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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Before we admit strangers, just to advise my colleagues, I wasn't in the room yesterday but we had a burning sensation, smell. I'm told that the Minister of Transportation and Works and his team are on it; there's a belt that's malfunctioning somewhere in the building. I don't know what the belt does (inaudible).

Admit strangers, please.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Whole on Ways and Means to consider a resolution and bill respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 55.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on Way and Means to examine the Interim Supply Bill.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering the related resolution and Bill 55, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The

Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

Resolution

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,864,878,600."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

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

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

I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak on some broader issues here in the House. Since we are doing what we familiarly call the Interim Supply bill, it allows us to look at how our money is spent. We know we need Interim Supply at this time of the fiscal year because with a budget not in place – and we've been told by the Minister of Finance that he intends to bring the budget in in April sometime. With the fiscal year coming to an end, we have to make sure that we approve the expenditure of money on April 1 in order to keep government running.

The responsibilities of government is to take care of the people of the province and to make sure the province works for the good of the people, and government has programs and services to work for the good of the people.

One of the things I want to talk about actually relates to that, because one of the biggest expenditures that we have in our budget is education. That, along with health, are probably the two biggest needs that people have and are the two biggest expenditures that government has. Both of them are extremely important.

That's why I think it's so important when it comes to education that we take seriously the impact on families and on children of decisions that we make of how they're treated, et cetera. I'm particularly going to speak to the issue of Bishop Feild Elementary school. In the fall of 2017, Bishop Feild Elementary, as some of you may remember, the building had –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

Thank you.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair; I appreciate that.

The building had an accident, I guess, is the word to use, but part of the ceiling in the gym fell down. And with any old building, obviously, investigation into that fall of the ceiling led to looking at other issues in the building, and I understand that and I think the parents understand it, too.

Since, I would say, January of 2018, you had the whole fall with this being dealt with, partial information being given to parents, not very much, very partial information being given to parents, the children having to go from the east end of St. John's to the west end of the city, to the former School for the Deaf – of course, you know buses are in play, et cetera – but this was a tremendous impact on the families and on the staff of the school.

Beginning with January of 2018, I was looking back over my records, I think it was around January I really started getting letters from the parents who were really stressed out, and stressed out because they didn't have information, stressed out because anything they knew they were trying to get from what was in the media, and there was very little in the media. They were writing ministers, they were writing the school board, they were trying to get information about how the school was going to be repaired, was the damage going to be repaired, when were their children going to be able to get back to the school that many of them walk to on a daily basis – what was going to happen?

The utter frustration that came out in many of the letters, and the stress that came out in the letters, it really upset me. And even now, when I go back and read some of them, it really disturbs me; parents who sat down and took the time to carefully write their own letters.

We have a real complication when it comes to how we run in government, how we run silos.

We have the Department of Education, we have the Department of Transportation and Works, and these became the two departments, and then, of course, you had the school board. But in terms of government itself, these became the two bodies that parents had to work with.

So, once a decision was made, the educational side of it, those decisions were made, the children were now going to school in the west end until everything was taken care of, and the actual investigation into why the roof fell, the investigation into the damage, the investigation into what happened, of course, was passed over to Transportation and Works. You had two different departments responsible for two different things, but it seemed like nobody talking to the other, and nobody talking to the parents.

It was only recently, about six weeks ago, that you actually had a full meeting where information was put out, you had representatives from the school council, you had the school board, you had representatives from Transportation and Works. But this is 2019, so a year and a half later before there was really a meeting where full information was given.

The information now is that the date that parents thought the kids were going to get back in the school, which was September 2019, is now changed to 2020. And we do now have stuff in writing, on paper, from the minister. We do have commitments; we do have signs that this is when it's really going to happen. But the process has been horrible. We've got to learn how to deal better with our parents.

As an individual MHA, I can do the job that I do. I go to the ministers, I try to get the information and I try to get them to communicate but we have got to deal with people better. We have got to let them know – what's wrong with letting them know what the report is, seeing it, not having to ATIPP it? The first report that was done – what's wrong?

I've had to ATIPP a report right now that I still haven't received. We ATIPPed it from one department and it's really the other department, now we're waiting for it from the other department to really see what was found so that parents could fully understand why things have

taken so long. By the time the children get back into their school, it will be two years and four months since the ceiling fell. They could have been told every step of the way what was found, why it was taking so long for tenders.

I understand that sometimes there's a reason why it takes so long for tenders, but these parents – they were, up to a few weeks ago, were regularly going online trying to see were the tenders being called at the time they were told they were going to be called, finding nothing; once again, contacting the minister; copying me on it, my contacting the minister. I understand why delays can happen. And I bet the parents of the children in Bishop Feild and other schools where things like this have happened, they'd understand too if they were given the information and not waiting for two years before there finally is a real meeting that fully informs.

We have got to learn how to deal better, and we've got to learn too how not to work in silos in government. It's not enough for the Department of Education to say this is not our responsibility now; this is the responsibility of Transportation and Works. No, children not being in the school that they're supposed to be in are the Department of Education's responsibility. So what goes on between the two departments, in one department urging the other one to give the information that's needed so parents understand, because I'm telling you the stress has been terrible.

What happens is you get all kinds of speculation going on publicly. Early on, people were saying that's it; that's the end of Bishop Feild. We've heard they're going to be getting rid of Bishop Field; they're going to be shutting it down. Then, the parents get blamed because that kind of talk was happening, but that kind of talk is going to happen if people aren't informed.

If people aren't given the information then they're going to speculate. And, what can I do as an MHA? Can I say, no, that's not the intent of government to close Bishop Feild Elementary? Well, I didn't know that. I don't know that. We're assured now that's not happening. We're assured it's opening in January 2020. There seems like that definitely will be the case, but I'm urging this government – we spend so much

money on education. It's really important – let's spend a little bit more money on making sure that communication takes place, just a little bit more money even if it does mean sending out something through Canada Post that may cost a bit of money, but give people full reports, give people information. Don't hold people in the dark because they will speculate, because they fear and fear brings out speculation. And then, children are affected. Their education is affected because their parents are concerned.

So, I really beg this government to think clearly about how they work with the people in this province.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member her speaking time has expired.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour to rise in this House to talk about Interim Supply and what it means for this province to get us through a hump between the end of the fiscal year until the budget comes out. I certainly appreciate the work that the Finance Minister has done on that. He and his staff have done an amazing job and I'm sure it'll be another good-news budget come down this year.

I'm rising today, Mr. Chair, to continue to talk about the good things that are happening in the District of Bonavista. However, I'd be remiss if I didn't address some unfounded accusations made about me by the Member for St. John's Centre on social media.

The Member accuses me of not caring about seniors, not caring about those living in long-term care, or even caring about my constituents. That is on a Facebook post she waited a week to put up, discussing a speech I gave in the House last week. That's her words, not mine.

Mr. Chair, our Government House Leader stated last Thursday in the House that facts matter. Well, Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is that the

NDP or the former leader from St. John's Centre does not hold a monopoly on caring about their constituents or even social issues.

I can stand here today, Mr. Chair, and say that it is very disingenuous and a low blow to be such a part of petty politics just to score political points. I can stand here, Mr. Chair, and be proud of the work that I've done over the past four years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: I'm not going to go down the same road as the Member for St. John's Centre because I actually believe that she is doing a good job for the people in her district, for her constituents, Mr. Chair. Much like all 40 of us in this House of Assembly care about the seniors in our district, care about those in long-term care, care about our constituents.

I can stand here proud to say that I care very much for the people in the District of Bonavista. I can proudly say that my constituency assistant and I have helped hundreds, if not thousands of people, throughout my district. This includes seniors, those who live in long-term care and their families. Those who require travel assistance. Those who need help through Income Support or other social programs. Those who need new dentures is often brought up. Those who need housing. Those who are subject to domestic violence who need help immediately, and I can go on, Mr. Chair.

It is a fallacy for the Member for St. John's Centre to think that government Members do not care about our constituents or the people of our province. It is a fallacy for the same Member to think that the NDP has a monopoly on social issues. That couldn't be further from the truth. Mr. Chair, facts matter.

To provide social programs that we can afford, we need to have money to fund them, an economy which provides revenue from government to fund them, that is why I am going to take the rest of my time here today to talk about the new businesses which have started in the District of Bonavista over the past number of years. So I'd say to my friend from CBS, listen very intently.

Mr. Chair, the Bonavista-Trinity Regional Chamber of Commerce grew from 80 members in 2016 to 158 in 2018. I'm going to repeat that again because the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands –

MR. LANE: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. KING: – is heckling me right now.

MR. LANE: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. KING: Mr. Chair, the local chamber of commerce grew from 80 members in 2016 to 158 this past year, which it currently has. That is a significant growth; almost 100 per cent.

Some of the new businesses that we have, and bear with me because there are quite a few: Art Bonavista Productions Inc.; Bonabooch Kombucha Co. Imagine, kombucha being made in Bonavista, it's amazing; Bonavista Adventure Tours, and both Jordan and Bonnie were featured on Eastlink TV's Discover NL, and it was a great segment on what they do. CareGivers, for those working in the home care industry; Discovery Sea Adventure Tours in Dunfield; East Coast Glow. Mr. Chair, they're featured in Vogue in the United States. They ship all over the world, so they're not just pigeonholed in a small market. They ship all over the world and have a wide following.

Maudie's Tea Room in Keels, another success story. The Mesh's store was featured in *Maudie*, they kept the old style and now they've developed that into a tea room to grow the tourism industry on the Bonavista Bay side of the District of Bonavista; Round Da Bay Inn in Plate Cove West; Fishing Stage takeout in Champney's Arm; PJ's Take-Out in Port Union; Bon Appetit takeout; Saucy Mouth food truck. Saucy Mouth, actually, is a business located here in St. John's and they pop up at a number of different events, but they're set up in Bonavista in the summertime.

Moreish Cupcakes and Treats, a cupcake and cake shop, and they're open through the year. Masters Taxi in Bloomfield; Dunrovin gas bar

and trailer park, and we actually helped them get going through a traffic study paid for by the Department of Transportation and Works due to a regulation where it said you had to put in a left-hand turning lane. We worked with them to help them establish their business and get all their Service NL permits.

Robin's Donuts in Lethbridge, and I can tell you I stop in there every time I go through. It opened in, I think, November or December.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good food, good food.

MR. KING: It is good food and good coffee, but they're busy all the time. It's remarkable.

Beth's Variety in Princeton. This couple moved to Princeton from Ontario, they have family in that area, and they took over an old convenience store that was already there, but they've set a community tone for that town, and they're being successful right now.

Vera's Villa in Musgravetown, a number of seniors' apartments; low-cost affordable housing units in Musgravetown. Nish Body Products in Trinity; Newfoundland Salt Company. Newfoundland Salt Company started here in St. John's but they decided to move to Bonavista because the economic conditions made it very lucrative for them to come there. Now they're successful; they ship around the world. You'll see them at any event going on, craft fair, whatnot, here in the province and around the country; another success. They started off with just salt and they get into other salt products as well.

What's left to be said about Port Rexton Brewing Co.? We're helping them right now with a repayable loan to expand. Currently, the TCII minister – they have 16 employees and with the new expansion they're going to be able to hire three more people. Nineteen people working in a craft brewing industry in a small village in outport Newfoundland, it's remarkable. And then independent from Port Rexton Brewing Co. but associated with them is Oh My Cheeses, a grilled cheese and french fries stand who provide a great meal with the product at Port Rexton Brewing Co. As well, I should mention that Port Rexton Brewing has a pop-up store here on Torbay Road.

In Bonavista we have, in the Raymond Guy building, Pretty Pink Boutique, and I've bought some stuff there for my cats. We also have Simply Chic Consignment Boutique, which I have some clothing that I have up for consignment. Rosewood Suites at Trinity, an old tavern dating back to the early 1900's that's been redeveloped into a number of suites, which we've supported by a repayable loan, adding to the accommodations on the Bonavista Peninsula, which you can't get, it's hard to book in the summertime. You can't go up the peninsula now and get a room on the spur of the moment. You have to book well ahead.

Shannon's Pub & Grill; Sweet Rock Ice Cream, two locations, one in Bonavista, one in Trinity, and this goes from Aunt Sarah's Chocolate.

Now, Mr. Chair, I'm not even near finished of all the businesses that have started up over the last couple of years, so I'm going to take a few more minutes when I get a chance to finish this list off and continue talking about the good news in the Bonavista District.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to Interim Supply, fully understanding the concept of this is a bridging facility between fiscal year-end and the new budget approval. I'd like to, first of all, comment on the speech just given by the Member opposite there. It was very eloquent and well designed. I'd like to congratulate his speech writer.

Let's talk about deferred revenue. I know the Minister of Finance has often referred to the oil that's being left in the ground on account of the shutdown at one of our production facilities as deferred revenue. Deferred revenue is a great thing because it's revenue we can draw on in the future. But it's only a great thing if we, as a province or as a business, which our province is, are operating in a surplus.

Right now, because we're not pulling that money out of the ground, capitalizing on the sale

of that product, we are looking at a larger deficit than we had forecasted. We are looking at having to borrow extra money. So, in the future, we have to look at that oil in the ground, that not only does that oil have to get the market value of the oil as it comes out, but it also has to pay for the interest that's it's going to bear now because it's still left in the ground.

Everybody often hears of the phrase: Oh well, it's water under the bridge. And my understanding of water under the bridge is, okay, water goes under the bridge, you can't really stop it, but it gone down the river and that's all you got to think about it.

So, let's talk about water over the dam. As recent, in the past couple of days, it's been brought to this House that since August of 2016 we've been letting water flow over the dam, power go in the lines, Quebec used our natural resource to fatten their coffers when we really should be looking at how much can we tax them for that. That should be more of a revenue for us.

And this water over the dam, we can't stop that. That's going to run through every day. So, that is lost revenue. That's the kind of revenue we really have to focus on, and it's tragic that the people of this province have had to bear the cost of government's expenditures through increased taxation.

Yes, we brought the deficit down, but the only reason why the deficit has gone down is because world commodity prices on our exports such as oil and minerals has gone up, and, of course, the tax burden on the people of this province has also increased. That's something that we have to change because every regime in history that has relied on fixing their deficit or fixing a spending problem with taxation has fallen.

I think that we quote one of the more famous situations in which the Queen said: "Let them eat cake." Basically, that's what's happening. We're taxing our people to fix our problems, but taxation does not fix problems, it only magnifies problems. It delays a problem, but it does not fix it.

What we've seen, and I've said it many times in the past week, is people do not have the extra

money to take out of their pockets to put into staying here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We've become one of the more expensive places – well, probably the most expensive place, taxation-wise, to live in in Canada. And that is not going to encourage our young people to stay here. That's not going to encourage our well-pensioned pensioners and seniors to stay here. They are going to move. Those who have the opportunity to move have been leaving, be they the young and well educated, the well established and well reputed or the well pensioned. Those people are the ones that are leaving and those people are ones that are taking the investments of our province out and contributing elsewhere.

In the consideration of Interim Supply, as I said, I completely understand the process, but it does give us the opportunity to speak to other larger issues that are occurring throughout our province. I've heard Members from the Third Party, the independents, our Opposition and, just most recently, the governing party speak to the plight of our seniors. Those and others who are on fixed incomes and lower end of the scale, they are the ones who have been most affected by the increase of the cost of living.

It's not that we're getting more bang for our buck. Our insurance is not giving us extra coverage. We're paying 15 per cent extra. That 15 per cent extra is necessary to carry on the duties of our lives. It's necessary to get back and forth to work, necessary to get to our doctors' appointments, necessary to go out and visit local businesses, take a trip down to Bonavista to see if what the Member is saying is actually true. We need to be able to traverse around our province and spread our money around. We need to open up our pockets and take the money out, but what I found is even people who do have money in their pockets are not spending it. They're worried about what's coming next.

I would love to hear a good-news budget, because last year's budget was a regurgitation of the year before. I do understand that the government has a responsibility to generate revenue. Again, as I said, they can do it in two ways; They can do it through taxation or they can do it through economic stimulus. And the bit of economic stimulus that we have been seeing, being the exportation of our minerals, opening

up of new mines, that's all driven by world commodity prices and government has little or no control over that.

Another issue I'd like to speak to is, yesterday, the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue stood up and spoke regarding the closures of several fish plants, and he referred to the previous administration as being responsible. A fish plant closes for one reason usually. Do you know what that reason is? It's the lack of fish. It's the lack of raw product to put through that processing plant to make it feasible.

As I've said before, in the terms of Confederation, those sitting around the table thought it was more important to maintain the control of the colour of our margarine than the colour of our fishery – the colour of our fishery, than control of our fishery. Right now, and in the past, federal governments of different stripes be they red or blue, they have ultimate control of our fishery. They have ultimate control of the supply.

Supply is necessary to keep our plants moving. Supply is necessary to keep our workers working, our harvesters moving and the rural economies moving along as well and sustainable. We can't blame provincial governments for making the decisions, but what we can blame provincial governments for is not lobbying hard enough against Ottawa, against decisions that will affect our fishery.

We need to lobby harder with Ottawa to have at least, at the very minimal, joint management between provincial and federal jurisdiction over our waters that surround our province. It's time that we even look, okay, we are an Island economy, as much as we like to say we operate on a global scale, but basically things that happen around our Island, being in our waters or under our waters, are what's driving our economy. Everything else is very important – different industries, it is always important to diversify of course. With the oil industry and the subsequent supply chain that surrounds it, I mean that generates a lot of activity.

