland and Labrador is debt free. That's not a Tory win, that's not a Liberal win and it's not an NDP win. It's a win for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, we've stood in this House today and over the last three days and we listened to all of the professionals who came in here and advised, we listened to the questions, but there were some questions that weren't asked. I never once heard Members from the opposition side ask anyone if they thought this was a better deal, yet they volunteered it. They brought it up. They said, each and everyone of them, profoundly, that this is a much better deal.

I've listened to people talk about the misinformation and the lack of information. Well, I can tell you, since last November, when we got sworn in as ministers, I have never once, when it comes to this file, heard from the Leader of the Opposition, from the critic from the Opposition, the Member for Lake Melville never came and talked to me about it, so when they say that they haven't had the answers, they simply haven't asked the questions.

Speaker, we have been here to answer those questions.

This province will move forward with a future under this deal that secures a future

for everyone, young men and women, our seniors, our middle class, our poor, our sick, this deal will deliver for everyone. It's long overdue, and it's time that we move forward.

What we are asking here tonight is for people to vote on a resolution for us to bring forward so we can get the definitive agreements done. We are asking for people to vote for a brighter future for Newfoundland and Labrador. We are asking for people to vote for Canada. This isn't just about us.

We've heard the Carney government talk about the future of this country and what a big role Newfoundland and Labrador plays in it. If you are to vote against this, you are voting against the future of this country and you are voting against Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

No deal is ever perfect, we know that, but this deal is a deal that we need right now, a deal that will deliver right now. It will deliver for today. It will deliver for tomorrow. It will deliver for the next 50 years. I strongly encourage all of my colleagues in this room to support the deal. I have no issue signing my name on this deal and I have no issue voting for this deal because I, for one, can't wait to get started on a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: We are going to just recess for five minutes to get organized here, and then we will be starting Question Period.

The House is in recess for just five minutes.

Recess

SPEAKER (Lane): Order, please!

Questions to Government Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier has said in the past, I will not sign any deal that does not have the clear consent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and he promised a referendum. Instead of referendum, he held an information session as his own Finance Minister has called this.

There have been protests outside the doors; a caucus Member has left his government; Indigenous Leaders continue to withhold their support.

How can the Premier possibly consider this the clear consent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, as I already said before, I did say that I was going to do a referendum and I know there are people who are disappointed about that and I accept that.

But let's talk about what we have achieved here in this new agreement for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador because that's what's important here. It's about the benefits now and the benefits into the future; the benefits that include the fact that we actually have more value than we had before, that we have more power and we have more transmission. But more important than that, we have the optionality, the flexibility that we never had in the '69 agreement.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador now and into the future will decide how they want to use their power, whether they want to use it to sell it or whether they want to use it to build it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, it's beyond disappointment. There's trust broken with this Premier, who now has the slimmest majority government in our province's history and we are about to make perhaps the most significant decision in our province's history.

He has said that they're voting as a caucus – a whipped vote. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians realize that their voices matter, so even if the Conservatives won't give them their voice, why won't the Premier give his caucus a free vote, publicly, and allow them to vote with their constituents?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition is fixated on whether we're having a free vote – a whipped vote, but I will tell him the vote we're having. We have a united group of people on this side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: We have 20 Members strong who support this deal, support this Premier and support our party and we'll vote for more value, more transmission, more power and, most importantly, Speaker, more jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The definition of fixated is alarming. I've only said it twice, I think, and they've said their slogan about 200 times in the past four days.

This week the Member for Lake Melville said the Premier is trying to sell the

unsellable. He also said there are too many independent experts out there who are saying this isn't fit to eat, and we've really got to slow down.

How many other MHAs in the PC caucus have the same concerns that they're hearing from their constituents, and why is the Premier forcing them to vote the way he wants them to vote?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, the MHA for Lake Melville has moved on, and so have we. We stand here as a united caucus ready to work for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, ready to deliver on the commitments that we made in our budget and now ready to deliver on a most historic agreement, an agreement that will put power, value and transmission back in the hands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for generations to come.

Don't just take my word for it. Let's hear from Trades NL, "The Gull Island project and related developments represent a generational opportunity for the skilled trades workforce of Newfoundland and Labrador"

They will "create long-term good-paying union jobs and a clear pathway for young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to build rewarding careers in the Red Seal trades"

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Premier's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The Member for Lake Melville did what he was put here to do, to do his

job, but I hope the Premier hasn't moved on from the people of Lake Melville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: I asked this yesterday and big surprise, the Premier refused to answer. So I will try again. Yes or no, Premier, please.