So now in times of us renegotiating the Atlantic Accord, we have to make darn well sure that we're looking at further down the road, not just for an immediate cash grab, we need to look at

what's going to happen as our province and population move along long after we're just nothing more than a memory. Things that we decide today are most important for those of the future.

We have to look past what we're going to do right now. We have to look into what we're going to do right now is going to affect our future. At the same time we can't ignore those, such as our seniors, who have contributed so much to our population and to our province as where we stand today.

It's a delicate balance, but we have to look at the positive aspects of our province and we have to make our province a more affordable place to live, and the first part of that is to reduce the tax burden on the people of the province.

We also have to look at reducing the tax burden and the administration costs of business because business is what's going to fix our economic woes. It's not going to be government, but in order for business to fix that, government has to make necessary changes and one is take the – I'm sure other governments have been just as guilty, but the nepotism and partisan actions or appearances of certain economic decisions are discouraging legitimate business from coming to Newfoundland and setting up here in the province.

The resources that we all occupy are not ours, they are only on borrow from future generations.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's indeed a pleasure to speak to Bill 55, Interim Supply. As well, it's indeed an honour and a privilege to rise today representing the good people of the District of Exploits.

In an imperfect world, there's still some good news and that applies to districts, provinces and countries, so I would like to speak, even with all of our imperfections, on some of the positive things that are happening in my district.

I'll list just a few but they're certainly not all of the great positive news that this government has brought forward to the District of Exploits during our tenure.

Capital Works projects Grand Falls-Windsor: upgrades to road infrastructure. Grenfell Heights: road widening, new water storm Phase 1. Bishop's Falls: Hamptons Hill water tower replacement, lift station upgrades and road upgrades. Botwood: engineering design for town hall/fire hall. Outfall Phase 1, Circular Road. Northern Arm: extension to the water main. Point Leamington: new water tank and pumping system. Phillips Head: water line repairs throughout the community.

Bishop's Falls: new town road booster pumps system upgrades; Riverside Drive paving project. Botwood: Confederation Place water, sewer and road upgrades, septic tank; Fernwood Drive sanitary sewer. Norris Arm: sewage lift station. Pleasantview: water system upgrades.

Government has also provided \$3.58 million to expand the waste water treatment facility in Grand Falls-Windsor. This is in addition to federal and municipal funding. This investment will allow for the addition of a secondary level of waste water treatment at the facility. These improvements will ensure the municipality can meet current federal waste water system effluent regulations, and the upgrades will also provide the necessary capacity to provide residential and commercial growth across the region.

Mr. Chair, in the 2018 and 2019 year, our government funded \$2.3 million to pave the TCH from the Sir Robert Bond Bridge to Grand Falls-Windsor. In 2017-2018, they provided \$125,000 for a water main replacement in the Town of Point Leamington.

Under the Small Communities Fund, we have provided \$241,000 for a water main extension in Northern Arm. Significant brush cutting has been realized in the district, with more to come. Significant paving on the Botwood Highway has been realized, as well as on Route 352 and in Northern Arm. We can look forward to more paving on this route and others to be forthcoming under the recently announced Rural and Northern Communities funding plan.

On October 26, 2018, I was joined by the hon. Al Hawkins, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour and MHA for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, to announce the official opening for the Sir Robert Bond Bridge replacement project, and also included the reconfiguration of the Botwood interchange and the east and west approaches to the bridge, as well as demolition and removal of the former bridge and upgraded underpass for the nearby Newfoundland T'Railway system. Motorists now encounter a more familiar and universal diamond interchange and approach the bridge along a flatter, straightened portion of road, which allows for increased visibility and safety, especially in inclement weather. The project also has resulted in the relocation of Route 351 intersection with the Trans-Canada Highway for a safer location further from the bridge.

The new bridge first opened to traffic in October of 2017. The project was completed in partnership with the Government of Canada, through Canada Strategic Infrastructure funding and represents a total shared investment of approximately \$22.5 million.

I wish to express my pleasure upon the completion of the federally and provincially funded replacement of the historic Sir Robert Bond Bridge. This occasion is certainly significant to the District of Exploits, and provides an improved, safer and more attractive and progressive thoroughfare in Central Newfoundland to accommodate traffic from all regions of the province. It's a major element in the province's plan for highway improvement.

As well, the protective care unit at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre in Botwood, a contract valued at approximately \$600,000 to design a 20-bed protective care unit extension which will bring the total numbers of beds in the unit to 49. Residents throughout the district are proud of our Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre and we are blessed to have a facility providing such important health services in this area of the province.

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia is life changing for an individual with that disease, as I would well know, but also for the family and friends. As the disease progresses so does the degree of care an individual requires. The

expansion of the special care unit at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre will ensure that increasing numbers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and dementia in Central Newfoundland receive the care they deserve and provide great comfort to families who can be assured that a high quality of life in a safe, secure environment for their loved ones will be maintained.

In addition to the extension of the protective care unit at the Dr. Hugh Twomey centre, government has also announced a new long-term care facility, both to be built in Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor as well. Government has also launched a new primary health care reform initiative in Botwood. This involves working with frontline providers at the Twomey centre to improve access to a variety of primary health care services.

As part of the services that will be provided Botwood will be the first community, and is the first community to introduce remote mental health services using the provincial Telehealth system. These remote mental health services will supplement Doorways, the single session walk-in clinics which are now available in Botwood and province-wide. I believe these initiatives are clearly demonstrating our government's commitment to improving access to health care services in the province and in the District of Exploits.

I'd also like to acknowledge and mention the advancement and improvements made at the Wooddale tree nursery, recently designated as a centre of excellence for agriculture and forestry. I would also like to add that the agriculture and farming industry throughout Central Newfoundland, and in particular in the District of Exploits, takes a backseat to no one and the listing of assistance provided by Minister Byrne's department towards those positive initiatives – there's a litany of them, too many to name right now. For that, I know that the operators are certainly thankful for the support of the government and the department.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I alluded to my connection with the Alzheimer's and dementia health concerns. I got a mom and dad that are currently at the Hugh Twomey Health Centre in Botwood, neither of whom are doing well. I guess it's only

a couple of days away, March 15 – the Ides of March is always what March 15 is referenced as. Most people in this House and throughout the province would know the background history of where that comes from. But it just so happens that my dad's birthday falls on March 15 and, God-willing, in a couple of days, he will reach his 81st birthday, and I'd like to wish my dad the happiest of birthdays, even during these trying times.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: So with that, I've got some more items that I hope I can bring forward and discuss at another time, but thanks for your time and indulgence, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always a pleasure to be able to have the opportunity to stand and speak in this hon. House. Of course, we're speaking to Interim Supply, so we have 10-minute intervals. The good news is that unlike a bill, as long as there's an intervening speaker, you can speak again. So I intend to speak again and again and again on various topics and take every opportunity to do so.

I just want to talk a little bit about tourism. This is something I've raised in the past, maybe last year or year before, but I think it's always good to put these things out there. The intent is not to be critical, just to point out some observations. Before I do, I do want to say to the Member for Bonavista when he spoke and he referenced the fact the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands is heckling me, what he didn't hear is that when he was talking about his district and all the great things happening in Bonavista I said, you should call it 'Boom-avista,' because the place is booming, and I agree with him.

So I do say, in all sincerity, I go to Bonavista at least once, twice a year. Myself and my wife, we go there usually on a day trip. Sometimes we've

stayed there, but a lot of times it's on a day trip. It's a beautiful location. There's a lot of history. There are tons of things to see and do, whether it be in Bonavista or whether it be in Elliston. Of course, now we heard that there's going to be an expansion in Port Rexton of the microbrewery. I haven't had the opportunity to go there yet. I absolutely intend to go there this summer, though, and see what they have to offer.

I say to the Member that when we talk about tourism, the Bonavista Peninsula is an absolute jewel, there's no doubt about it. From a tourist point of view, it is an absolute jewel. We have many jewels throughout this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Twillingate?

MR. LANE: The Member opposite said: What about Twillingate? I say to the Member, I went to Twillingate – I can't remember if it was this summer past or the one before, I think it might have been the summer before, went through his area, went to Twillingate, went to the Auk Island Winery, I think it's called. There were a number of attractions there we went to see, and another absolutely spectacular part of our province. I encourage anyone and everyone to certainly go out and explore Newfoundland and Labrador. There's no doubt about it that we have so much to offer here to tourists and we have so much to offer here to our own people, if they want to take staycations and so on.

Anyone that has this idea that there's nothing to do and see in Newfoundland and Labrador, it really is a myth. There actually is a lot to see and a lot to see outside of the St. John's metro area, an awful lot to see and I certainly encourage people to do so.

We are seeing increased rubber-tire traffic and so on here in the province. I think a lot of it is due to the ads that have been done. Certainly, I believe it really started with the former administration with some beautiful ads and then it's been continued on by the current administration. I think it's really paid off for sure in terms of getting people here.

I think that *Come From Away* has absolutely had a tremendous impact in driving people, driving traffic here to our province. I believe that 9/11, which is what *Come From Away* is all about,

that really put us on the map. It was a sad time for an awful lot of people, a lot of tragedy but it also opened up the world to Newfoundland and Labrador and showed people what we're all about. I think that has had an impact on bringing here to this province.

Of course, it's all about word of mouth. When somebody comes and they have a great experience, they'll go back to wherever it was they're from and they tell their family members, they tell their friends, their neighbours and more people come to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I think we've only starting to realize the opportunity we have with tourism here in Newfoundland and Labrador. I think that there's still more that we can do. We can still bring more people here, I think there's still more work we can do, particularly on the shoulder seasons, I think they're called, in the tourism industry, to stretch out our tourist season, and I encourage government to continue down that road.

One of the things, of course, we have to do; it's one thing to attract people here and want them to come here and entice them to come here, but there are issues around getting people here. When we look at the flight to Dublin, for example, that WestJet flight that was cancelled and so on, that's not good for our province. When we look at Marine Atlantic and ferry rates that continue to rise, that's not good for our province.

We actually have a Member here who kind of made a federal career out of bringing that issue to the forefront, and so he's nodding his head in agreement with me about that issue. But we have to ensure as best we can, particularly given the relationship that the government continues to say you have with your friends in Ottawa and so on, to try to ensure we have stability and keep rates as low as possible on Marine Atlantic to bring people here, to make it more attractive for people to come here to Newfoundland and Labrador.

We also have to be working, obviously, with the airline industries and so on in the development of packages, particularly when we talk about Dublin and that and to continue to work to get that flight back and other flights here. Because we are right on the edge, of course, of North

America in terms of just across the pond to Europe, to England, Ireland and so on, and it's really hard to take the concept that you've actually got to fly – if you're going from London or Dublin or wherever, you're going to fly over Newfoundland, land in Halifax, and then fly back to Newfoundland. Or if you're in Newfoundland, you want to go there, you got to fly to Halifax and then fly back over Newfoundland to go over across the aisle. So, that is a problem. It's something that I believe we need to work on.

Another couple of observations, which I have raised in the past: signage. I say to the minister, to the government, that I really believe that there are opportunities. Again, I'm not being critical for the sake of being critical, but I do believe there are opportunities when it comes to signage on our highways and on our byroads and so on, to actually get people to those attractions; to get people to where it is they want to go and the things they want to see. I have certainly experienced, when going throughout the province, that there are times when there may be a sign on the highway saying that there's a certain site or location or whatever and you turn off the main highway, then you're driving and you're looking for it and the signage to actually find what you're looking for, particularly if it's a road off of a road, off of a road, the signage has not necessarily been great all the time to locate what it is you're trying to find.

I live here and I'm from here and I've been around, and I've even been to places and went back a few years later and had trouble finding the place that I had already been to because of some of the confusion with signs and so on. So, if I'm someone from away and not used to the place, never been here, then I think that sometimes it could be a challenge because of the signage.

When you go to other places, most of us have travelled off the Island, if you go to Florida, for argument sake – and I understand that we're not Florida, Orlando, Disney and all that but still I think, just to make the point, you'll never get lost there. The signage is perfect. Every road you turn on, there's a sign and everything directing you exactly where you want to go.

I'm not trying to compare us to that. I know we don't have the size, the scale and the amount of people and all that, I get that, but the point I'm trying to make, though, is that there's no doubt when you go to a lot of places, you can easily locate where you're trying to find because the signs are so good, multiple signs, directional signs and so on. I'm not being critical; I'm just saying it's something that we can work on. It's room for improvement, that's all I say to the minister, to the government.

The other thing I think is important, I've noticed that there are places around the Island, some beautiful places, but there are also sites or things listed in the tourist maps or on a sign of a place and when you get down there, the place is falling apart because perhaps it was put there a number of years ago, maybe it done using JCP money and grants and whatever the case might be. It was built and then there was never any plan or money to maintain it.

So, I think it's important to do an inventory of that and we need to decide what are the spots that we want to make available, to encourage people to go to, and what ones do we do and which ones, perhaps, we're just not going to do; but you don't want to have a situation where someone drives –

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. LANE: – 30 kilometres down the road, gets down the road and the place is falling apart either.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member that his speaking time has expired.

MR. LANE: Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a great honour to get up and speak today on Bill 55, Interim Supply. For the general public listening and watching, being a money bill, it

gives us the opportunity to speak on some things happening within our district. In the beautiful district and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate there are lot of great, positive things happening.

I'm just going to start by talking about a couple of events I attended over the weekend. This past Saturday night, the Lewisporte Regional Fire-Rescue held their annual banquet and awards ceremony. The Lewisporte Regional Fire-Rescue has been doing a fantastic job of protecting the community of Lewisporte and surrounding communities. This is their 70th year in operation in the area.

This past October, they expanded their operations to form a regional service, which basically now they're taking in the community of Brown's Arm, joining in their fire protection service area. So far, since October, that relationship they have built and the fire protection that they are now providing to a much larger area has proved to be very successful.

I just want to say a bit hats off to the Lewisporte and Brown's Arm fire departments for the relationship they have built and the work they're doing, and also to the councils and the local service districts for their understanding and their commitment to the communities to provide the best possible fire protection to the area.

During the ceremony, which MP Scott Simms also attended with me, there were a number of recognitions given out for long-service awards and also firefighter of the year. I'm just going to give a little shout-out to those members. Keith Budden and Mark Woodford both received their long-term service awards for 15 years. Ken Curtis and Brad Haggerty received a 20-year service. Todd Pelley also received a 15-year service pin. Also a good friend of mine that I've had the honour of working with for 25 years when I was with the Town of Lewisporte, Darrin Ryan received his service pin for 30 years. Darrin, two of his brothers and his father have been in the fire department for many, many years now and they have done a great service to our community. So, Darrin, if you're listening, which you shouldn't be, you should be out working today but if you're listening, a great congratulations there.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention, Steve Cole, another good friend of mine that I have had the honour of sitting with on several committees over the years. Steve was given the prestigious award of the Firefighter of the Year, this year. It is a great honour because Lewisporte Regional Fire-Rescue has approximately 35 members and they train every week; it doesn't matter what's happening. Probably, with the exception of Christmas and stuff like that, they are training every week and they are an exceptional fire department and I sing their praise every chance I get.

Mr. Chair, in addition to the Lewisporte Regional Fire-Rescue, I have approximately 12 other firefighting stations in my district. The one in Twillingate, in particular, services all of the Twillingate area, Twillingate Island. New World Island, there are two fire departments. Summerford services, I think, 17 communities, so they are a true regional service. In addition, like I say, there are a number of other fire departments doing great work to protect our properties, our homes and also responding to motor vehicle accidents and other things.

To all firefighters, first responders, a big thank you for your dedication and the work that you do, and also to their families. So often that these firefighters go out, either on an accident call or a fire, and their spouses and families are left home not knowing what they had to face and that. So, their work and commitment is to be commended, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to speak a little bit on Education Week. Last week, we celebrated Education Week throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Friday, when I got back into my district, I took the opportunity to go out and visit the seven schools in my district. I had the opportunity to speak to a few teachers and the administration. I just want to also commend them on the fantastic work they are doing each and every day to help to build our future leaders within our communities. So, Mr. Chair, a big hats off to all teachers and support staff within our education system.

Mr. Chair, on March 3, I had the opportunity to visit Pleasantview Manor, a seniors' home in our community, where a gentleman from my district celebrated his 102nd birthday, Mr. Victor Baker.

Victor has been residing at Pleasantview Manor for a number of years and, I have to say, is in good health for a gentleman 102 years old.

During my time to spend with him and have a chat with him, he was excited that spring was soon coming. Victor, for the last number of years, has been planting all the flowers and maintaining the flower gardens in the home, and he's looking forward to doing that again this year at the youthful age of 102. So happy belated birthday there, Victor.

Mr. Chair, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we do have some challenges in our area too. Back in 2015, the Cottlesville fish plant burned down and shortly, two years after, the shrimp plant in Twillingate also closed as a result of quota cuts. I just want to reassure the people of the area that I have been working with the owners of the plant and also with the town council of Twillingate trying to diversify and trying to find some other areas that, hopefully, if not in the shrimp processing, that in future years that some other type of processing can happen and that plant will reopen.