There is a lot of detail left to negotiate between now and the final agreements. Will the Premier commit to bringing the final agreements back to this House, back to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador before they are signed and before locking us in for 50 more years?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, as I have already said and I've actually put it in writing, we will turn around and make sure that there's another oversight committee put in place. The three members of the existing Oversight Committee have agreed to serve on that. A new terms of reference will be developed. The Clerk will advise the Chair, who will contact the PUB to get more members added to that committee and once that committee starts its work, and when these definitive agreements get close, then the House Leaders will sit down and talk about what that will look like.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Premier, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want to know. This is it. Thursday, September 17 could be the last day that anybody gets to have any input into the final agreements on Churchill Falls. So will you, as the leader of the province, confirm to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that their voices will be heard at least one more time and the final agreements will come back to this House of

Assembly so we can ask questions on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians before you lock us into another 50 years?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, I just said that we will bring the definitive agreements back into the House, just as his former premier said he would do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: I will ask the Premier for a third time: Premier, this is your legacy, will they come back before they are signed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I find it amusing that the Leader of the Opposition is over talking about definitive agreements coming back into the House, when he has his own party whipped into a vote, trying to ensure that they don't ever leave the House to go and get negotiated. We've heard from every one of them this evening who said they will not support this resolution. So they don't care about –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: – definitive agreements, they don't care about jobs, they don't care about more transmission, they don't care about value, and they certainly don't care about power.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: For the record, all 14 Members of this caucus will make up their own mind tonight and I'll have nothing to do with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: In fact, they will make up their minds based on what their constituents are telling them to do.

Those three answers from the Government House Leader, the Minister of Energy and Mines and the Premier not confirming that the agreements will come back before they are signed shows a complete lack of leadership and dedication to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now the Premier's own advisors confirm that they didn't know if the Premier even tried to negotiate a market-based index.

I ask the Premier directly: Please set the record straight, did you try to negotiate it or did you just walk away and not even put the effort in?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, we did what we said we were going to do. We had an Independent Review Committee take a look at the previous MOU, they made recommendations and raised concerns around market-based pricing and that's where the negotiation team worked.

They came up with a better strategy. They have a guaranteed fixed price that sees the price rise year over year over year, 14 per cent, right up until 2041 and then up to \$273 billion, which represents a significant increase over the previous MOU – \$49 billion to be exact. That's what we've done.

If you had listened to the experts who were in the House of Assembly for the last three days, you would have heard them talk about that market pricing is still available.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I heard one expert say they walked away from it because it was too hard and another expert say they walked away because they gave something up in exchange for it. I don't know which one is worse to be honest with you.

The Premier just claimed, again, he secured market-based pricing for Churchill Falls and he's pointed to the options in Appendix B.

Can the Premier confirm what percentage of Churchill Falls power Appendix B actually applies to? Does he believe it applies to all sales?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, what I can confirm is that this deal gives the people of Newfoundland and Labrador right now into the future, new people that may find themselves in this House of Assembly, the optionality to choose how they want to use the power that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We will now be in a position to have enough power to be able to build those new mines in Labrador West. We'll be able to open up the Labrador Trough. We will be able to build new industries in Labrador, something that was not available previously in the 1969 agreement and was not available in the 2024 MOU.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: What wasn't available in '69 was market-based pricing. What was available in 2024 was market-based pricing. What isn't available in 2026 is market-based pricing.

I'll tell the Premier the answer to my question because God knows he won't answer it, it's 6 per cent and it gets worse. Even that isn't market-based pricing. The fact is it is power sold to Quebec based on contracts negotiated by Hydro-Québec at fixed prices.

Does the Premier not understand this or is he not answering the questions because he doesn't want Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to know the truth?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, what I do know is we have an agreement that delivers more value, more power and more transmission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: The Member opposite doesn't want to hear me talk about that –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: – but that's the facts of this deal. We have all of those and we have a federal government, a federal Liberal prime minister, who has chosen to build Canada strong, who has chosen to electrify our nation, and Newfoundland and Labrador is proud to be part of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, we thank the prime minister for doing his job for the country and for Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, what the prime minister's job was to do was to grow the size of the pie. What the province's job was to do was to get the bigger share of the pie.

So thank you to the prime minister and shame on the Premier. Why didn't you get the biggest piece of the pie?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: It is mind blowing that the Leader of the Opposition stands up and said we didn't get a bigger piece of the pie. Speaker, \$273 billion versus \$233 billion, and then you can take away the \$30 billion that they had left as a debt balloon at the end of it, which makes it about \$200 billion. So \$73 billion doesn't more mean to this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: Just think about that. It doesn't mean more.

Speaker, we brought back more for the people of Newfoundland. We brought back more power. We brought back more transmission. We brought back more value. We brought back more jobs. And guess what? We're going to see it through and deliver it for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The small amount of power that the Premier will sell to Quebec is only from our allocation of power; the very power the Premier claims we need and we will use. You can't use the same megawatt twice.