It is the backbone of Twillingate. Mr. Chair, at the high point there was over 500 employees working out of that plant, and shortly before it closed they were at approximately 100 to 125 employees. So it did have a devastating impact on the community of Twillingate, but they are a very resilient group of people and I'm quite sure they will be working hard, with the support of government, to try to get some action back into those plants down in Twillingate Islands.

In the meantime, the Town of Twillingate have been diverse in a lot. They've been getting into the tourism industry. As everyone knows, Twillingate is one of the hot spots for Newfoundland and Labrador and they have been growing that industry quite significantly over the last number of years.

My colleague from Bonavista is talking about all the great business happening in Bonavista, and Bonavista is a great community. It falls a little bit short on the tourism numbers than Twillingate, but they're working as hard as Twillingate Islands. There are a number of new businesses that have been opening over the last couple of years in the accommodation sector, a

new microbrewery has opened up, Split Rock, and they are doing fantastic out there.

Last year, there were two new business started. There was a kayaking touring business that just opened up and without any advertising, marketing, Mr. Chair, they were booked most all of the summer. So, this year, I'm quite confident that they will be much more successful.

Also, Mr. Chair, I'm proud that another business opened up last year providing helicopter tours of Twillingate Islands and also going out towards Fogo Island. Again, a business that just sprung up overnight by a person visiting the area, saw the opportunity and now this year, Mr. Chair, they're going to be, I guess, in full swing, operating helicopter tours during, obviously, the peak tourism season when the icebergs and the whales are most visible out there. They're also looking at more types of tours to extend on that shoulder season. So, great things are happening in Twillingate.

Mr. Chair, the community I am from, Lewisporte, has also suffered a loss there over the last year with the closure of the freight service to Labrador. I don't think it was a surprise to anyone. It was probably a matter of when rather than if. Once the ferry service discontinued a number of years ago, I think the writing was on the wall that eventually the freight service would also close, especially with the Trans-Labrador Highway becoming more and more prominent.

Myself and the Premier, the Minister of Transportation and Works and other ministers have been working closely with the Town of Lewisporte to see how we can divest in and make other opportunities for the wharf and for the infrastructure at Lewisporte because it is a great facility, the wharf facility. It is something that Lewisporte has been built on – and my time is getting near as I see – but I can assure the residents of Lewisporte and the town council that future meetings will be happening and we will look forward to building the community again.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I recognize the hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a pleasure to get up again and speak on Interim Supply. As previous speakers have said, it's an opportunity to get up and speak about various issues of importance, whether it be in your district, it could be in the province or what have you.

I get up because a lot of times I have issues that I care strongly about, as I have often in my petitions, I'll refer to the 1.6 kilometre issue. It could be roads. In my critic role it's the carbon tax, many things. Sometimes I even mention the \$40 million that we're spending on the grow op, but, today – I couldn't resist that one in the meantime. I see the Minister of TCII looking over, so I couldn't – that was just a polite morning little motion.

Today, actually, I'm going to talk about his department but in a different form. I know my colleague or Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands mentioned tourism. Ironically, I had in my mind, I wanted to speak about tourism today, actually, because I'm sure the minister is aware, I did have the opportunity to spend several years in that department, working with the former minister. I went in there not really knowing, other than what the bare bones of what tourism was about, I guess, in the province.

After spending, it was in excess of almost four years there, I learned an awful lot about tourism and our tourism in the province and our tourism campaign. It's something that, regardless of what side of the House you sit on, I think it's something we all should be very proud of. It's an award-winning campaign. We're after getting in excess, I think, in the vicinity of 300 awards, national and international awards. It's something that, back in the day, I know back in the time, it was years back, when we were trying to draw tourism, previous administrations tried unsuccessfully, I guess, to try to boost the tourism product in the province, and we had all kinds of initiatives and they were all well intentioned.

As we all recall, there were these waterslides popping up in all these communities. You go in,

there was a waterslide, there was go-carts; it was trying to attract what we thought the tourists were looking for, because we thought – we went down to Disney and we went to other places and they had all these theme parks and that's what we thought people come to Newfoundland to look for.

We're off the beaten path. In the tourism world, we're not on – Newfoundland is not on the – we're a bit off the beaten path by virtue of, I guess, being out in the North Atlantic.

Back in 2006, I think, was the launch of it, in the early 2000s. In 2003, when the former – it was when the previous administration took over, there was a group, and I give credit to the group, there's a group of individuals that were tasked with developing a tourism model. How do we attract tourists to the province? What do we do?

Incredibly, basically, the Coles Notes of it: Do nothing. This is who we are. We're simple. It's rocks. It's roughed coastlines. There's berry picking. There's mountains. There's hiking. There's camping. It's trails. That's who we are. We're not Disneyland. We're not a theme park. We are who we are and they called it the Find Yourself campaign.

Like I said, it's after winning over 300 awards and still winning. It maybe even more than that or close on it, I think it's around the 300 mark. I guess the one thing with tourism in our province that we all look at, and we're doubling our numbers, we're bringing our – the goals of doubling it to \$2 billion.

I know when we were in power, I think \$1 billion was a big deal because it was more value. It was bringing in more revenue to the province than the fishery, which is incredible when you think about it for Newfoundland because the fishery was always, and still is, one of the main backbones of our province. It will always be part of us, but it's incredible how we grew a tourism product to be able to bring in that much revenue.

Now we're in excess of that, obviously, and the current administration has continued on with this tourism campaign, and it is doing good. I think everyone deserves a lot of credit, but there are public service awards given out to the individuals who developed this Find Yourself

campaign. A lot of them are still within government.

They deserve probably the majority of the credit. It's fine to say, this current administration, previous administrations, provided the funding and the encouragement to develop and support, but these people, these individuals that work in that department, and a lot of them, I think, I don't know, I haven't been over around there in a long while now but the minister could probably tell me, that a lot of those same people are still there. They are very unique, talented people. They're not your – you don't come across a lot of these people every day. They have a passion.

We all have our passions. They have a passion for tourism. They have a passion for the province and they believe in what they do. I know when I got there within the department, we started working within. I was really struck by that.

We talk about bureaucrats within government and they're all – everyone as bureaucrats think all the targeted jobs they do in departments and files they all work on, but these people got a love for it. They love what they do. It's a passion. It's not something that's a 9 to 5 to them. They're always creative. Their minds are always going, they're creative, they're thinking.

I think sometimes we say our tourism campaign, our Find Yourself campaign – I know I found myself saying it and many others may have – how well it's done. I think sometimes we forget the reason that's done so well, and the reason we've accomplished so much and where we are and what this has done to the province and the province's economy, is those people.

I know a lot of them individually, like I say, they're amazing. This passion will not die. I ran into some individuals who are no longer with Tourism, just in a coffee shop wherever, and the first conversation, besides the normal pleasantries, how are you and hope all is well, they'll target, they'll mention something about an ad or some part of the province they were, or one of our UNESCO sites. It's just amazing.

I went in there as a total – I wasn't tourism oriented, I didn't really understand outside of a

pin or a postcard or I saw these beautiful ads that were on television and I thought they were amazing. That's all I knew; really bare bones. When I left there, it left me with a totally different viewpoint. It changes your thought process because tourism – even people say tourism on its own is you're promoting your province, you're attracting people from outside the province, outside of the country to come visit, spend money, build your economy, and that's really, truly, I suppose, the business case for tourism.

What we don't realize sometimes is when you turn on the television and you watch one of those ads, and all of those, no matter what ad, what campaign it is, the winter, summer, whatever campaign, these ads make us feel good. As a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, you cannot feel anything other than pride when you watch those ads. When you feel good, good things happen. If you feel good about yourself, you feel good about the place you live. It helps your psychology. It helps us all, it makes us a better place. It makes us better people because I think that it helps build your confidence. I used to always say that those ads always put a bounce in people's steps, and I really, truly believe that they did.

I'll go back again and I'll thank the creative individuals. I know Target Marketing has been the creative minds. They've done the productions. They've done a wonderful job for the province over the years, and others as well, but the individuals that's brought on these creations deserve a lot of credit, and they don't ever get, I don't think, personally – we say it, but I don't think they ever get the kudos they deserve.

Personally, it's something that I get up and speak a lot of times and I sit down and I think: Why didn't I talk about tourism more? I understand tourism, and I learned a lot. Don't get me wrong, there's a lot more I can learn, but I think those people deserve a lot of credit.

In keeping with those individuals, I guess, and our ads, just recently last December past, my district, my community, CBS, hosted the Boost National Grand Slam of Curling, which was a huge success, but in preparation for that and promoting our town, we created, our town

created an ad and they consulted with staff from the Department of TCII, the same individuals. They assisted with the creative minds to help them develop their own ad to promote the Boost National. That ad was absolutely beautiful, but it still had that same theme, that same sense of place that all of our Find Yourself campaign ads have had. Again, that's another credit to them. That did well.

As a matter of fact, we are playing host again this year. It was such a success that they've announced that CBS will play host in December of 2019 to the Boost National once again. Maybe we'll have a new ad, I don't know, maybe they'll do some adjustments to the current ad.

Leaving it alone, it's fine, because nothing is going to change, because the ads depict nothing special. We are special, no doubt, but there's nothing new, there's nothing created, this is who we are. We're water. We're rocks. We're trails. We're a beautiful place that we're all proud of and these ads depict, they just tell the story, and the story we tell each other. We know that we go outside the province, we tell it. These ads tell the story much better than we can do it.

I just wanted, in my final seconds, to just say thank you to all the people that have been involved with that. We all should be very proud of the place we live and very proud of the work that's been done by these individuals.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate that the Member opposite is given such accolades to Target Marketing for having a 15-year relationship with government and doing such exceptional work on the creative, and the staff at TCII and the tourism team that worked so diligently in partnership so that we can continue to build on the momentum.

The Member opposite has an incredibly beautiful district, Conception Bay South. I've been out there many times. I've been out there with the Member for Harbour Main, who also represents a portion of that area. We've seen where we've, at Manuels River interpretation centre, we've made investments in the trail networks to create destination, to create sense of place and community in Conception Bay South. That's one of the areas where you are seeing growth in tourism. You also see the connectivity to the T'Railway and how we can do a lot of adventure tourism.

Tourism is, I would think, the largest employer here in our province with 20,000 people employed, and the numbers are growing. Just five years ago that number was 18,000 people and we had 2,600 businesses in 2017. Last year, the numbers showed growth that almost 2,800 businesses, many of them I think in the District of Bonavista, in Twillingate and on the Great Northern Peninsula as well, we've seen new businesses started in the tourism industry.

It's exciting. I was at the Port Rexton craft brewery that they have and saw the expansion, the jobs that are being created with the Member for Bonavista. Also, there'll be a new craft brewery on the Great Northern Peninsula in St. Anthony at the Clock Shop, that'll revive a heritage building, also create opportunity and other economic benefits for the region.

One thing, though, that I want to say to the Member opposite is that I disagree with his statement of do nothing, because the people in the Department of Tourism, the people in the industry that are working hard to get to those levels of spending and to create all of these jobs are certainly doing a lot.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: They are working incredibly hard. They are part of the process and when it comes to how we develop our product, how we develop our experiences, this is a globally competitive environment when it comes to how we grow tourism here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ads are one thing, and it's important to have that number one brand and that awarding winning

campaign. It's also equally important to have advance transportation links to get people here and to have those people-based experiences and opportunities once they come here. We know that we have so much to offer from our four World UNESCO Heritage sites: Mistaken Point, L'Anse aux Meadows, Gros Morne with the Tablelands and Red Bay, Labrador, and working on Discovery Aspiring Geopark, which hopefully will have another UNESCO World Heritage site in this province.

We're working on Heart's Content with Valentia, Ireland to link the old world to the new because, Mr. Chair, we have so many great opportunities here in our province.

We have \$49 billion in economic activity that has been announced through government initiatives and projects since we've started *The Way Forward*.

I was in my district and saw how – just in River of Ponds – small communities are working hard and we have dedicated members on councils, some people serving 30 years, 20 years. They are very dedicated to their community and they're seeing investments. They're seeing small business expand. They've been able to finally upgrade some road infrastructure in their community. This comes when you work together, Mr. Chair.

I was at a meeting with the Town of Port Saunders to see their town centre. They've been able to consolidate all of their organizations, their 50-plus club, their Aboriginal women's group is operating out of this town centre building, along with their town, all the community events. They just established a youth centre, thanks to some support from the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

We see as well that SEDLER opened up a satellite office for community employment supports to help people with disabilities be able to attach to the labour force. So, there are good things happening, Mr. Chair, in small communities when people work together and find those partnerships and those opportunities.

I was in Port au Choix for Ms. Eastman's 90th birthday. To get to hear, just two days ago we

made an announcement with the federal government in clean technology, in fishing enterprises like with Ocean Choice International, with \$1.4 million, Mr. Chair, so that clean technology can be used to use that energy in a winch system so that you're not using fossil fuels, that you can improve the bottom line.

I've spoken to the community and to representatives at OCI, and they're eager to get started even earlier in Port au Choix this year. They're quite excited about the opportunities because trade agreements like CETA are reducing tariffs, which is allowing for industrial product that would have been produced in other countries, other jurisdictions, can now be done here in Newfoundland and Labrador quite competitively, which is enhancing our competitive advantage in the fishery. Those are very positive.

I have to commend the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources as well for releasing the forestry action plan and all the initiatives. Finally, there is focus on the forest industry as to how we can get more value-added product. The Great Northern Peninsula has certainly suffered for years when it comes to stagnation of forest industry, unlike some other areas of the province they've been able to maintain sawmills, add value-added product and continue to great jobs. But when you have two major mill closures in Stephenville and Grand Falls-Windsor, it does have an impact. You need to find an outlet for your small diameter wood.

I was very pleased to see that a company, Active Energy Group, looking to make a \$20 million private sector investment with no government funds to create that outlet and create those jobs and opportunities. As well I'm just as excited to see opportunity in St. Anthony area with the Great Northern Port potential. The St. Anthony area is very strategically positioned for international shipping. They already have Eimskip operating; it's the second-largest international containerized port in the province next to Argentina.

When we look at Crémaillère Harbour, it's an ice-free port. It does present a strategic advantage to do business activity and investment and present some long-term, sustainable

employment opportunities in St. Anthony and for the entire region.

Speaking of St. Anthony, we've seen where there's been investment in affordable housing; \$1.25 million to create 10 units because, as we age, our population has different demands. So to see those units added will be very helpful to seniors.

I also toured the John M. Gray long-term care facility in St. Anthony and to see the work that was done by nurse practitioner, Lorraine Barker, and her spouse, Thom, in partnership with the foundation and others who would've supported the Newell family to see that the protective care unit now has murals and that it's a more inviting behaviour. It's less institutionalized. It's stimulating for the residents that are there.

That was very impactful and powerful to see, and certainly leading to improvements for the quality of life for residents that are residing at John M. Gray. Very pleased to see that this nurse practitioner is here in the area and seeing a number of clients from Shirley's Haven, John M. Gray and the community. A nurse practitioner is a very valued member of the health care team and can certainly play a tremendous role in primary care.

The area of St. Anthony has just recently hired an audiologist. This was a service that we've not had for some time, and there will be opportunity to have clinics throughout Labrador as well to provide those much needed services. And there will be more speciality services in this region and in this area.

I want to highlight that this year has certainly faced some challenges when it comes to the amount of snow that the Great Northern Peninsula has been facing, but I want to commend the team at Transportation and Works for working hard and being diligent, bringing in some additional equipment and deal with those tunnel systems that exist in Goose Cove and Great Breat and St. Anthony Bight and St. Carols and Quirpon and Boat Harbour road, as well as Cook's Harbour and other areas.

Just yesterday, I saw an excavator on a mountain of snow by the Tim Horton's at the Viking Mall parking lot. And these are the types of

challenges that we have, as well as the ice conditions with the new ferry system. I'm looking forward to the ice moving off and the important movement of goods, people and services. It does have an impact and I think that that's why it's so important that we continue to look and advance a fixed link to have continuous movement of goods and services and people. But that is necessary to also have a commitment from Quebec to see Route 138 complete, and that's why it's important to continue those particular conversations.

We've invested in cellular coverage for 17 communities on the Great Northern Peninsula. It's a \$1.4-million project. There has been over \$5 million in broadband improvements slated for the Great Northern Peninsula, including Conche and Cook's Harbour in particular, to deal with those issues.

Significant amounts of investment in roads because roads are critical, the paving of the Conche road and Port au Choix. We've seen the tourism numbers go up to 60 per cent in Port au Choix area. So I was very pleased to hear other Members talk about how important tourism is to the Twillingate area and the Bonavista area, and no different on the Great Northern Peninsula, Mr. Chair. So I've very proud to help accelerate growth and see opportunities, even in your District of Baie Verte - Green Bay, great opportunities there.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Order, please!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm happy to be able to stand once again and speak in Interim Supply. I would like to talk about the situation of boarding houses, of temporary lodging, particularly in my area of St. John's Centre where there seems to be a number of them. But it's not only limited to St. John's Centre. We also know that there are similar situations in Happy Valley-Goose Bay where there were boarding houses, where there was an

incredible housing crunch that was started because of the construction in Muskrat Falls.