I ask the Premier: If he achieves his goal of using all of this power for domestic purposes, can he confirm for the people of our province this actually means we have zero megawatts tied to external markets?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, what a wonderful problem to have, the fact that if we use all of our power means that we will have new mines open –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: – which will create hundreds of jobs during construction, thousands of jobs long term for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. All of those industries will be up and running. That is actually what we should be looking for and that's what the future of Newfoundland and Labrador deserves.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: It is a great problem to have but I think they believe that the whole plan is 720 megawatts. It's over 5,000 megawatts. So that is the amount of power that we do not have market-based pricing for – a fact that they don't want Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know.

The Premier's own financial advisor acknowledged that the so-called premium price is actually a cap. It's a cap on the price

that we get for power. So did Quebec really convince the Premier he got something good when what he really got was a limit on how much he can sell the power for?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, it was quite clear that the head negotiator, Barry Perry, which I think we were all impressed with, stated that the cost-of-service model was the best one to attend and to go with.

He was also mentioning what we get brought in and coming into the coffers of Newfoundland and Labrador, and he stated to this House that, in 2027, we will get \$337 million; in 2033, we will \$900-plus-million; and then, in 2041, we are getting in \$2.7 billion, which is 60 cent of what our health care budget is.

I am not sure what caps he is looking at but I know look at Annex D and see the revenue the province gets –

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Those were a lot of big numbers. Imagine if there was no cap on those numbers.

Why did the Premier, again, give away something that Quebec wanted? We gave away a floating return of equity on Gull Island, and he settled for a fixed certain price, which is what Quebec wanted, at 8.5 per cent.

So how much is the province losing for that extra 0.5 per cent in this deal?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, what we gave away was a \$30-billion debt balloon that would have been left to the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As I said yesterday, imagine taking out a mortgage for \$100,000, paying it for 50 years and still owing \$100,000. That is exactly what Gull Island was going to do. There wasn't enough money to pay down the debt. So, at the end of the day, what we had was a \$29-billion project with a \$30-billion debt balloon left at the end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: In all seriousness, not one substantive answer has been given by the Premier in the course of these four days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: The Premier is also conflating oversight of negotiations with an independent review of his deal. When he was in Opposition, he demanded it. Now, as Premier, he is avoiding it. He did it, an independent review of the old MOU, but he won't do one of this, even though he says it is a new deal.

How can he possibly justify that, even to himself?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, we did exactly what we said we were going to do.

We took the old MOU, we did an independent review of that old MOU and we used the recommendations of that review to turn around and basically form the framework for the new deal. That is exactly

what we have done. We are very proud of the agreement that we've reached.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, the Premier engaged in –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

We are debating, perhaps, the most important thing – I talked about this earlier today, the enormity of what's being debated here tonight. We don't need heckling. This is too important to the House and to the people.

I'll reset the clock.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

I will tell you, for the record, what the heckling is, is that the government cannot stop focusing on the past and we're trying to focus on the future.

The Premier engaged an architect of Muskrat Falls to negotiate this deal, so I guess it's no surprise, just like Muskrat Falls, the Premier selected his own Oversight Committee to tell him how to follow his mandate. Yesterday, the Oversight Committee said their job was done. The Premier then scrambled to reappoint the same hand-picked members because he got caught.

Will the Premier commit to a truly independent oversight committee agreed to by all parties with the proper mandate that reports to the public?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, if the Members opposite want to stand up in this House of Assembly and call me whatever you want to call me or chastise me, do whatever you want, but when people step up who have –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: – professional careers and are willing to sit here and work for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and for someone to discredit their abilities, their character and their knowledge, I think that's a disgrace. You should be ashamed of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Will the Premier tell this House which Indigenous groups he will require consent and agreement from before signing final agreements?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and Labrador Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. EVANS: Speaker, we recognize the Innu of Labrador as Aboriginal people in Canada. We recognize that. The Innu are going to be our partners. We are signing an impact and benefits agreement with them. We are also consulting with the other Aboriginal groups, Indigenous groups in Labrador. We are also consulting with Labradorians to make sure that they benefit but the agreements, in terms of the IBA, is with the Innu.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Premier promised the people a referendum. He cancelled it and broke that promise. Then he brought this deal into the House and 11 of his 20 Members asked these experts nothing at all, including the Minister of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development on a deal sold on jobs; the Minister of Environment on two dams on the Labrador river; and the Minister of Education on a deal supposedly to be about young people and educating them.

The public was silenced because there was no referendum. His own caucus was silenced. Speaker, 15 of 15 Members on this side asked questions of the experts; nine of his 20 on his side asked questions.