Often what we see with our boom-and-bust economy is that one of the areas, one of the most vulnerable areas that is hit is the issue of housing, affordable and accessible housing. I'd like to talk a little bit about this. Mr. Chair, again, it's a difficult topic. Some of the stories I will tell are difficult, but it's about the reality of the lives of some of the people living in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's kind of the underbelly of what we don't see so much in our province. It's really hard for us in Newfoundland and Labrador where we pride ourselves in our ability to take care of one another; we pride ourselves in our sense of care and compassion for all people. That's what we do, so it's really hard to see.

Unlike larger cities like Toronto or Vancouver, or even in New York, where you see homelessness on the streets, where you see people sleeping on the streets and, in winters, trying to sleep over grates where the warm air is coming up, for instance, from subway stations and that, we don't see that so much. We know that there are situations of people living in makeshift shelters in different parts of St. John's, in different parts of Labrador. We know that that is real but we don't see a whole lot of that in terms of the real public display of the severe issue of homelessness.

So, for a lot of people, we figure it's not a big issue here in the province. Well, I'd like to talk a little bit about, and describe a little bit of what I know to be true and what are we going to do about it. I commend Newfoundland and Labrador Housing for the work that they do. It's a program that we have for affordable housing for people who are disadvantaged, or people who have low income. It's not enough. It's not enough and lot of the housing in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing was built in the '60s, in the '70s, when people had larger families. Now, a lot of the homelessness we see are single people; single men, single women, particularly seniors who can't afford housing.

So, what Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has done to address that is to provide rent supplements, but those rent supplements are always oversubscribed. There are a lot of people

who need rent supplements who cannot get them. They're also not portable, which is a real problem, particularly for seniors.

I want to talk a little bit about the boarding houses in my district and the rooming houses in my district, and, again, a little bit beyond my district.

I got a call from a gentleman who was staying in a boarding house that had three bedrooms, and there were six to eight adults living in that boarding house. A good number of the people were quite vulnerable. Their rent is paid by our taxpayers' money. The house, because of some of the tenants finally speaking up – and, again, tenants who are really vulnerable, who are homeless, put up with some of the most incredibly difficult, difficult situations in some of these boarding houses. I can describe some of them, but I know that even in my describing them it will sound like I'm exaggerating. I would encourage people to try and imagine the worst possible kind of place to live, and then you would just start to begin to get to the reality of what some of these houses are like.

So, six to eight adults – men – in this particular boarding house. There are only three bedrooms. The house has now been condemned because of some of the folks speaking out. Again, people are afraid to speak out because they have nowhere else to go. A lot of these folks may be in receipt of income support for various reasons; some because they've had accidents in their lives and are unable to do paid work; some because they have had conflict with the law and they've been in prison, they come out of prison, and it's really hard for them to get work because they have a prison record. Some of them because they have very persistent mental illness.

I have a psychiatrist that I often do some work with in terms of helping some of his clients who need advocacy around issues of income support or housing support who says: Gerry, sometimes it makes no sense for me to even attempt to try and help some of my patients because they don't have a safe place to live. If you have a persistent mental health issue, if you're living with extreme paranoia or extreme anxiety and depression and you don't have a safe place to live, it's really hard to get stabilized. It's really hard to get well. It's really hard to be able to

take your medication because maybe you're in a boarding house where other people are putting pressure on you and they want to take your medication because people are dealing with addictions. So it's really, really tough.

We're talking about houses, for instance, where there's payment of, at least – the rent in most of these places, just for rent, is \$600 a room and that money comes directly from AES, which is our department that administers income support. It comes directly from AES right into the pockets of the landlords. Those are agreements that the people who are renting agree with their landlord. They have to do a damage deposit and then their rent goes directly into the pockets of their landlords.

If there's any dispute, the landlord has control over that money. So, for instance, there's one boarding house in my district, and I visited a number of times, and social workers won't go in there anymore. If they really have to go in, they go in by twos. No fridge, no stove, the dirt is not something where someone can just clean up their room. The dirt is embedded in every place in the house. The house probably hasn't been cleaned in 20 years at least. There are broken lampshades, holes in the walls, windows that don't open, one raggedy towel for all the men to share; no other towels. They have to provide their own cleaning supplies. They have to provide their own toilet paper and there's nobody who cleans anything.

Again, we're talking about some of our most vulnerable people in society. People will say: Well, why don't they just clean it up? But we're talking about people who may not have that ability, who are dealing with depression, with anxiety, who have been homeless a lot in their lives and who are afraid. Oftentimes, afraid of the people that they're sharing a house with. There's oftentimes no supervision. So this is our taxpayers' money.

You have somebody who wants to leave that situation. They may complain, and they're afraid to complain, but they complain, and then what happens is the landlord kicks them out, keeps their damage deposit. It's midway through the month. They also keep the rest of the rent and they are left homeless. They've got no income support left for the month. They can't get their

damage deposit to get another place to live. They need a damage deposit, but they can't get their old damage deposit back even though they may have done no damage.

These are the stories we hear again and again and again and again, and the problem is that there is no oversight. Some of our most vulnerable people live in conditions that increase their vulnerability, that increase the danger in their lives. I believe, Mr. Chair, that this is not how the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want us to deal with this kind of housing.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's certainly not doom and gloom in Newfoundland and Labrador these days, I say. In fact, there are a lot of good things, positive things happening in Placentia West - Bellevue, representing parts of the Burin Peninsula and coming in on the Avalon isthmus area of the province, as far as Long Harbour-Mount Arlington Heights and Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove-Long Cove.

We have such a storied district with so much industry; as I liken it to be the industrial heartland of the Island portion of Newfoundland because there truly is so much going on, and there's more happening.

MR. LETTO: And Labrador.

MR. BROWNE: I said the Island portion of the province, I say to my colleague from Labrador. I certainly wouldn't want to infringe on your highly industrial area that is seeing great success under your stewardship as its MHA, I say to my colleague from Labrador West.

Mr. Chair, there's certainly a lot happening in Placentia West - Bellevue that I want to take an opportunity to highlight. We have, as I mentioned, so much industry happening throughout the entire district. If you look at Bull Arm, we've been discussing Bull Arm over

these last number of days as it is now in what I believe its rightful place in a new standalone oil corporation, separate from the travails of Nalcor and whatever else they're doing in terms of utility and hydro business.

It's certainly the largest fabrication site in Atlantic Canada. There are great things going to come from Bull Arm. The Minister of Natural Resources and I have met several times now with the local communities that surround the site for their input and to consult with them on how they see the future progressing, because as the oil industry is evolving and changing, as we move towards *Advance 2030*, the needs for that site will also change and we have to adjust to what the industry needs, Mr. Chair. So there are certainly good things happening in Bull Arm. I've had a number of meetings with proponents that are seeking to secure access to the site via the RFP out from Nalcor, so we'll see where that goes.

Also very proud, Mr. Chair, of Grieg aquaculture project, not all Members of the Opposition, certainly in the Third Party, have been in favour of this project, and I'll let them speak for themselves; but what I can say is that the people on the Burin Peninsula certainly have spoken in favour of this project. They are supporters of aquaculture.

We are seeing a turn now in our economic fortunes because we've had such a history, Mr. Chair, of boom and busts with the shipyard, with the Cow Head facility. We had 1,200 people just three years ago working on the Drilling Support Module for the Hebron Project in Marystown, making top dollar, and those who weren't working there, Mr. Chair, were renting out their homes to workers. So, there was a quite a bit of affluence floating around at that time.

We're now seeing us get to a place where there's stability and people have the opportunity, if they wish, to plan to stay at home with their families, with their children at night and earn a good wage at home. That's what we're seeing with the Grieg project, some 800 jobs tied to that. The world's largest hatchery to be built in the heart of Marystown, with marine sites through Placentia Bay which, by the way, if you took all the sea cages that are proposed for the Grieg project, you'd fit them in Paddy's Pond.

The notion that this is taking over the bay, or taking over Placentia Bay, that's not the case. It's really important as we have these conversations to get the proper facts out there and have discussions. We can disagree, Mr. Chair, but base them on the facts and not blow things out of proportion, as some Members opposite certainly seem to enjoy doing.

But we're also seeing, with the Grieg project, a budding supply sector being built up around them. In fact, if you travel through Marystown today, there are pipes everywhere. There's 15 kilometres of piping that has to fit into the new hatchery. With the lack of laydown space around the hatchery area, it's being put everywhere in town that they can find. It's quite amazing to see the industrial revival.

Of course, that plays into what's happening in the former Marystown Shipyard, where Marbase now will purchase directly from Kiewit – something that I believe is a very positive development. The mayor of Marystown believes is a very positive development. The president of Unifor Local 20 of the union workforce thinks it's a very positive development. The president of the Chamber of Commerce for the Burin Peninsula thinks it's a very positive development, Mr. Chair.

Everyone seems to be on board, except Members opposite. So, we hope that their positivity will emanate on this project and we will see their support for the people and the workforce of the Burin Peninsula, because we certainly didn't see it when the two largest fish plants in the province shuttered on their watch.

But I digress. So we're certainly looking forward to that opportunity coming to realization, because that is very important. We need the stable, long-term employment in our communities, and that's what we're working towards.

I also want to take an opportunity to talk about the fishery. Recently, we had a major announcement with the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. In Arnold's Cove the leading groundfish processor exists, Icewater Seafoods. Just last week, I did a statement on the passing of Mr. Wareham who had founded this company in his 60s in 2004. So he obviously believed in the

future of the cod fishery; he believed in the future of Arnold's Cove. His son, Alberto, and the entire Icewater team are taking that to the next level.

Just through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, we secured funding in my district for projects in Southeast Bight, Arnold's Cove and Norman's Cove-Long Cove for \$4.5 million, including \$3.2 million of cost-shared funding for an ice management system at Icewater. So we're very much looking forward to that.

I also want to touch on the Live at Heart international musical showcase, which is kind of an evolution in Europe. We're seeing these Live at Heart festivals where a high number of bands, 30, 40, 50, go to one Live at Heart and then they go to another Live at Heart, whether it be in Sweden or other places – in Norway there's Live at Heart as well – and they travel to each other's festivals.

So, for the first time in Canada, this past fall this was hosted on the Burin Peninsula. We had people like Jamie Gair, Mike Brennan, Barry Stacey and Ben Wiseman to thank for that, and they've done a terrific job. Myself and the Member for Burin - Grand Bank had the opportunity to visit with them. There were producers here from all over the world. In fact, Jeff Bova was one producer from Los Angeles, who has produced with Eric Clapton, Celine Dion, Katy Perry, so this has been a major, major development. We're hoping this is going to expand this fall, especially with our connection now with Saint Pierre et Miquelon just off our shores with access to the European Union. We're hoping this will grow. This is a major economic opportunity, as well as a musical opportunity.

Myself and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women had the opportunity to be at Smugglers Cove – which if you haven't visited it, it's in the minister's district, it's truly out of this world – and this is where we had an opportunity to meet up with some of these people, but there were also venues all over the Burin Peninsula, including in Marystown, so that was very positive.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to conclude today talking about tourism, as has been mentioned by many

of my colleagues. As I just alluded to, tourism is such on the rise in many parts of the province and it's no different on the Burin Peninsula. We have such opportunity with our connection and proximity to Saint Pierre et Miquelon. Now, it's our challenge as a region to rise to meet that, to ensure that people who are travelling down the highway to catch the ferry in Fortune can stay a night or two along the way at different accommodations, enjoy different tourism products, and we're seeing that rise.

Just this year, of course, I'm very proud of the fact that the provincial tourism ad was filmed, in large part, on the Burin Peninsula. It is stunningly beautiful, Mr. Chair. In fact, it has the highest number of YouTube views – the highest number of YouTube view; 680,000 views already. The next closest to it has only 400,000, and that was four years ago. So you have 400,000 views in four years versus almost 700,000 views in four weeks. It's amazing what the beauty of the Burin Peninsula can inspire in budding travellers coming to the province, and I'm sure there are other factors involved as well in terms of making that video the success that it has been.

We have to thank our terrific team in our Department of TCII who have done a fantastic job with these ad campaigns. I'm delighted to see that the beautiful scenes of the still waters of Fortune Bay East or the vistas of Parkers Cove. These are all beautiful. There were sheep in a dory, with the beautiful and historic Collins Cove church behind it in the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women's district. So it's truly remarkable, Mr. Chair, what's happening on the Burin Peninsula, the positives that are happening.

The best can only be yet to come, there's so much happening and I look forward to continuing working with our communities to make our communities stronger and even better in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's certainly a pleasure this morning to rise to speak to Interim Supply. For those out there tuning in and listening, this is a process we go through every year in preparation for the annual budget, to make sure funds are allocated on an interim basis to get to the end of the fiscal year to make sure government continues to operate and that amount of money is approved up to March 31, to the end of the fiscal year –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. HUTCHINGS: – which, as I said, allows to continue operation of government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

Thank you.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said, to allow for the continuing operation of government to March 31, the end of the fiscal year.

A couple of points this morning, due to the latitude that's permitted in regard to speaking to Interim Supply, that I just wanted to talk to. A few issues related to my district, the District of Ferryland, which takes in from Goulds, Ruby Line and south right to St. Shott's. So it takes in a portion of the City of St. John's as well a number of rural communities right down through the Southern Avalon.

The Minister of TCII did mention economic opportunities that are certainly related to tourism. He did mention Mistaken Point and the UNESCO heritage designation of the United Nations that was designated in 2016. He did allude to it and things that have been done, but, unfortunately, we've had challenges with this current administration in regard to the promotion and the funding and being able to drive the opportunity that exists with that UNESCO designation, which is one of four here in the province, but this one is operated by the provincial government and not by Parks Canada.

In terms of the plan and what was presented to UNESCO to get designation in Turkey, where those meetings took place, there were a number of items in regard to a management plan that need to be fulfilled in order to meet the obligations of that designation. One of those was the infrastructure, working with a volunteer group, the Cape Race - Portugal Cove South Heritage Inc. and that volunteer group, the name has changed several times. That's the volunteer group that within the management plan talks about the provincial government partnering with that volunteer group.

They own the Interpretation Centre, which is the gateway to Mistaken Point and to Cape Race and to the Myrick Wireless centre that is out at Cape Race. That centre, in and of itself, in our time, we invested significantly in that. That is the centre that sort of celebrates wireless communication. The Myrick family and their presence over decades, centuries, really, in regard to Cape Race and that area, but also recognizes the first SOS call from the *Titanic*, that tragic event in the Atlantic. That area was the first place to receive the message, a SOS call, from the *Titanic*.

All that's very historic and adds to the UNESCO designation and to Mistaken Point. But with any regional economic opportunity, and certainly on the Southern Avalon that is huge, there are needs for commitments and assistance to reach out to those that are operating the site or involved in the site. That's where I get back to the community group, that's the volunteer group on the ground, which is partnering with the provincial government in regard to operating that site there and being the gateway.

Some of the things that we have challenges with, just in terms of operational funding and making sure that there's enough funding there, initially, for a five- or 10-year period to lay out a plan to provide that funding so appropriate tours can be done, the infrastructure is available and there are funds there for those volunteers and advisory board now put in place, the advisory council, to be able to give advice and direct the operations to make sure they maximize all the opportunities.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of funding and lack of commitment we've seen by this

administration, we're actually seeing now, unfortunately, volunteer groups out selling tickets, having dinners, having spins to try and raise money to operate the facility in Portugal Cove South. Now, remember, Mr. Chair, this is a world heritage designation.

You look at how many designations are around the world and what it means and the amount of traffic and the opportunity that that makes available. Since 2016, we've seen the numbers rise in regard to visitations to Mistaken Point, but we've also seen, unfortunately, people calling or people showing up but can't get tours. I think this year, if my number is correct, there was around 600 that called and weren't available to make tours. That's unfortunate. So, right now, I think there are 24 that goes to the site each day. Not a large number, but if we can accommodate more it drives economic opportunity.

What we're seeing in the region is we're getting some small businesses set up in Portugal Cove South and as well in Trepassey. We've seen significant investment with the inn there and other small business as well, but it's about the influx of traffic and what that means when people enter the region they stay, they visit, they spend their money and drive local activity.

It's so important that we have the support for Mistaken Point and, hopefully, in this budget we'll see a commitment to that and see a new approach and supportive approach that's needed to take advantage of this huge opportunity that exists for that region.

It's not just for that region, it's for the whole province. People fly in from all over the world to visit UNESCO sites. They fly into St. John's, the Northeast Avalon. If they're here to see this site, they may move on to see the other UNESCO sites on the Island and on to the Labrador. So it's not about that region or that community, it's about the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and recognizing what we have in that and how important it is to the province that we make a commitment towards it.

The other issue I heard my colleague across the way talk about was aquaculture. Certainly, on a provincial basis, we, in our time in government, certainly put a lot of investment into the

aquaculture industry and what it has meant for the province in terms of combined with the wild fishery at various times is over almost \$1 billion in regard to activity and what it brings to the Newfoundland and Labrador economy. So, coastal communities in various regions of the province where we've seen a downturn certainly in the fishery, that has replaced it with economic opportunity that we continue to drive.

There are three big players now in this province: Cooke, Marine Harvest and now with Grieg coming in, in terms of the amount of volume and production they're expected to bring is certainly significant. I know in 2015, and prior to that, as minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and as well Intergovernmental Affairs, had opportunities to establish an MOU, memorandum of understanding, with the Grieg group out of Norway and to look at enhancing the opportunities we have on the South Coast, certainly Placentia Bay.