Will the Premier tell this House whether or not his ministers had no questions or whether or not they were not allowed to ask them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, while we were in here and the chair of the negotiating team tried to give the Energy critic a response, he said: I'm sorry, I wasn't listening. I was trying to prepare for something else.

So I wouldn't be worried about who's asking questions. That's the first thing.

The second thing is, they're over there preaching about a referendum and the Member for Mount Scio is on record saying, I don't agree with a referendum. It's a waste of \$8 million. So even their front bench

doesn't agree with it. At the end of the day, they come out with all of this stuff, they question people across this way and they're tied up in their tangle over there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Speaker, in January 2025, the now Premier stood in this House of Assembly as the Opposition Leader and demanded the Public Utilities Board review the MOU. Today, his own agreement makes exempting Gull Island from the same board a condition of the deal.

The PUB exemption was not a recommendation from his so-called independent Review Committee, so who's idea was it, the Premier's or was it Hydro-Québec's?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, I am very proud that the prime minister of Canada has referred these projects to the Major Projects Office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: The Major Projects Office will handle all regulatory reviews of all of these projects, which, in fact, is another accomplishment just to be able to have it at the Major Projects Office.

When it comes to hydroelectricity rate increases or anything here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the PUB will be involved.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker.

We've heard the Members opposite – some of them, the ones who were allowed to talk – ask questions and speak about the data centres.

In which communities do they plan to build these data centres and has there been any consultation with these communities?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Again, the Energy critic is worried about us asking questions when this was clearly answered last night.

We said that we will develop everything we can, we would love to sell no power to Quebec and that we would love to use all of our power on mines. If there's any electricity left over after and there was a company that wanted to build a data farm or a data mine or any kind of AI centre, we would talk to them. We didn't say where; we don't know where. We never said they were coming. We said our door is open for business and we're looking forward to doing business with the world.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, yesterday, the Premier said government has to make sure the trades are put back into high school and that we have to reintroduce a high school skilled-trade program into our high schools.

Would the Premier elaborate how this reintroduction will take place and what's the plan?

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I can't answer it in the time I'm given so I would like to ask leave to properly answer this question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

P. DINN: If the crowd in here who wants answers, don't want an answer, that's fine.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: I'd appreciate a summary at least.

I'll narrow it down. Teachers are always concerned when schools are enlisted to fulfil political agendas.

I remember visiting rural schools with brand new equipment in unopened boxes because there were no skilled trades teacher and schools that did not have the budget to purchase the consumable supplies for the program.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to additional skilled trades teachers and increase school funding so that they can purchase the necessary supplies to help them prepare students for skilled trades?

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

To the Member opposite, I don't mind giving you a complete summary of what we're doing; you're interested in what we're doing. Thank you.

With the K-to-12 school and the skilled trades, we just recently announced additional units to 21 schools to offer

additional opportunities for kids to do skilled trades. We have about 100 high schools that are now offering skilled trades. We have nobody on the wait-list for apprenticeship in skilled trades right now. All who want to do it in high school are doing it right now. We'll continue to look at that and improve on that as need increases.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, we have an aging workforce and we do not have enough workers. The new project will place an upward pressure on all wages, and the cost of new home construction and other builds will skyrocket.

I ask the Premier: What is his government's plan to address these and other issues to ensure that our young people will benefit from the Churchill River project?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

We always hear about the lack of workforce here in the province. We've got 16,000 skilled workers in the building trades right now and numerous others that travel away to work. Between 2012 and 2018, we did Long Harbour, Bull Arm, Voisey's Bay, work in Labrador West, all simultaneously while Muskrat Falls was being built. We have the workers.

We brought in 44 workers from Ireland to come weld in Long Harbour – very few other workers came in during that time. We have a plan to get kids in school, to get apprenticeships up, we have a plan to start moving that right away as soon as this is

approved. We look forward to getting people educated and getting them skilled jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Speaker, when the NDP brought forward a private Member's motion calling for the HST to be removed from home heating – a motion both the PCs and the Liberals voted against – we were clear, this must apply to all forms of home heating, not just electricity.

In my district, there are still residents who rely on stove oil to heat their homes and they are facing skyrocketing costs compounded by the impacts of Trump's war on Iran. These families should not be left out.

So I ask the minister: Will this government ensure that no Newfoundlander and Labradorian is excluded from the 15 per cent rebate and commit to matching that cost-saving measure for all forms of home heating, including stove oil?

Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: Speaker, the hon. Member has brought up affordability measures now, I think, probably for the third night. The only thing I rest assured is that we will have affordability measures this fall directly related to the increased revenues due to the price of oil over and above our benchmark \$79 per barrel. So I just wanted to get that out there; they will come this fall.