It was an exciting time to share that information with them and encourage them to come to the province and to make massive investments in regard to expanding our aquaculture industry, and getting those volumes up to a point where you have critical mass. Critical mass is so important in any industry where you're allowed to get to that level. Then the business model is ripe for having small businesses supply the support services that are required. So with Grieg and with the production we have and helping getting to what their targets are, 40,000 to 50,000 tons, that allows us to provide those small businesses to grow to provide those support services.

Now, tied into that, we've had some discussion and a lot of discussion over the days in regard to the sale of Marystown Shipyard and how that would be used from a conversion to a support facility, I think it's been called, for the aquaculture industry. If so, that's certainly positive.

We haven't heard yet who would use that facility. Would it be three of the major players? Would they be able to provide the support services? All of those issues, I guess, we're waiting to see, and how that would drive the industry because there are things within the industry, you look at the feed that's brought in,

all brought in now for the aquaculture industry. You look at some of those support services I talked about, cages, all those other things that support that industry, that's all support that grows the industry as well.

Hatcheries, there are hatcheries in Stephenville. There's also one significant to be built in Marystown, in that area. So all of that adds to the overall industry and the importance for aquaculture and overall our fishing industry.

It's certainly a pleasure today to get up and have a few minutes to speak to Interim Supply, Mr. Chair. There are certainly good things happening in the province, but as for areas like Mistaken Point, we need strong commitments from the government of the day to exploit that to make sure we can maximize all the benefits in the province.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a pleasure for me to rise today and speak on Interim Supply. The last time I rose in this House I spoke on all the great things that are happening in Municipal Affairs and Environment, but today I want to talk about the great District of Labrador West and the great things that are happening there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Mr. Chair, where we've come from in the last 3½ years has been really amazing with the iron ore industry. As you know, the iron ore industry had taken quite a beating, but in the last couple of years that's certainly rebounded and we're feeling the benefits of that, especially in our mines in Labrador West.

I certainly want to highlight some of the great things that are happening, especially with Skully Mine, the reopening of the Skully Mine under Tacora Resources Inc. It's amazing really to see the work that's going on there. When you go on

Facebook or whatever, social media, they have a great page, looking and talking about all the great things that are happening within the project and the facilities to prepare them for operations in early June.

You see trucks being assembled, you see mills being rebuilt, you see additional silos put on the load out, you see the installation of the manganese separators, you see the realignment of the processing plant. It's all good stuff, Mr. Chair, and it's done to make sure that this becomes a viable operation and it's there for the people of Labrador West for many, many years to come.

We're looking at – in the workforce – around 260 jobs that have started now. The hiring process has begun and the target date for production, Mr. Chair, is June 3, 2019. So we look forward to that day when, once again, we'll see the steam rising from the plants and the trains rolling –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: – across the overpass. It will be a great day for all of us in Labrador West.

Mr. Chair, the Iron Ore Company of Canada continues to move ahead with the increase in production. As we saw this past year – and by the way, I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources and her department for the work they have done to make sure that we get back into operation – the Iron Ore Company of Canada, of course, just opened another huge pit, Wabush 3, now known as the Moss Pit and it's right behind the Smoky Mountain.

Many people have heard of Smoky Mountain and the great skiing facility there. The fact of the matter is you can still ski there. We're mining right behind the mountain and because of that the Iron Ore Company of Canada put in all new lifts for the ski hill, two brand new lifts. So, Mr. Chair, we're moving well ahead of where we need to be. Certainly, we look forward to a great future there as well with Smoky Mountain.

The Iron Ore Company of course is the largest mine in Labrador City, Labrador West and probably the largest mine in Canada. We are the iron ore capital of Canada, by the way, so just

not to confuse that with any other area of the province or the country.

MR. BROWNE: What about the mining capital?

MR. LETTO: We are the mining capital of Canada and we're proving that time and time again.

Of course, right behind the IOC and Wabush and the reopening of Scully Mine, we have Alderon that's back in the picture after a hiatus because of the downfall in the iron ore industry and certainly we saw many casualties of that. So Alderon is back in the picture and they're working towards a new project, the Kami project. They have a robust schedule put in front of them to start construction in the spring, or the first quarter of 2020, if the funding can be secured for this project. It's a considerable amount of funding that's required, \$1.2 billion, but if you look at their progress, they've partnered with a great number of world-class organizations and companies to help them along with that.

We look forward to the day when we see the announcement and hear the announcement from Alderon that they're moving ahead with the Kami project, which will be another significant boost to the economy. You're talking about a mine that's going to produce 8 million tons a year and probably employ 300 to 400 people. Again, we are very optimistic and hope that this will take place.

Right across the border, of course, Mr. Chair, is the Bloom Lake operation and even though it's in Quebec, we do reap a lot of benefits from that. All you have to do to prove that is go to the industrial park in Wabush and talk to the owners of the businesses there, the industrial businesses. They are the major supplier for this mine, even though it's across the border in Quebec, like I said, but they do supply a lot of goods and services to that mine. So what's happening in Bloom Lake is a huge boost to the economy in Labrador West. It was great to see, just probably about a year ago, that train rolling again across the overpass on the Wabush highway. So, what happens next door certainly is good for all of us.

Mr. Chair, I cannot get up and talk about the mining industry without remembering the great folks of Wabush who were impacted by the shutdown in 2014. They're not only in Wabush, they're not only in Labrador West. They're in every single district of this province. We all have retirees and pensioners from Wabush Mines, and the impact that they took when the mine shutdown and Cliffs pulled out and left them hanging with an unfunded liability in the pension plan that saw their pension plans cut by 25 per cent, in some cases, and lose all their medical benefits. That was the first issue, actually, as I've said this in the House so often, that the first day after I was elected, or just a couple days after, I went along with the minister of Service NL, at the time, to terminate the pension plan for the Wabush pensioners. It was not a pretty sight.

Since then, we've done a lot of work, Mr. Chair. As you know, our government referred it to the appeals court of Newfoundland and Labrador and we won our case, which had a big impact. I still believe today that what we see now, today, is within the next couple of months – I think May 1 is the deadline – you will see those pensions back to about 94 per cent; 93, 94 per cent of the original pension, which is great news. Great news for the people of Wabush and the pensioners of Wabush who are, as I said, all over the province and the country.

There are a lot of people who were involved in that. I have to single out one person that I worked very closely with who was, herself, a pensioner of Wabush and spearheaded a lot of the work that went on with regard to the court case and recovering that, and that's Rita Pynn. As I said, she's a pensioner of Wabush Mines, but she worked tirelessly and kept me in the loop, and I kept her in the loop, and we worked together very closely to get to where we are today.

I know there are others that were involved, but I just want to single Rita Pynn out because of all the great work that she's done over the past four to five years to get back the pensions that were taken away from them by Cliffs. So besides that, as I mentioned, they also lost their medical benefits and last year – or just a few months ago, actually, they were given a lump sum for the OPEBs that they lost, their medical benefits.

We're working now today – we're still working on that to make sure that does not become a taxable item for them, because medical benefits, we believe, should be exempt from taxation. That's something we're working on with our federal counterparts, with the MP, Yvonne Jones, and others, to make sure that what was given to them is not taken away again, because they don't deserve that.

Mr. Chair, in closing, I just want to say that Labrador West is doing well. I thank the people and all my constituents for their co-operation in the last four years to get us where we are. There has been a lot of work done, we still got a lot to do but I'm confident that we're on the right track and this government is on the right track in improving the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service." (Bill 55)

CLERK (Barnes): Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, schedule carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending

March 31, 2020 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Mr. Chair, I moved the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 55.

CHAIR: The motion is the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 55.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

Now?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the resolution be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,864,878,600."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, that this resolution be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service, Bill 55, and I further move the bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Deputy Government House Leader shall have to leave to introduce Bill 55, the Interim Supply Bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service, carried." (Bill 55)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 55)

On motion, Bill 55 read a first time.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early

Childhood Development, that Bill 55 be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 55)

On motion, Bill 55 read a second time.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Torngat Mountains, that Bill 55 be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 55)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 55)

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Noting the time, I move that we adjourn until 2 p.m.

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

Thank you.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

I'd like to welcome the Members back. First of all, I'd like to draw your attention to the Speaker's gallery today and I'd like to welcome Mrs. Keli Jo Healey. Mrs. Healey is joining us this afternoon for a special tribute.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I wasn't going to introduce him but I am going to because there are not a lot of folks watching, but up in the public gallery I have a friend of mine from St. John's, Mr. Fred Dodd.

Nice to see you, Fred.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today, we will hear from the Members for the Districts of Exploits, Topsail - Paradise, Torngat Mountains, Stephenville - Port au Port, Terra Nova and Waterford Valley.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize four members of sister Lions Clubs, Bishop's Falls and Botwood in the District of Exploits.

Lions Robert Sheppard and Joe Thomas of Bishop's Falls were recently presented with their 50-year service pins and certificates, while Lions Len Woolridge and Walter Lee of Botwood were presented with the Melvin Jones Fellowship award for dedicated humanitarian services.

These Lions, as do their Lions colleagues, exemplify community service, selflessness and their motto "we serve" and have always been at the forefront of any community concern where their help is needed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in the delivery of congratulations and a well-earned Lions roar for Lions Robert Sheppard, Joe Thomas, Len Woolridge and Walter Lee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise

MR. DINN: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 15-year-old Alexa Tobin of Paradise who was recently named Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association junior female official of the year for 2018.

Alexa, an excellent student and sports advocate, has received many accomplishments including Junior Female Athlete of the Year for 2018 for Holy Spirit school, second runner up for Junior Female Athlete of the Year for the Town of Paradise.

Alexa trains year round with the under 16 provincial team and has been on the provincial team for the past five years. She trains three days a week with her club team and two days a week as part of the Vancouver Whitecaps academy prospects group, an elite invite-only training program and was only one of seven female players in her age from Newfoundland and Labrador to be chosen for this distinction, one which she has spent three years at.

Alexa is very dedicated to her teams and teammates and shows good sportsmanship off the field as well. She is a consistent, positive example of what it means to be a team player.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Alexa Tobin on her many accomplishments and in particular Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association junior female official 2018.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this House to recognize the remarkable accomplishments of a young man from the community of Postville in Nunatsiavut, Northern Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, Bronson Jacque is not only an accomplished artist, but also boasts surprising athletic abilities. Bronson will represent Canada after winning the 2019 Canadian Powerlifting Union bench press competitions in Ottawa.

Mr. Jacque is 24 years old and weighs 178 pounds. He competed in three categories: the squat competition, the bench press and the deadlift where he lifted a combined weight of 1,482 pounds. This accomplishment earned him

the gold medal and the right to represent Canada at the Commonwealth Games to be held in St. John's later this year.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention his remarkable artistic talent. His ability is so great that in many comparisons one cannot tell the difference between a photo and a painting. Quite an accomplishment for a young man from the tiny Inuit community of Postville.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Bronson on his national achievement and wish him well in representing our province and our country on the international stage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With over 1.4 million members and 47,000 clubs serving in over 200 countries, Lions Club International is the world's largest service organization. The hard work of its dedicated and passionate volunteers in communities throughout our province is truly remarkable and the club in Stephenville is no exception.

Just a few short years ago in 2014, the Stephenville Lions Club was named one of the top five Lions Club in the country. Yesterday, the Stephenville Lions celebrated their charter evening for 67 years of service and the Lionesses club for its 66 years of service. Reaching this significant milestone was only possible as a result of its founding members and last night two of them were on hand for the celebration.

Eric Lomond, at the young age of 91, who still volunteers with the Lions, was acknowledged for 55 years of service and Minette Shave of the Lionesses, who also still volunteers, was acknowledged for her 66 years of service.

Mr. Speaker, it is these extraordinary volunteers who have given over half a century of their time volunteering that are a testament to the Lions motto "we serve" and are a true inspiration to us all.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Stephenville Lions Club and Lionesses club on their success.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to acknowledge the nominees and recipients of the Clarenville Area Chamber of Commerce 12th annual Business Awards of Excellence and Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Of the many initiatives which the chamber leads each year, the business awards gala is one of its signature events.

For 2018, three individuals were inducted into the Business Hall of Fame: Mr. Ern Warren and Mrs. Kay Warren, a husband and wife team, who, in 1974, became local representatives of Steer's Insurance, a business which still exists in the community today. Mr. Stanley Fleming, born in Portugal Cove, moved to Clarenville in 1967 to open the Handy Andy store. Mr. Fleming operated this store for 38 years before retiring in 2005.

During the awards banquet, three additional awards were given out recognizing business excellence in the community. Business of the year: the law firm of Mills, Pittman and Twyne; Small Business of the Year: Craig's Locksmithing & Autoglass and the Corwin Mills Community Cares Award went to Power to Hope.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the winners of the 2018 Business Awards of Excellence and Hall of Fame induction ceremony

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Waterford Valley who will confirm he has leave, please.

MR. OSBORNE: I ask leave of Members of the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Please proceed, Sir.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the hon. House today to address the passing of a pillar of our community, Mr. Tom McGrath.

Throughout his adult life, Tom was known for his involvement in political politics both provincially and federally. He was never daunted by any task at hand, always willing to take on the challenge and exceed expectations. He will be remembered for his leadership roles with the Duke of Edinburgh program, St. Bonaventure's College, Gonzaga High School and the cadet movement.

Mr. Speaker, if there was one thing that's been constant throughout his life, it's ensuring that youth were provided with a voice. Tom had a great ability to recognize a skill set and encourage youth to reach their potential.

He lived by the philosophy instilled in him at Gonzaga. He was a Viking to the core, a man for others. Tonight the Gonzaga community celebrates the life of Tom McGrath through stories and song. This celebration will take place at St. Pius X Church Parish Hall at 7 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in paying tribute to a wonderful individual who made a valuable contribution, not only to his community but to the political process in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to congratulate the Memorial University Faculty of Medicine on receiving the Rural Medical Education Award from the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. The award will be presented in Halifax in April.

The society looks for a medical school program matching the most graduates to rural family medicine programs. In 2018, Memorial excelled with 68 per cent of total graduates matching to a rural family medicine residency. They've certainly set a standard that other medical school programs can aspire to.

Graduates from Memorial's medical school are receiving world-renowned training that will enable them to excel as physicians, and many of them are choosing rural areas for their residencies, which is extremely important as we look at physician recruitment and retention throughout our various regional health authorities.

While acknowledging the rural medicine award, I would also like to acknowledge other faculty and students who have been recognized for outstanding work in their respective medical fields: Dr. Jane Green, Dr. Wayne Gulliver, Dr. Vernon Curran, Dr. Kris Aubrey-Bassler, Dr. Graham Fraser, Dr. Matthew Parsons, Dr. Bruno Stuyvers, Dr. Qi Yuan, Dr. Jennifer Shea, Dr. Maria Matthews, master's student Leah Curnew and medical student Travis Pickett.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Memorial's Faculty of Medicine for their many outstanding accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I join with the Minister of Health and Community Services in congratulating the Memorial University Faculty of Medicine on

receiving the Rural Medical Education Award from the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Memorial University's commitment to rural medicine is something to be incredibly proud of. Our graduates are world class and the recognition with this award is certainly evidence of this.

The Official Opposition would like to congratulate Memorial University medical school and the other faculty and students who have been recognized for their remarkable work in their respective medical fields.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. Congratulations to MUN Faculty of Medicine for receiving the Rural Medical Education Award. How exciting is this and how well deserved? This award reflects their commitment to working in interdisciplinary health care teams. It's best practice and they know it works, and this is exactly how our young doctors want to practise health care.

I encourage the minister to establish more primary health care teams in our public community health centres around the province to ensure we have enough doctors in rural communities in the future, giving our people the best health care possible.

Bravo to MUN Faculty of Medicine and to the celebrated individual doctors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to celebrate the fact that Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism has been named one of the top advertising brands in Canada by Strategy's Creative Report Card.

Strategy is one of the premiere marketing industry resources in Canada. Produced annually, Strategy's Creative Report Card tracks and tallies the top agencies and top brands for the year based on awards won at key regional, national and international award shows.

Mr. Speaker, this year Strategy has listed Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism as one of the top 10 brands in the country for 2019. Not only is Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism the only tourism destination to make the top 10, it is a pleasure and an honour to be listed among brand leaders such as WestJet, IKEA and McDonald's.

I would like to also recognize and congratulate our agency of record, Target Marketing, for their recognition among Canada's top 15 advertising agencies for 2019.

Mr. Speaker, the Find Yourself campaign has become one of the most successful and recognized tourism campaigns in the country, receiving 330 awards to date.

The tourism industry is responsible for over 20,000 jobs, representing almost 2,800 businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism continues to deliver a marketing campaign which inspires with its uniqueness and creativity. I commend their effort, and I congratulate all who worked so diligently on this successful platform.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to extend congratulations to Target Marketing, the province's agency of record. It is their creative approach and strategy that has resulted in Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism being named as one of the top 10 brands in the country. I commend the government for continuing with our initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the diligent, hard-working, warm and welcoming individuals of the tourism industry. It is these individuals who provide the inspiration for our tourism brand and who deliver on our brand promise, which helped to ensure that visitors leave wanting to return.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to encourage the minister to leave the marketing of our tourism sector to the marketing professionals and refrain from posting his own homemade videos on social media.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. Bravo to the fine work of Noel O'Dea and his –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Bravo to the fine work of Noel O'Dea and his clever team at Target Marketing and the fabulous team in the department who work so hard to define our tourism industry brand. Tourism is a big industry in the province and growing by leaps and bounds.

Our province has a lot to offer and Target Marketing's work gets folks here. Once they have visited, visitors also do a lot of marketing for us, telling people they know of the many wonders of Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, that Target is doing these ads and not the freelancing minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

We'll set the note of levity aside now for Question Period. We're seeing a cannabis shortage that has recently driven a small retailer based in Clarenville out of business. The Minister of Finance said that the original \$40-million deal with Canopy was to secure supply.

I'd ask the Premier: Is Canopy fulfilling its supply contract with NLC?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a very important and pertinent question because Newfoundland and Labrador didn't have a licensed producer; we were the only province. We entered into a supply and production agreement with Canopy Growth Corporation and we've also since entered into a supply and production agreement with Biome.

We have the third-highest supply rate per capita in the country. If we did not have a supply and production agreement, we would likely have the least amount of supply in Canada. We've placed ourselves at a better advantage to get product into marketplace.

Yes, there are supply issues that's been acknowledged and there are supply issues across the country, but Newfoundland and Labrador is in a better position because of decisions that this government has made to secure supply agreements for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: We take great comfort in the minister's answer, but to be more specific the contract with Canopy says they must supply 8,000 kilograms of cannabis to the NLC each year. It also says they must supply the NLC within one week of the order request.

I would ask the minister: Is Canopy meeting its targets and if it is why are there shortages?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, demand for product is quite high in this province, here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have the third highest amount of supply in the country. It was released recently that sales in the first few months were over \$12 million by the NLC.

Certainly, we continue to work with our suppliers, all the suppliers because it is not just Canopy that is providing supply here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Recently, we've been able to work with Biome where they are providing shipment and that's very important.

Supply contracts and agreements, we have criteria that Canopy will supply us with 8,000 kilograms per year and they will meet those requirements, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: As the minister has averted, the government has made two deals on cannabis. One is \$40 million with Canopy, another for \$52 million with Biome, that's \$92 million in subsidies to the world's most lucrative industry.

I ask the minister: Has his government approved any other deals to date?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to correct the record from the Member opposite because when it comes to the cannabis industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, when cannabis became legal in the country we did not have a licensed producer. Our government made a decision that we would become a leader. It is our goal to be a leader in Atlantic Canada when it comes to production and when it comes to the overall industry.

So what we did is we created a performance-based contract. It is an incentive to encourage the investment and what we've done is we've been able to, with Canopy Growth, secure 145 jobs at a production facility that's costing tens of millions of dollars that the company is spending. They are spending that money, Mr. Speaker, not taxpayers.

The government is getting revenue for every sale that they're making and they only get a return based on a sale here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So it's in their interest to make a sale.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Your time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, while the Canopy contract was being negotiated, the cannabis PR consultant, Kevin Casey, was hired at the NLC for \$9,000 a month with no job competition or RFP.

What were the consultant's responsibilities and what did he accomplish?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will consult with the board at the NLC. It was the board that made the decision to hire Mr. Casey and provide him with the responsibilities at the NLC. He was not hired through the

Department of Finance but through the board of directors at the NLC.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the minister for that undertaking and ask something that would be within his direct knowledge.

Did this consultant present to, liaise with, or advise Cabinet as part of his responsibilities?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The board of directors, representatives from the board of directors, the CEO at NLC, as well as others, including Mr. Casey, had provided updates, Mr. Speaker, to government including, on occasion to Cabinet, on the process that NLC were making getting ready for the sale and distribution of cannabis throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: In furtherance of Open Government Week, which this is, we've received an ATIPPA response from the NLC. The cannabis consultant, Casey, emailed his team at the NLC at the end of his contract and said – quote: I think my contribution was important to get through the Cabinet game.

I ask the Premier: What does get through the Cabinet game mean?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that question should be to the person that wrote the email because we take the Cabinet process to be very serious. I think that most

people we work with in government would understand that there are certain committees in place, there's an extensive amount of analysis that would occur before things get to a Cabinet table and for the decision to be made.

But, Mr. Speaker, what that email means is certainly not language that we use and I would not have used that language. So, I guess, the question is best asked to those that would have written that email.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the Premier for that answer.

The same consultant hired without a job competition or RFP for \$9,000 per month was working out of 7 Plank Road, the building permits for the secret-numbered company were sent to 7 Plank Road, the advertising agency for the Liberal election campaign is located at – fill in the blank – 7 Plank Road.

I would ask the Premier: Has he found out who is behind the secret-numbered company, 80521 NL Limited?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the consultant that the Leader of the PC Party talks about was also a consultant for the PC Party for two general elections.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. OSBORNE: He was consultant for this party for one, for that party for two.

The other fact that I'd like to tell the Leader of the PC Party is that it was Steve Winter that hired the consultant, and I believe Steve Winter is a friend of the PC Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Obviously, the hon. Minister of Finance knows a lot more about political details than I do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: But in any event –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Members have been addressed.

Please proceed.

MR. CROSBIE: In any event, it's our Question Period and our questions.

We found out yesterday that there were three proponents who submitted bids for Marble Mountain.

I ask the Premier: Are any of these proponents based out of 7 Plank Road?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Marble Mountain, as I said yesterday, what we've done as a government is that we're trying to develop the base at Marble Mountain, improve financial stability, but we are committed to Marble Mountain and its operations. It will continue to operate throughout the season, as we've committed.

We have three proposals that's going through a review, and that matter is going through proper due diligence. When we have something to report publicly on, we will, as is the case with any of the cannabis supply and production agreements.

The Member opposite asked me do we have any other agreements in place. No, we only have agreements right now with Biome and Canopy Growth.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, an open government web portal now exists for the proactive release of government information.

This being Open Government Week, can the Premier confirm that the last date that the government proactively released information to this open government web portal was August 4, 2017?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, with open government we've done a number of public engagements through EngageNL. As a matter of fact, I think it was the minister, when we were talking about the ban of single-use plastic bags.

There's a success that we're having with engagement with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We've had three very successful ones. One would have been ban the single-use plastic bags that is currently at historic numbers of public engagement. We've seen it with mental health and addictions within youths, well over 2,000 people. We even saw it with engagement.

So people are working within this government in a very open way. You look no further than *The Way Forward* and seeing the type of engagement that we're having with industry leaders. And guess what? That is creating jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in historic ways. This party, this government, is engaged with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: We're all in favour of engagement, Mr. Speaker.

But specifically on the portal: What will the Premier do to ensure that the people of the province have free and ready access to information about their government through this portal?

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

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

I'll take an opportunity, I guess, as Minister Responsible for the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office, to talk about the fact that this government right now receives more ATIPP requests than any government ever before.

The fact is that we have great staff that are constantly working on making sure that information is available to the public at no cost. These requests come in at no cost. I will remind the Member opposite to look to your colleagues who actually brought in the law that made us the most regressive province in the country when it came to the release of information. Maybe they could chat about that at their next caucus meeting.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: What I'd prefer to focus on now in Question Period are solutions to the issue that the hon. minister just described, the Minister of Justice.

The present procedure does force people to go through a costly and lengthy ATIPPA process to get access to information that the government has already at hand. Why not follow a proactive disclosure model?

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

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

Maybe I'll remind the Member opposite that we sat here in 2015 and debated a bill – a bill I would say that amended the previous regressive legislation brought in by the PC Members.

We helped debate a new piece of legislation that saw free requests to information, and in fact we have seen a greater uptake in requests, and it increases exponentially every year. There is more information going out than ever in the history of this province.

But if there's a specific piece of information that the Member opposite would like to receive, I would suggest that you simply ask for it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Well, I guess the point is, Mr. Speaker, that maybe members of the public shouldn't have to ask, and that was the point about a proactive model.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: In a report in July, the Information and Privacy Commissioner said that the government failed to comply with its legal obligations, failed to comply with the mandatory deadline to respond, failed to fulfill the duty to assist. It took 86 business days to get a response for a request for access to information, when the law says it should happen within 20.

What will the government do to expedite access?

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

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

Certainly, when we talk about the Information and Privacy Commissioner it's a very important role, and I'd like to think that we've taken steps over the last number of years when it comes to

the legislation to ensure that position is as important as it is.

And the fact remains that, at times, because of the sheer number of requests that come in, sometimes information requests do not go back in as timely a fashion as they should, and that falls on us – even though I will give the public servants that are doing this job an extreme pat on the back for the work that they do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: The fact remains, though, that the vast, vast majority of requests that come in are granted and the information put back in a legal format in a timely fashion. So again, I would suggest that we've gone above and beyond to ensure information is out there.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On September 5, the Minister of Natural Resources said in a response to questions from the media that she had received draft reports from rate mitigation committees. When we were asked through the ATIPP process, we were given a heavily redacted slide deck. The slides following the title slide, proposed approach to rate management, were missing.

Why doesn't the Premier believe the people of the province should have access to this information now when they are asking for it?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have been forthright with the public on this very important issue, Mr. Speaker. Rate management is probably one of the key concerns of the people of the province right now, all because the former administration decided to build Muskrat Falls. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, we are currently undergoing a full

inquiry, and some of the results of that inquiry are quite startling, to say the least.

We have been working very diligently to get a better path for Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, to finish that project stronger than how it started. Secondly, we're building a plan for how we can manage rates and how we can pay the mortgage of Muskrat Falls. We are still working on that plan, and details will be forthcoming.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Where this is Open Government Week, will the government finally share the analysis reports of their rate mitigation committee and trust the people of Newfoundland and Labrador with the information they've compiled?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we fully intend – I think we've laid out our plans for putting in place a credible rate mitigation plan, Mr. Speaker. I say to the Member opposite that he's looking like – in a golf term, you'd call it a mulligan. You redo, you take another shot, because your cheap plan is really not doing the job that you intend it to do.

Mr. Speaker, we will put out a credible plan on rate mitigation to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – one of the things that we've done, by putting committees in place, but we've also brought in the Public Utilities Board that has put out a lot of information. I think the Members opposite would have used that simply because that formed the foundation of the cheap plan that they just put out this week.

I understand you're looking for a mulligan; you want to do it over. Mr. Speaker, you'll have your

chance. The people of this province will see a credible plan on rate mitigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No doubt, I've watched a lot of mulligans being hit on this side of the House over the last four years, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: On January 9, the Premier announced a new clerk for the Executive Council, the fourth person to serve in the role in three years. The recent clerk, Ms. Ann Marie Hann, was assigned to lead the review of the Provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy.

Will the Premier explain the responsibilities for this review? Will the Premier table the job description for Ms. Hann?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Provincial Waste Management Strategy we have in place was put in place in 2002. It was devised by that administration and the administration opposite decided that they would go with that. There's been a lot of great work done on the Provincial Waste Management Strategy. In fact, today, 81 per cent of the waste in this province goes to two engineered landfills.

Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot of good things right, there are a lot of good things that need to be looked at again and there are things there that need to be done in the waste management review. That's why we've ordered a review, to look at what we've done, to look at how we can do things better and to look at the areas in this province that are not yet part of the Waste

Management Strategy. It's doing a good job, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister didn't answer the question I had asked. I asked: Would he table the responsibilities so we have an understanding of what Ms. Hann's role will be in fulfilling this responsibility with the solid Waste Management Strategy.

That's simple. We do ask that you table her responsibilities if you could, please.

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

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker, Ms. Hann has devised, and we have approved, a terms of reference for this review. The review will look at all different regions of the province, whether it's Eastern, Central and Western.

Right now, in this province, we have a mishmash of different policies, different procedures for waste management. We want to look at it all; we want to bring some uniformity. If the Member opposite wants the terms of reference for this particular piece of work, I'm more than willing to give it to them.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you.

Terms of reference would be good, but the job description would be even better, keeping in mind who Ms. Hann is.

The clerk of the Executive Council is the top civil servant with a broad range of responsibilities and authority. Ms. Hann's new role is more narrow in terms and responsibilities, as we've just heard.

Will the Premier explain why Ms. Hann continues to be paid as the highest civil servant at the salary she received as the top civil servant?

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

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We consider this piece of work to be very important for the future of this province and the future of waste management in this province.

Waste management has always been a concern of ours and it still remains to be a concern. The person, Ms. Hann, that's been hired to do this is very competent. She has a lot of experience in the waste management field and we feel that it's the right position for her and we look forward to her report. We know that she will do a great job on it. It's a job that needs to be done in order to move forward with the Waste Management Strategy in this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nobody, particularly on this side, would question Ms. Hann's competency here, that's not what these questions are about. They're about getting to the root here of the responsibilities and the job description.

A recent ATIPPA disclosed that the taxpayer paid \$65,000 to relocate Ms. Hann to her position as clerk.

Is there a requirement to repay any of these expenses, keeping in mind that she spent less than two years as clerk with this administration?

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

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker, I think this is the day for cheap shots from the opposite side. There are a lot of cheap things going over there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker, Ms. Hann is a very competent person. She is the right person for this job. She has a lot of experience in waste management. In fact, she was part of the original Waste Management Strategy. We feel that we've done the right thing with allowing Ms. Hann to continue with the strategy, with the review. A review that's much needed in this province. A review that we look forward to getting before the end of this year so that we can put in a Waste Management Strategy that has some uniformity in the province and will address the needs that still exist within the Waste Management Strategy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On January 11, the Premier announced that Mr. John Abbott was appointed as special advisor, Health-in-All- Policies.

Will the Premier explain Mr. Abbott's new responsibilities in this new role? Will the Premier table the job description for Mr. Abbott?

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

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

Mr. Abbott was the obvious choice for a cross-government strategy that involves health. We've

enshrined this in one of the landmark pieces of legislation of this administration, which is the Health-in-All-Policies approach. He has vast experience in government in a whole variety of departments from Transportation and Works, to Finance, to Health.

He was the CEO of the Health Council of Canada and did this work on a national level. Who better to put in the role to deal with this job?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we're not questioning the competency here, we're questioning about the logistics in the operation of the responsibilities and the costing related to that.

Mr. Speaker, before becoming special advisor, Mr. Abbott was the deputy minister of Health and Community Services, the largest department with a broad range of responsibilities and authority.

Will the Premier explain why Mr. Abbott continues to be paid the same salary that he received as the deputy minister at the largest department?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, I think I will have to take issue with the preamble. I spent four days with the Member opposite in an atmosphere of learning about respectful workplace, bullying and harassment. These people cannot defend themselves.

The implication behind the question is that somehow Mr. Abbott is not suited for the role for which we have appointed him, and that is heinous, Mr. Speaker, it really is sneaky and nasty.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, the minister is trying to cloud a simple question we asked relevant to the taxpayers knowing that what we're paying for is relevant to the job that's being done.

We're asking that we get a job description for this new position to understand exactly what we're paying top dollar for, that simple a question.

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

MR. HAGGIE: Again, Mr. Speaker, I take a different and dimmer view of the activities of the Member opposite. He is doing by stealth what outside this Chamber no one would be allowed to do, which is to drag someone's name into the mud, implying in some way that this individual, who is one of the best qualified health administrators in the country in health and all policies, is in some way unsuited or incompetent for the job for which he's been appointed, and I think it's reprehensible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

Minister, harvesters are concerned about the DFO's planning when it comes to the snow crab fishery this year. As a matter of fact, there's a major meeting on the go today in Grand Falls.

Have you been able to get any insight from the federal government on what DFO's plans are when it comes to quotas?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for a quick response, please.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, there are two issues that harvesters have concerns with, which I also have concerns with. One is that the

representation from scientific analysis that there is a stock or a biomass decrease. We always want to encourage and ensure that DFO has the best scientific information available to it. We encourage DFO to improve its methods.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that harvesters are very concerned about is a policy process under the precautionary approach principle and the setting of a limited reference point.

I've had the opportunity to speak with the entire inshore council of the FFAW last Friday. We met for three hours and this was a major point of our discussions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The United Nations declared 2019 as International Year of Indigenous Languages, and warns of the loss of languages that are essential to preserving cultures, skills and world views that humanity needs.

I ask the Premier: Will his government commit to the long overdue investment of training fluent Indigenous language teachers, translators and other human resources needed to save Indigenous languages before it's too late?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for the question. After the announcement on declaring 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, there have been a lot of strategies that have been implemented.

TRC, *Calls to Action*, has five which include Indigenous languages. We've had introductions of junior high school stories based on Indigenous cultures. We've had the university that's re-implementing Indigenous language,

Inuktitut specifically. We've had a young girl by the name of Catharyn Andersen, who's from Makkovik, who's the special assistant to the president of Memorial University, who's gone around doing consultations and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Inuktitut and Innu-aimun translators helping Indigenous peoples through social services, health and justice systems and other settings are poorly paid, frequently overworked contract employees. They're often run off their feet trying to help people in need.

I ask the Premier: Will he commit to proper resourcing full-time Indigenous language translators so people can access basic services that is their right?

MR. SPEAKER: The parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for the question. Actually, in the last week I've had discussions with both Chief John Nui and Grand Chief Gregory Rich, and this is an issue that comes and goes. Right now, it's at a period where they're unable to find someone who's committed to do the job. They're still looking and we're hoping that this position will be filled.