When it comes to the revenues that we get from this deal, I mentioned earlier that in 2041 we'll have \$2.7 billion that will come straight to the coffers in Newfoundland and

Labrador. With more time, I could tell you what \$2.7 billion could do, but it's not a stretch of the imagination as I stated before, 60 per cent of our health care costs can be covered.

SPEAKER: The hon. minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the same as in 2024, I worked with the party involved to try to strengthen the oversight committee. The Premier today in writing said that he would ask the people involved to meet with the oversight committee to have the PUB involved in some manner as strengthening to oversight.

Will the Premier confirm that when this oversight is in place that he will let the public know what details are involved with the oversight with the PUB and when it is finalized?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, that's exactly the intent of what we intend to do, because we know we need to put a new mandate in front of our Oversight Committee now. We have already committed to having the chair of the Oversight Committee reach out, through the clerk, to the PUB, to ask the PUB to provide some names of other expertise that could be involved in this oversight and they will work together on developing what those oversight regulations are and what they will actually be looking at.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Education. Corner Book on many occasions are already asking questions about the work. Will the minister commit to having information sessions in the Corner Brook, Bay of Islands area and across Newfoundland and Labrador to give people who are looking to enter the trades what is available and will be available so they can prepare themselves for these jobs?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: Thank you for the question.

I can tell you in my past experience with dealing with major projects and skilled trades and training over the years, we have always worked with industry proponents to ensure that the information is in the right people's hands.

In the past, that has resulted in holding information centres across the province. I suspect we'll be doing the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period is now expired.

The final item on our agenda now is the three party leaders will speak.

I'm not sure if the Leader of the Official Opposition is ready to go? Do you need the —

L. PARROTT: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party is going to go first?

J. DINN: Sure, the best goes first, no problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: If that's the case, the Speaker recognizes the hon. Leader of the Third Party, for your closing remarks.

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

First of all, thank you to the many people who wrote in, called, spoke to me in the supermarket about this. I have a binder full of emails. This is the second time in as many years that we're debating this issue and the enormity of it is not lost on me and what it means to the people of the province, the people of Labrador for the future of my grandchildren and my children as well.

The one thing in this province, Speaker, we've been traumatized by major projects and the promises that come with them. Certainly the one thing that's common to all of them is the rhetoric. I go back to resettlement, a major project, a major shift. The premier at the time said: We must develop or perish, burn your boats. Two jobs on shore for every job on the water.

Churchill Falls 1969: "This is our land, this is our river, and we will forever make sure that it will operate primarily, chiefly, mainly for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland."

Muskrat Falls, Premier Williams: This is a day of great historic significance because we'll develop the Churchill Project on our own terms to free the geographic stranglehold of Quebec which has for too long determined the fate of the most attractive clean energy project in North America. The benefits of this project for our province will be enormous, including thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic activity.

As good as the jobs were, we were left with a lot of angst and after-effects.

The same thing applies to the debate of 2024. Then Premier Furey said: “Today we begin to write a new chapter for this province and this changes everything. The agreement will have a generational impact on the growth and prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

This year: This deal will redefine the future of our province. Oh, and let’s not forget – say it with me – “more power, more value, more transmission.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

J. DINN: So the thing is, in many ways, but throughout this whole week, in my mind has been dueling banjos going back and forth as to which deal was the best. The question for us on this side here, on the NDP, still remains: Is the deal – whether it was the 2024 deal or this deal – in the best interest of the people of the province?

Here’s the thing, then, as now, the government had the majority. Like as we did in 2024, the best we can do is ensure that there’s transparency, because that’s the only way we’re going to determine if this is indeed in the best interest of the people of this province. See past the rhetoric.

We set three conditions: an independent review that did require an external involvement of the PUB, and we made that clear; we want a clear vote – brought back to the House of Assembly to be voted on; and it did require the approval of the Innu.

As I said in my opening comments, to say that I have trust issues is an understatement, because we had the same critics of 2025 – some new ones – and they are the critics here that are being brought forward with two different views, and still the problem remains, as evident, as to how truly independent are some of these experts.

Mr. Perry, the chief negotiator, was deferential to the Premier. It was not his place to disagree with the Premier. He did

not consult with the IRC nor did he see the need to consult with them. He was appointed by the government. He owes, I guess, his allegiance, to some degree, to that. That makes sense too.

We heard from some experts, in the attempt to try to prove that this deal is better than the last deal, that maybe the answers aren’t so clear. For example, this deal touted the federal loan guarantee and the tax credit. This is the big difference between this deal and the last deal; yet, Ms. Katz said that the same supports were available for the 2024 deal. I have no way of knowing that but, the fact is, she said that was there. So it’s a selling point or it’s not a selling point.

Ms. Katz also said that the purpose of the Major Projects committee, which I understand from her answers to the question, it was not an independent review, it was to make sure that we get these projects moving – not what we were looking for.