It's a concern that's not only ours, but it's a concern of the chiefs of both Natuashish and Sheshatshiu and by the Innu Nation and Grand Chief Gregory Rich.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, precisely because people are overworked, run off their feet and not properly paid. So my question was about addressing that.

Mr. Speaker, every native Indigenous friendship centre in Canada gets provincial core funding, except ours. For years the centres in our province have asked government for core funding and have been denied, even though, for instance, the St. John's centre alone has seen a 200 per cent increase in people seeking their services.

I ask the Premier: Why doesn't his government see the value of our provincial friendship centres and support them like every other province in Canada does?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there is no question – no one questions the great work that those friendship centres are doing, Mr. Speaker, and they're doing around our province. These are discussions that we have during budget time to make the decision. But I can assure you we have a good understanding of the great work that's being done within friendship centres within Newfoundland and Labrador. These are the decisions that we have to make with the resources that we have available to us to support friendship centres, and the work that's being done by other community groups supporting Indigenous peoples right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

So we are currently in the budget process right now. These decisions are made when the budget is announced, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance already gave us somewhat of a time frame of when that budget would be, but these are the decisions that are being made (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action points to problems of access to justice for Indigenous people. The critical lack of Indigenous language translators in the Labrador court system has caused frustration and delays for everyone involved. And the fact that Indigenous people are overrepresented in Labrador's criminal justice system only adds to this injustice.

I ask the Premier: Why isn't his government doing everything possible to ensure the Indigenous people of this province have equal access to justice?

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

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

I take offence to some of the premise of the question saying that we're not doing everything that we can. And the Member opposite knows full well that we're certainly trying our best to deal with this obvious issue. The fact is this is an issue not just in Newfoundland and Labrador, but all across this country, unfortunately. And we are doing what we can here.

The fact is we have taken several initiatives over the past three years to address this issue. In fact, we had a criminal justice summit in Labrador last year, that I think the Member may have been at, where we had representatives from every level of court in Canada at that summit. We are doing everything we can.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I have a document to table further to Question Period today, which is a note coming from the ATIPP Office for the government, which details the number of pages released through ATIPP.

In fiscal year 2014-15, the number of pages was 14,159; 2015-16, the number of pages was 55,595; 2016-17, the number of pages was 73,088; and in 2017-18, the number of pages released was 60,280.

I'd like to table this to concur with my answer from Question Period.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Notices of Motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I sense there's something in the wind.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I got distracted by the Opposition talking about access to information.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to move the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Assembly as follows:

WHEREAS subsection 6(3) of the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* provides that the Independent Appointments Commission shall consist of a minimum of five and a maximum of seven members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS there are currently five members of the Independent Appointments Commission;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following persons be appointed members of the Independent Appointments Commission: Mr. Earl Ludlow, Ms. Cathy Duke."

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

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

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

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly to instate legislation which includes the mandatory establishment of an adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia,

Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of patients.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is a petition, the wording of which is very familiar to us, but people now from the Brigus area, quite a number of people, all from the Brigus area, sending this petition in – a petition that has been generated by the Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights, a group that I hear from fairly regularly, and is made up mainly of family members of people who are in long-term care facilities and who are experiencing the conditions that the petition outlines.

They say that senior residents of long-term care facilities have the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including adequate food, physical environment, hygiene, medical care and safety. I think it's important that they point out that this is a human right. We are dealing with a rights issue for senior citizens.

As has been indicated in the petition, they have come forward with many examples of seniors who have suffered and because their basic needs are not being met. Mr. Speaker, it's very disturbing to hear these stories which I do hear from individuals, because you just get the feeling that, in some cases, we have seniors who are not being treated humanly and their human rights are not being met.

So, I urge the House to listen seriously to this petition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

I recognize the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, please, for a response.

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

I'd just like to draw the Member opposite's attention to several things. Firstly, the number of these complaints seems to be outweighed by the volume of the story, and it is very difficult to get a handle on some of these. What I would encourage her to do is actually an obligation we each share as Members of the House of Assembly which is, if she is aware of a specific individual who is having some issues then if the family feel concerned about bringing it forward she, on their behalf, should not; it is her job to do that.

I have not heard in any detail, with any consent form or any approval of many, and those issues that have been brought up have been resolved through existing processes. In addition to that, we now have individuals within each RHA who are responsible for safety and quality of care issues at each RHA. I would encourage you to bring them forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is timely, given that this week we had a day of action for ban the bag.

Single-use plastic bags are polluting our environment, endangering marine life and wildlife and threatening serious health consequences for generations to come.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ban the use of lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags, and to urge consumers to take reusable bags when shopping.

Mr. Speaker, disposable bags have become and are a huge environmental problem, they are for several reasons. They do not biodegrade harmlessly. They end up in our waste areas and they don't break down as quickly as other waste does, so it causes waste problems that way.

Due to their lightness and shape you often see them blowing around, often outside our waste management stream. They're caught in trees. They're caught in waterways. They're caught wherever they can get hooked. They are unsightly, but more importantly, they are a hazard or lethal to our wildlife in terms of choking, suffocation or internal blockages. Billions have ended up in the sea to break up into tiny pieces causing widespread harm when ingested at all levels of the food chain.

Even while whole they are hazardous. Turtles, for instance, make the mistake taking them as jellyfish and they ingest them and die. On land these bags end up blocking drainage systems and thus contribute to localized flooding. I think you don't have to go far on the Internet or social media and you'll find the great trash island that's off the coast down in Texas. It's 1.6 million square kilometres in size; that's double the size of Texas.

This is a huge problem and anything we can do to eradicate this and come up with a better use or something alternative to that. I understand we're in the process of a consultation. I hope we get the results of that soon, and I hope it'll come up with some good solutions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To reply to the petition just put forward by the hon. Member, we have engaged in what we call a very robust survey and consultation process that has gotten overwhelming response. In fact, on the EngageNL site nothing has been seen like it that we've done so far regarding the response that we're getting. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that not all of the responses we're getting are positive. There are some people out there who do have concerns about the proposed ban.

I would tell the hon. Member that this is something that was suggested by the organizations and stakeholders that met back in September, that further consultations were required. We're doing that. The survey closes on March 17. We'll be meeting with the

stakeholders immediately after that and a decision will be forthcoming.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Torngat Mountains to stand in his place and introduce the resolution, Motion 1.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move the following private Member's resolution, seconded by the Member for St. George's - Humber.

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages; and

WHEREAS a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has estimated that 40 per cent of languages spoken around the world are in danger of disappearing; and

WHEREAS more than 70 Indigenous languages across 12 language groups currently spoken in Canada and it is believed that 75 per cent of these languages are identified as endangered; and

WHEREAS Indigenous languages are a fundamental and valued element of our culture and society and are essential in improving our Indigenous identity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador officially recognize 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages.

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Nakummek, Mr. Speaker, (Inuktitut spoken).

MR. SPEAKER: Llaali.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, if I were to bring greetings in Innu-aimun, I would simply say: (Innu-aimun spoken). Coincidentally, if I were to bring greetings in the Miawpukek Mi'kmaq language, I would say: (Mi'kmaq spoken). So there are similarities in our languages but there are vast differences as well.

You talk about 2019 as the International Year of the languages, I think we're also, in this province, referring to 2019 as the year of snow. The reason I say that is because in Inuktitut we have some 26 words for snow and every Indigenous language in our province has an Indigenous word.

To talk about deep snow in Inuktitut, Mr. Speaker, I would say: maujak, deep snow. In Innu-aimun, I would say: (Innu-aimun spoken), deep snow. In the Miawpukek language I would say: pasaliteg, deep snow.

So, our languages are alive, Mr. Speaker, the question is: Are they threatened? I'm hoping, through the course of this debate, with what I say and what my hon. colleagues on both sides of the floor will help me say, to point out these differences and find out where our languages stand, and, hopefully, have a look at some of the programs and services that are being done throughout our province to bring it back.

Mr. Speaker, I think the best example I can use is the one I'm most comfortable with is the Inuktitut language in my culture. The first question that we ask is: Is our language threatened and what were the reasons for our language endangered?

I'm going to talk a little bit in my language and I'm hoping that my colleagues will help me in the other languages around the province.

The Beothuk language, Mr. Speaker, is obviously gone because there are none of our Beothuk Indigenous people left, and I'd just like to, I guess, point out the great work done by Saqamaw Chief Misel Joe on the repatriation of Nonosabasut and Shanawdithit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Or Demasduit, sorry, Mr. Speaker.

In Nunatsiavut, prior to 1752, I think the only language spoken was Inuktitut. In the interior with the Mushuau Innu it was Innu-aimun. I guess our first impact was with the arrival of the Moravian missionaries. They arrived in a place called Ford's Harbour, which is just south of Makkovik. This was one of the first contacts. They actually started building a small community onsite and then they went down to a place called (inaudible) Island to trade with the Inuit for whale bone. There was an altercation and some of them were killed, Mr. Speaker, and the Moravians went back to Nisbet Harbour, picked up their crew and went back to Europe.

A few years later, a gentleman by the name of Jens Haven who have learned the Inuktitut language in the Greenland dialect while being in Greenland, came over and he was able to speak Inuktitut to our forefathers, if I could use that word, Mr. Speaker. That's where I guess the story becomes more well known in terms of impact on our Inuktitut language. It led to a chain of events that we're not proud of that we were subject to, and certainly the story has been told many, many times, and I'm going to share that story again with the emphasis on loss of language.

The irony in the arrival of the Moravian missionaries, Mr. Speaker, is that they learned Inuktitut so they could communicate to our forefathers and tell us that we can't speak Inuktitut. That was the first impact. And the story eventually reveals itself, but we're still stuck with the loss of language. In communities like Nain and Hopedale the language is still strong. Was it impacted? Yes, it was. Is it still being impacted? Yes, it is.

The Moravian missionaries came, set up their churches and set up their missions and set up boarding schools, first locally, and then they expanded into Northwest River and in some cases, St. Anthony, with, I think, boarding schools in Muddy Bay on the South Coast of Labrador.

So, as the Inuit were being converted into Christianity from being deemed as heathens, Mr. Speaker, they were forbid to speak Inuktitut in boarding schools, and they were punished quite severely for even attempting to do so. One can almost imagine a child who has no language except Inuktitut is trying to communicate and being punished for it. And I think that's how it all it started and it just grew worse. Because once they expanded into residential schooling, not only did they lose their language, they were removed from their culture, and culture is language in many aspects.

Then we get into the dark days of residential schooling. We've come a long way since then, but we've all heard the stories. I guess I'm a descendant of residential school survivors. My grandmother is 102 years old, can still speak Inuktitut. My father was bilingual, and my mother and my older sisters are all survivors of a residential school. I know the stories well.

Mr. Speaker, this, in turn, is passed on through generations. I, by no means, am fluent in Inuktitut. I know a lot of the words. I did spend time at a job when I was young on a collectible, collecting fish from fishermen north of Nain, where Inuktitut was the first language, primary language spoken, and I had good teachers; teachers like (inaudible) Tom Barber, Paul Harris, Elias Harris, that took the time to teach me, and it was immersion. I found that it was really helpful and you learned a lot of words, especially about being out on the land.

But, as I get into generations, we've come to the point now where a lot of our young people are coming to us and saying we can't speak Inuktitut. You know, in some cases the elders carry this guilt because they weren't allowed to teach their young people, and the young people are saying you're not teaching us, and it causes a lot of emotional distress. I guess the question is, in the bit of time that I have – and I think this is the first time that I ever stood in this House of Assembly in eight years, and 15 minutes wasn't going to be enough time for me.

Mr. Speaker, the next question is: What is being done? What is being done to bring our language back, to make us feel comfortable with it, you know, when you're saying things like 70 Indigenous languages are in danger. But there

are improvements, and statistics show that. In 2016, it's been estimated – and these are Statistics Canada results – 160,500-odd people were speaking Indigenous languages. The most recent figure shows that 263,840 people are speaking Indigenous languages. The overall number of Indigenous language has grown by 3.1 per cent in 10 years. How did that happen?

I'm going to just list off a few – by no means have I got the time to list them all – but there are some programs that all levels of government – Truth and Reconciliation Commission put forth 94 calls to action; five of these were language- and culture-related. Aboriginal programs, immersion programs that I talked about earlier, are taught in Aboriginal language for students.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago the Maori in New Zealand were in danger of losing their language, so they created a little program called Language Nest where children, as young as infants, were put into daycare and they were spoke to in their Indigenous language. We actually sent a delegation of Inuit down there and actually implemented a program in Nunatsiavut through the daycare program.

Mr. Speaker, we've had teacher education programs and Labrador programs; 20-course certificates, aimed to train Indigenous people education, ethics, instruction in their own language; and this has been done through MUN, in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, since New Year's we had a young girl from Makkovik by the name of Susan Onalik who went to Memorial University with a petition saying Indigenous languages, especially Inuktitut, should be offered in school. It gained a lot of traction.

I'd just like to mention the special assistant to the president of Memorial University, Catharyn Andersen, who just recently came from consultation in Nunatsiavut. I actually spent time with her at the airport in Goose Bay due to weather home. Memorial University is taking great strides in promoting Indigenous culture. Catharyn has mastered linguistics. She's done immersion, she's studying Russia and we're really proud of Catharyn's accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunatsiavut Government whose prime mandate is to preserve culture and language, they have interpreter-translation services; OKâlaKatiget radio, one-hour in Inuktitut and English; Inuktitut Master Apprentice Programs; Labrador Inuktitut Training Programs; Inuktitut Rosetta Stone CDs, I think they've come out with two and they're maybe working on the third – I can't confirm that; Language Strategy; and even through the process of repatriation with the remains of our forefathers on Rose Island in Saglek Bay.

The provincial government, with their launch of traditional stories based on the *Tales from Shadow River* are based on true stories. They eventually put these into the junior high school program.

In my closing remarks I'd just like to point out a few of many, many people that did help in our language; people like William Kalleo, August Andersen, Rita Andersen, Joan Dicker. These are some of the people who led the charge and are helping us to bring our language back. Hopefully, we can do more to assist and I'm sure, at the end of the day, we will develop programs that can help us preserve and strengthen our language.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly it's an honour and a privilege to rise in this hon. House again today and speak to this very important private Member's motion, and we are happy to join with other Members in celebrating the 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages.

I have to say, though, at the outset, my apologies in areas where I am going to be unable to do justice to the various languages. They are beautiful languages indeed and certainly I think it's going to be of benefit to ensure that Aboriginal persons themselves can re-learn their

languages, and those of us who have not experienced them get to experience and understand them as well.

In this province there are Indigenous languages in continuous use because people have chosen to continue using them and teaching them. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are other Indigenous languages that have disappeared. Tragically, the Beothuck language disappeared with those who spoke it. Only small remnants remain, including the word Beothuck itself.

But all Indigenous languages are at risk of disappearing if a concerted effort is not made to maintain them. Obviously, the dominant languages of communication and education in a society tend to crowd out the others. It's very difficult to get by in this province without a working knowledge of English. Recognizing the dominance of English, Quebec has made special efforts to preserve and promote French, and Canada embraced official bilingualism, as did New Brunswick. In parts of our own province, indeed, French continues to be used as a mother tongue as well.

Many immigrants and international students continue to use the languages they grew up with, but they find that life is very challenging if they don't also have a firm grasp of English. In Indigenous communities English also dominates, even when Indigenous languages are commonly spoken at home and around the community. Children in Indigenous communities grow up learning English in the classroom.

In the modern, interconnected, online world, kids everywhere find that English is the convenient common language. It's the dominant language of music and television, and it's also the dominant language of music and gaming and online content. But it's extremely important for young people to be taught that the Indigenous language of their elders is an extremely valuable heritage that can only survive if young people continue using it and teaching it down the line. Languages that fall into disuse will disappear.

I am delighted to see Indigenous community leaders and elders making a strong successful effort to promote the use and knowledge of their own languages. And I'm very proud to see

young people showing a hunger to embrace that heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a very proud representative of an Aboriginal community in Conne River. I have several nieces and nephews, actually, that are growing up in Conne River and learning the language. And it's very heartwarming to see them learning the Mi'kmaq language and to see it being brought back, because we came very close to losing it. Through the efforts of the community leaders and the education system in Conne River, we're seeing a resurgence of that language, and it's great to see.

I'm proud to see Indigenous film and television producers, musicians and event organizers make a special effort to celebrate Indigenous heritage. It wasn't always that way in Canada or in our province. As my colleague just previously spoke about, there have been a lot of losses in our history. The residential schools that caused such damage in our past were infamous for trying to crush the Indigenous identity of our Indigenous children. They were punished for using their language and taught to feel ashamed of it.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that we should all be ashamed of as something that happened in our history. It wasn't just in residential school; it was in communities right across this province that many people were ridiculed for their Indigenous heritage. We're hearing the stories all the time of people who felt ashamed and even wanted to hide their ancestry. It's to our collective shame that this was allowed to happen. It was probably rooted in a class-based ordering of society where the best educated and best spoken were at the top rung of the ladder and others didn't measure up.

It wasn't so long ago that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were given tutoring to speak more like Central Canadians and hide the local accents, dialects and words that were unique to this place. Mr. Speaker, I'm not an Indigenous person, but even as a Newfoundlander I've certainly felt offence at being ridiculed at our native tongue. The brogue we use in Newfoundland and Labrador is not the same as that in Upper Canada and we were the target of many jokes because of that. That, in no way, compares to what the Indigenous communities have suffered, but it certainly speaks to the need

for all of us as a society to recognize each and every person's individuality and heritage.