J.P. Morgan – two different points of view on the 2 per cent escalator. The one here in 2025 did not divulge that. Mr. Chee-Aloy on-air supporting the 2024 deal and saying it was a fantastic deal, promoting this deal as well.

Mr. Kennedy, who talked about how he had his decision upon Muskrat Falls tied to the experts that he had, the information from the experts. Well, that’s what we’re getting here. The question is, are the experts giving us the full deal?

We also find that Mr. Levert, who was the Oversight Committee, was a person approached by Mr. Kennedy.

So from our point of view, it has always been about making sure we can see past any potential conflict of interest, to see past any bias and to establish clearly, from our own point of view, if this deal makes sense, if the last deal made sense. We can’t see into the future. We can’t. Sixty years from

now, they might be writing history about how we fooled this up. I don't know, maybe we'll be on the right side, maybe we won't, but I will say this, it's been encouraging in the last few days, certainly since I wrote the Premier, that early on we've had these conversations, that there's an attempt towards this transparency and what we've been asking for. It is, yet, remained to be seen where it goes, but we are encouraged.

The Premier has committed to bringing this back to the House of Assembly. I'm hoping that this includes, and I want to account is, a vote and debate on this, because, again, government has the majority. They will pass it.

The Premier has committed to reconstituting the Oversight Committee and bringing the PUB in, which is that external independent source. That's positive and I will give the Premier credit for that, and my colleague too, the MHA for Humber - Bay of Islands.

However, we set three conditions and we are bound to honour those three conditions that we put down, and the third condition was that the Innu must give their approval.

There's a path forward. We cannot vote yes, no is not really the appropriate vote, but maybe if there's a third choice of not yet, that's what we would vote. We do support going forward, this move towards a transparent review. We want that information. We want that brought back to the House for that final debate.

We will vote no, but we are encouraged very much by the fact that we are moving in the right direction.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker, we have another former MHA visiting us here in the House of Assembly

this evening, former MHA and former minister, John Ottenheimer.

Welcome, John.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was truly incredible to hear from all Members on this resolution today. Regardless of our different viewpoints, let us never forget we clearly share the same goal: to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the generations that follow us in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I was prepared to support this agreement. In fact, the night we lost the election, I encouraged the new government to move forward with a Churchill Falls deal, because some things are bigger than politics and the Churchill River is certainly one of them.

I had hoped to vote yes for this, but I cannot vote in favour of an agreement that I would not be prepared to sign myself.

I would never have signed an agreement that repeats the fundamental mistake of 1969 by giving up market-based pricing, and I would never have signed an agreement that, rather than providing for economic upside for our province, is actually subjected to a revenue cap. I would never have signed an agreement again that allows Quebec to buy our power and sell it for their benefit for much, much more. If the value of this electricity rises faster over the coming decades, Newfoundland and Labrador should share in that upside. Full stop. Period.

I would not sign an agreement that came through a process entirely orchestrated by just one person, the Premier, with no

openness, no transparency and no independence. I would not sign an agreement that didn't have the support of all of our partners, including the Innu Nation.

Presumably, negotiations will continue tomorrow if this vote passes. We're being asked, as a province, to trust this government to deliver the best deal. After everything I've learned this week, and the rest of the province, how can we?

The Premier promised a referendum and broke that promise based on a false assertion about timing. The Premier promised his independent review panel would speak publicly to their report, the report that formed the very basis of the negotiation strategy that led to this deal, yet the committee members suddenly disappeared into thin air, never to be heard from again.

The Premier claimed his deal has given us the ability to negotiate prices directly with external US markets, and yet, we heard from the experts, this simply is not true. Trust is earned through promises kept, facts that stand up to scrutiny and answers to questions when they are asked. We did not get any of that.

Let's be honest, Quebec stands to gain a lot from this agreement. In fact, they're thrilled about it. Hydro-Québec is calling it a better deal than the last one because they are getting more power at a cheaper price. The Quebec separatist party that previously criticized any deal, especially with federal involvement, said earlier this month that this is a good deal for Quebec.

The Premier has said he didn't want to hear political sound bytes in this debate but that is what the province heard over and over and over again. The government Members continued to reference their empty slogan dozens and dozens of times.

They promised more power, and it is true, Quebec is getting more than 80 per cent of

the new power. Much of Labrador's additional promised power is from wind, which is only just a thought subject to years of feasibility, consultation, negotiations and financing. We were promised more value and Quebec got it because we've given away market-based pricing again.

The Premier's own advisors confirmed they didn't know if the Premier had even tried to negotiate a market-based index and, more importantly, they confirmed that even though the negotiating team walked away from the formula because it was too complex, it was indeed to finalize it if it had been pursued.

We were promised more transmission. The Premier claimed, as I said, he had access to external markets, but they've since walked back their language. The experts confirmed that Hydro will not directly contract with buyers of power in these external markets. Conservatives and the Premier didn't even meet their own mandate.

Now, when I was Premier, I spoke to the prime minister many times about his government involvement in Churchill Falls and how it is a project of national interest. As the federal energy minister said to me on August 17, the federal government's role is to grow the pie but it is up to each of the provinces to get their fair share.

So I say thank you, Prime Minister, for growing the pie and shame on the Premier for not getting the bigger piece for Newfoundland and Labrador.

An agreement of this magnitude should withstand the strongest possible scrutiny, not because, as Members opposite think, we want it to fail, but because we need it to succeed.

This independent review was hand-picked and the report is based on secret submissions. The Oversight Committee was hand-picked, and they didn't bother to challenge and test the assertions that were

given to them. We learned yesterday the Oversight Committee's role had ended, causing the government to scramble to reappoint them.

Now, there are some good things in this agreement, but the question is whether those benefits are enough to justify the protections that the Premier has walked away from: no market-based pricing for Churchill Falls, no increasing revenue for Gull Island, no off-ramps, no independent oversight or review, no new access to outside markets, no fair share of federal funds and, most importantly, no trust.

When the Premier was trying to earn that title, he made a clear promise to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: I will not sign any deal that does not have the clear consent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. He promised a referendum and cancelled it. Now, with this slim majority, we are about to make the most significant decision in our province's history.

So does the government have the clear consent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

There have been protestors outside these doors. The MHA representing Lake Melville walked out of the government caucus when this started on Monday. Indigenous leaders have withheld their support, who I know, to them, this is more than just a river. That, to me, does not sound like clear consent. So, by his own standards, the Premier shouldn't support this agreement.

The Premier, even worse, will not bring the final agreements back to the House of Assembly before they are signed. The Premier promised Newfoundlanders and Labradorians the final say and now it is confirmed they will never get it.

Anyone who votes no today is not saying no to development. It doesn't mean saying no to jobs, no to investment or no to clean energy. Do not fall for this false choice. Our

desire is to move forward, but we cannot be using this as a reason to settle. Voting no means insisting on a deal that best serves our province, that best serves Newfoundland and Labrador.

We've had more than a century to learn from 1969, a deal that's haunted us for decades. Muskrat Falls has nearly bankrupted us. It is our responsibility to make the best decision we can with everything we know for the people that sent us here and for the generations who will live with what we decide.

After I became Premier, I stayed awake many nights wondering if the final agreements ever came to me, how would I feel. Imagine being the person responsible for the entire future of our beautiful province. It is a difficult moment for anyone, but for me, today, I am not in that position but I do have another responsibility; I have a vote here in this House and I have to justify my vote to the people of Winsor Lake and to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

While there have been many issues raised, questions unanswered, flawed processes have emerged and promises have been broken, there is a single overriding non-starter for me, we have not insisted on ensuring that our province stands to gain from any windfalls gained by Quebec. Even more troubling, we had negotiated that from Quebec not long ago, but the Premier decided to give it back because it was too complex. Complexity, for me, is not a reason to cave. It is not a reason to give in. It is definitely not a reason to accept the formula that Quebec wanted.

For me, and when it comes to this deal, the lack of protection for our future, for our children – for my children, Maggie and Jack – is where I will always take a stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: That is where I would have said to Quebec, it is my job to protect the future

of Newfoundland and Labrador, not Quebec. That is where I would have said to Quebec, not again. That is where I would have said to Quebec, no.

That is why, with my hand on my heart, I can stand here today and vote no on this resolution.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I want to extend a special thank you to the experts for sharing their time, their experience and their knowledge with the House, and I want to thank all of you, my colleagues in this Legislature. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been well served by your efforts.

We are all well aware of the magnitude of the decision that falls upon us today. I have felt the weight of that decision since shortly after I assumed office as Premier when I was faced with the question of what to do with the historic opportunity at Churchill Falls and Gull Island.

The question included whether to seize an opportunity and resolve the historic injustice of the 1969 agreement, a terrible deal which has cast a long shadow over our province, robbing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians of the ability to benefit from our own resource to power our economy or pay for our services.

The question included what to do with the MOU we inherited from the previous government. That, while it took important steps towards correcting the injustices of 1969, was also flawed. In the words of the independent Review Committee, "... the

MOU in its current form is not in the public interest."

The question our government then faced was how to approach negotiations with a counterparty in Quebec who had a need to secure more power for their province and were willing to make major concessions to get it, but who are also a counterparty that has, over the decades, become deeply distrusted by many in our province and a counterparty that was prepared to walk away.

The question included what to do with the opportunity presented by the federal government. In particular, Prime Minister Mark Carney who made it clear to me in every conversation that he was prepared to act, act decisively and act fast with billions of dollars in additional support, while at the same time staring down the challenges of Donald Trump and his new tariffs.

We must act with urgency to help build Canada strong, but, ultimately, Speaker, the question boiled down to the question that I hope every single one of us will ask ourselves before we stand to vote, faced with this moment in time, are we as a province prepared to act? Are we prepared to turn our resources into real wealth, real jobs, real industry, real improvements to our services, a real break in your cost of living and a real reduction in our debt?

We owe it to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador today, Speaker, including our children, our grandchildren and their children to leave them a more prosperous province. That is why I have put everything I've got into launching long-term industries in this province and, Speaker, we have only just begun.

We are kick-starting our offshore oil and gas sector with Bay du Nord. We're using the revenue from Bay du Nord to also build a new floating dry dock that will anchor a long-term Maritime maintenance and repair sector.

Speaker, with this deal, we're not just trying to build a power plant; we're trying to build something that will outlive all of us and give future generations the long-term power, the revenue, the jobs, the energy and the option to build their own future and choose their own path.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, I will say to all of my colleagues, through you, that the deal you have in front of you does just that. The deal we have today gives us more power, enough to transform our entire economy and launch a mining renaissance in the Labrador Trough.

More importantly, it's all about optionality. For every single year of this new deal, it will be Newfoundland and Labrador that gets to choose how we use our power. We will have more value, \$49 billion in today's dollars or \$273 billion in cash. Enough to start balancing our books and help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians balance theirs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: And more jobs. There are thousands of workers who could build their careers, buy their homes and raise their families right here and not somewhere far away.

We will have more transmission to sell our power to markets like New York and New England at the same price that Quebec gets. We will be able to share the benefits of the Churchill Falls right away with the Churchill River electricity rebate that will save families 15 per cent off their electricity bills.

It is a new deal. It is a better deal. It is better than the 1969 Churchill Falls agreement. It is better than the old 2024 MOU. It is certainly better than sitting back and hoping that someone, somewhere else, in some other time will solve our province's

challenges for us. Those are the choices, Speaker. The time to act is now.

When we do act, we will do it alongside the Innu Nation who are Indigenous people of Canada. Developing Churchill Falls and Gull Island has the potential to be transformative. We look forward to partnering with the Innu on this deal.

Speaker, a lot of people worked very hard to open the door in front of us. It is a door to more wealth, more jobs, less debt, more industry, more businesses. It is a door to the hospitals and schools and roads and police, to the better housing and seniors care and community services we all want to see. Not just for today, not just for tomorrow, not just this year or next year, but for decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of province I want to live in. That's the kind of province I want my family to live in. That is the kind of province I want my constituents to live in. This is the kind of province we all deserve to live in, and that's the kind of province I want to build for all of us.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: That brings us to the final moments, I guess.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: What's that?

AN HON. MEMBER: An hour and 45 minutes.

SPEAKER: Hour and 45 minutes left – you'll be here; I won't be.

Are House Leaders ready for the question?

All those in favour of the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Division

SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

TABLE OFFICER (Hammond): Tony Wakeham, Lloyd Parrott, Barry Petten, Lela Evans, Helen Conway-Ottenheimer, Paul Dinn, Joedy Wall, Craig Pardy, Jeff Dwyer, Loyola O'Driscoll, Andrea Barbour, Chris Tibbs, Lin Paddock, Pleaman Forsey, Mike Goosney, Riley Balsom, Hal Cormier, Mark Butt, Jim McKenna, Joseph Power, Eddie Joyce.

SPEAKER: All those against, please rise.

TABLE OFFICER: John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, Bernard Davis, Sarah Stoodley, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Pam Parsons, Keith White, Paul Pike, Elvis Loveless, Fred Hutton, Jamie Korab, Lucy Stoyles, Jim Parsons, Bettina Ford, Michael King, James Dinn, Sheilagh O'Leary, Keith Russell.

CLERK (Hawley George): Speaker, the ayes: 21; the nays: 18.

SPEAKER: The motion has been carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Before we adjourn, I just want to take a quick moment to thank all Members for the last four days and for the debate. Regardless of where you stood on the issue, I think that every Member in this House certainly represented their district and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and expressed their opinions, and that's what democracy is all about.

I also just want to thank my team, the Table Officers and the Commissionaires, my Sergeant-at-Arms, the folks in Broadcast, Hansard and so on. All this doesn't happen without them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I know they worked extra hard just to get things together and throughout the week and we couldn't do it without them. So thank you so much.

With that said, this House is now adjourned until the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, October 26, at 1:30 p.m.