If we still feel that pressure, not to misplace our h's, imagine the ridicule and pressure that Indigenous people were subjected to by those who thought the language of their childhood was something to be ashamed of. Not just Indigenous people, but all of us need to celebrate the heritage of Indigenous languages and cultures that we find all across our fine province.

Imagine if there could be a groundswell of interest in learning these languages at school, college or university, not just for Indigenous persons but for all of us, Mr. Speaker. Imagine if the families that were once told to feel ashamed of their languages were instead to become the teachers and champions of language preservation beyond their home communities. That day, I do believe, we're working towards.

Every language embeds a history. Take the English word, for example, disaster. Embedded in that word is the Greek root astron, meaning star. The word embeds the idea that, once, fortune was determined by the stars. The word itself captures something of the culture of the people who first used it. In the same way, the language of any culture captures the way of thinking about the world, the meaning of life, the way people get along, the value systems, the customs and the traditions and the knowledge gained across generations.

It is often said that the Inuit people have many more words for ice and snow than the English language contains. Being able to distinguish among various types of ice and snow were vital to life in the North, more so than in the South. That generational knowledge became embedded in the words themselves. The name Beothuk apparently contained a reference to the colour red, denoting the red ochre that the Beothuk used. It's so sad that we're left to guess so many things about their language and culture. The loss to humanity is profound.

Consider the origin of the name Manitoba. A document published by the University of Manitoba describes it this way: "Manitoba: The likeliest source is the Cree – my apologies, Mr. Speaker, for the injustice in this word – maniotwapow, the 'the strait of the spirit or

manitobau.' This name refers to the roaring sound produced by pebbles on a beach on Manitoba Island in Lake Manitoba. The Cree believed the noise sounded like a manito, a spirit, beating a drum. It has also been suggested that the name comes from the Assiniboine words mini and tobow, meaning 'Lake of the Prairie.' An additional source is Manitoo Ahbee, from the Ojibway meaning 'Where the Creator sits.'"

The name Coquitlam is "A word derived from the Salish tribal name Kawayquitlam which can be translated as 'small red salmon.' The name refers to the sockeye salmon common to the area." So even if the salmon were to disappear, the name contains the knowledge of how things were and that salmon were important when the place was named.

But what happens if the ability to understand and interpret that language is lost? A scholarly publication in 2008 reported that many Indigenous languages in Canada became extinct when their last speakers died, including: Laurentian (Iroquoian, Quebec) in the late 1500s; Beothuk (isolate, Newfoundland) in 1829; Nicola in the late 1800s; Huron-Wendat and Tsetsaut in the early 1900s; and Pentlatch around 1940. Note that the Beothuk appears to have been an isolate; as such, it represents an 11th language lineage in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'll refer again to my part of the province where I live. There was a gentleman and his name was Nicholas Jeddore. He was fondly known as Nickly. We all called him Nickly. Actually, his Mi'kmaq name is Nigola. He was one of the last fluent speakers of the language. I remember Nickly Jeddore. He was very much a traditional Aboriginal. He spoke the language daily, from the time he was born until the time he died.

He was an eel fisherman and he carried his spears on his back. He regularly walked from Conne River to St. Alban's, and that's over 30 kilometres by road. In the wintertime, you could cross the ice in five minutes or so but not so in the summertime, especially with the road networks. My dad would often stop and pick him up, and he was a frequent visitor to our home. So, I had the pleasure of knowing Nickly and he's still revered in Conne River today.

With his passing, there are many people gravely concerned that we would lose the language. But, again, through the efforts of the community in Conne River, the language is coming back and many people remember hearing Nickly speak the language himself in his native tongue.

Of the languages that remain, many still face imminent extinction. For instance, less than a dozen elderly speakers remain for the Munsee Delaware (Algonquian), Western Abenaki, the Tagish, the Squamish, the Tuscarora, so many languages: Chinook Jargon. Dialects, too, are disappearing, such as the Ts'ooke and Songish dialects of Northern Straits Salish.

Mr. Speaker, this state of affairs resulted in part from a deliberate action. Aboriginal language use was generally forbidden in church- and government-run residential schools, to which Aboriginal children were sent from the 1880s to the 1970s, almost 100 years of suppression of their language. Other Aboriginal languages, with more speakers, are nonetheless rapidly becoming obsolete under the influence of English and French, which has become the languages of the nursery and the living room in most of Canada, due in part to the influence of mass media.

Recently, however, many Aboriginal communities have sought to counteract the loss of their ancestral languages. With the help of government agencies, museums and universities, they have launched programs to retain and promote their languages and culture. As a result of this renaissance movement, some languages have seen the establishment of an orthography for the first time. And others have become part of the school curricula, or even a medium of instruction in lower grades. Again, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing that happen in Conne River. It's truly a delight to hear the young ones speak in their native tongue.

On a positive note, it is remarkable that in spite of the difficulties confronting them, several of Canada's Aboriginal languages are remaining relatively healthy. For instance, over 90 per cent of Quebec's 5,000 Atikamekw speak their dialect of Cree as mother tongue. Two-thirds of the 15,000 Innu in Quebec and Labrador speak their own dialect of Cree as mother tongue, and about a third of them are monolingual in it.

So, we are seeing a renewed interest in the language and, for a change, we're seeing support for Indigenous persons in re-learning this language. So I thank the Member opposite for bringing this motion forward, for the opportunity to speak to this very important bill here today and, by working together, hopefully we will see these languages grow, and those of us who can't speak them will learn the language and learn to appreciate it much better.

Wela'lin.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and the MHA for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a privilege always, any time you get a chance to stand in this Legislature and speak to a bill or a motion, whatever the case might be, whatever is on the floor. I want to commend my colleague, the MHA for Torngat Mountains, for bringing forward this PMR. For those, anyone that might be tuning in or watching today, where the MHA is asking his hon. colleagues in this Legislature that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador officially recognize 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages – very, very important.

When I read this, and you ponder what is language, and why is it important, and some people like yourself, Mr. Speaker, know many languages. Well, I barely know English, my daughter might say, but it's so important.

I had an interesting email last fall, a text – I'd forgotten it; it came to me when this PMR came on the floor. Some know that my daughter was away in France last fall, from September to December, a young lady, 22, and that was her first time leaving home. As a parent you get all kinds of texts from your kids, but one day I got a text that said: Mom, I really miss the English language. Now, what an interesting text to get from your 22-year-old. Why did she miss it?

I actually asked her after she came home. I said: What did you mean when you said I miss the English language? I know you were in France,

you were staying with a French family, you were doing five French courses but what did you mean? She said: I missed what was familiar.

So I just say that in the context of why language is important, Mr. Speaker. The youth of a particular language identifies each of us as belonging to a particular group. For children growing up in a different country than they are ethnically from, it can help them feel more connected to their parents and relatives, those who speak the native language, and it can help them feel as though, for some, they have a sense of home.

I can't think, Mr. Speaker, as we all go through this journey of life, we all work in our different fields and choose different paths, that there's one thing that I think we'll all appreciate, and some of us are blessed with it more than others, it's to have that sense of home and that belonging.

The Member for Ferryland, I remember when we were talking about relocation and I started quoting a song by Joe Diffie: Home is a swimming hole and a fishing pole and all those things. It's about home and where people come from, where their memories are, where, when they think about it, it's a certain piece of comfort that they get from that. So, that's what we're talking about here today, people who are at risk of losing their language, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Torngat certainly can speak much more eloquent to this than I can, but I'm going to go back to, probably it was in the fall of 2015. I had a little experience in Cartwright, one of the most Northern communities in the District of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair that I represent.

Mr. Speaker, when you knock on doors you never really know what's on the other side. You would appreciate that as an elected official yourself, and all of us have, we knock on doors, sometimes you might get someone angry because they have an issue that hasn't been dealt with. Oftentimes, you get people that are lonely, but there are different things that we are faced with as elected officials.

This particular day, I knocked on a door in Cartwright, quite a warm reception. I went into this home and they began to share with me some

of the experiences that they had. Sadly, this was a man and wife that, as little children, six and seven years old, had both been in the same residential school, had some terrible experiences in that school, but to that gentleman, I said: Yes, I'm going to take some time, I'm going to come in and visit with you guys. Sometimes we stay five minutes and we move on.

He went in, he said: I want to show you something if you have time. I said: Sure I have time. He went in the room, he came out with a Bible that was printed in Inuktitut. The man got all emotional and he started to weep. His wife started to weep. He said there were a lot of things that happened to us in residential schools. We tried to put it behind us, we tried to block it. Probably, he said, as we get older, the biggest thing that we think about now is we lost our language. He said: I have this Bible here that I cannot read because that was taken from me.

Mr. Speaker, the man was very serious and genuine. I could see the emotion of these two people and the journey they had been on. I was pleased that they had at least gotten married and found their way and they were on that journey together.

So, Mr. Speaker, just another sombre example of what people lose when they lose their language. I think about them often. When the prime minister came to Goose Bay – was it November 17, maybe – and made the apology to those people that were survivors in the residential schools, I was really touched to see that man had made the trip from Cartwright and was there that day. You can only hope, you can't go back and change the past, you learn from it, you move on. I can only hope that, in time, they find some peace from that.

One of the other things that really left an impression with me was – and my colleague for Torngat may not even realize this, but when the Truth and Reconciliation report came out and we gathered on the steps of Confederation Building with some of our colleagues and he shared an experience of growing up in Northern Labrador. How people from his community, the plane would come in the fall and would take them away. When they came back in the spring, he said, we never really knew why or there wasn't

anything in particular we could put our finger on, but they were different.

I thought about that a lot. These people that had to leave their community, had to leave these little remote Northern communities. There were some it happened to in my district as well, Mr. Speaker. A different world than what we're living in now. They'd go off and for that period, not only were those individuals in a totally different environment, not only were they in an environment where they were away from their culture, away from their language, which was such an important part of their identity, where they were not being taught their native language, but they were not treated very well.

That's some of the sad stories of our past. We all, collectively, as elected officials, want to do our part to help make life better, Mr. Speaker, for some of those individuals.

Now, I want to turn for a few minutes to my department, as the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, but, in particular, as the minister responsible for child welfare; lots of times dealing with heavy things, Mr. Speaker.

We have a tremendous team of people that work in that large social department, and I couldn't toss them enough bouquets. I often wonder about their own self-care. I encourage them to make sure they find some balance in their life and have self-care. Mr. Speaker, they deal with heavy things and they genuinely care about the work that they do, some 350 social workers around the province.

People in this House, and certainly some around the province and our Indigenous groups that we are working with, know that last year in May we brought in a new *Children, Youth and Families Act*. Mr. Speaker, that act is going to be proclaimed this spring. There's been a tremendous amount of work happening since last May to put policies and regulations in place around that act.

This is a very progressive piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, one that I believe will have great benefits for children, youth and their families throughout our province. If you'll bear with me for a couple of minutes, I'm going to tie in the language piece to this new act, Mr. Speaker.

At the heart of this new piece of legislation is child and youth centred with a very real and tangible focus on families, but, Mr. Speaker, unlike its predecessor, unlike the act that was in the department when I went in, one of the things that I am most proud of is that it is culturally responsive – culturally responsive.

We deal with so many Indigenous – and it's not unique to just Newfoundland and Labrador, right across Canada, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we have an overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in our care. Mr. Speaker, as an Indigenous woman myself, I am so humbled that I was able to play a little role in bringing this new piece of legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I already talked about, one key component of culture is language. In the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development right now, we are working hard to help support and facilitate this connection to culture for children, youth and families. In particular, our new act will strengthen service delivery to Indigenous children, youth and their families.

Some of the changes that will help to address Indigenous involvement in service coordination and planning, information sharing and very importantly inclusion of cultural and community connections in decision-making regarding an Indigenous child or a youth.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress today the significance of this recognition. The current act does not directly mention – I couldn't believe it. Here we are with such a – we deal with sometimes thousands of children and youth in our care, a large proportion of which is Indigenous, and we had a children, youth and families act that did not directly mention Indigenous governments and organizations. Hard to be culturally responsive, of which language is a very important component in that cultural piece, when you do not even make mention of Indigenous governments and organizations. This is a first for child protection legislation in this province and this inclusion is meaningful for Indigenous children, youth and families.

One of the things that I heard from my first meeting sitting down with Indigenous groups,

particularly, in places like Northern Labrador, our First Nation reserves – now, I want to stress, I guess, before I make this statement, when we are working with vulnerable families, removing the children is always a last resort. As a matter of fact, about 80 per cent of the families we work with around this province, the children are in their homes. Sometimes we have to provide wrap-around supports to vulnerable families and help them through a little challenging time in their life, but sometimes, just for a period of time, always with a view to reunify that child with their family, we have to remove the children. One of the things that we heard loud and clear from Indigenous leaders was we don't want these children to lose their culture. That is so important to their identity, the being away from their language.

So, Mr. Speaker, this new act that is coming into effect this spring, this new *Children, Youth and Families Act*, the new act requires cultural connection plans, and we're pretty proud of that because we have worked really hard. I'm not standing here taking all the credit. I have a tremendous team. We've done a lot of work and a lot of work continues, but what this new cultural connection plan means is that when an Indigenous child or youth is removed from his or her family, and we consider specific placements, they will require a cultural connection plan. There will be provisions in place to connect people from that community with the child, or to ensure that child has regular connections back with their family.

These changes to the legislation are an important step forward to ensuring Indigenous children and youth involved in the child protection system retain all those important connections to their families and communities, which, of course, enables connection to their language.

It is important to note also – and we were just discussing this at lunch time today in the department – there are lot of negative things around social media and sometimes we all need to shut it down for our own mental health for a few hours, but there are positive things in how social media has been able to bring people together that's spread over a large land mass.

Often you see elderly people now that are taking advantage of getting on social media because it

gives them an opportunity to engage a little with their grandchildren that may be living in another city or another province, and they can only see them once or twice a year.

One of the things that technology has done, Mr. Speaker, is we are keeping up on new ways to maintain connections with community. We have children that may be away from their homes for temporary periods of time, or their community, and we are using FaceTime to communicate. So when those children get an opportunity to FaceTime with family members back in their Indigenous communities, language is a very important component of that.

We're going to continue, Mr. Speaker, to build on those ways to keep those children and youth that are in our care that may be temporarily away from their families, do all we can to ensure that they maintain a strong connection to their culture and to their language, because we know, we understand the importance of culture, the importance of maintaining connections with your community. It really is something that's so important for all of us, as we go through life, to have a strong sense of our own where we came from in order to determine where we want to go in life.

Once again, I want to toss a bouquet to my colleague –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. DEMPSTER: – the Member for Torngat, for bringing the motion in. I'm happy to support this motion, Mr. Speaker, and I've had an –

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

I remind the Member her time is expired.

Order, please!

I would like to bring to the Members' attention, we do have a special guest observing our very important debate this afternoon.

I'd like to recognize Ms. Catharyn Andersen. She's Memorial University's Indigenous advisor and special assistant to the president of Memorial University.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: And she's also from Makkovik in Labrador.

Welcome, Catharyn, good to see you.

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a privilege to get up and speak on this private Member's motion brought forth today by my hon. colleague from Torngat. I listened to all the previous speakers, we sometimes forget how important, how deeply rooted we are in Indigenous people and their languages. We get caught up in two main languages of French and English, but anyone here, and if you're living in Labrador, especially, and I'm aware of it as well, and most of us are, Indigenous language and protecting them is very important.

Mr. Speaker, the United Nations are concerned about losing the Indigenous languages. They consider this to be a matter of development, peace building and reconciliation. Here's how they put it: "Languages play a crucial role in the daily lives of people, not only as a tool for communication, education, social integration and development, but also as a repository for each person's unique identity, cultural history, traditions and memory. However, despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at alarming rate.

"With this in mind, the United Nations declared 2019 The Year of the Indigenous Languages ... in order to raise awareness of them, not only to benefit the people who speak these languages, but also for others to appreciate the important contribution they make to our world's rich cultural fabric."

Here's more of what the United Nations says on its website for this special year. "It is through language that we communicate with the world, define our identity, express our history and culture, learn, defend our human rights and participate in all aspects of society, to name but a few.

“Through language, people preserve their community’s history, customs and traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking, meaning and expression. They also use it to construct their future. Language is pivotal in areas of human rights protection, good governance, peace building, reconciliation, and sustainable development.”

Increasing understanding, reconciliation and international cooperation is one of the five key areas that are listed from the United Nations. Creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices with regard to Indigenous languages is the second one. Integration of Indigenous languages into standard setting is third. Empowerment through capacity building is the fourth and growth and development through elaboration of new knowledge is the fifth.

The main objectives focus global attention on the critical risks confronting Indigenous languages, their significance for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance and peace building. Target steps that will improve quality of life, enhance international cooperation, strengthen intercultural dialogue and reaffirm cultural and linguistic continuity. Increase the capacity of all stakeholders to take measures that will support, access and promote Indigenous languages in accordance with legitimate rights of the people who speak them.

Mr. Speaker, UNESCO, the main facilitator for this year – many governments are partners in the initiative including the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is focused on other initiatives that are related to this such as promoting dialogues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Under the banner, Let’s Talk About Reconciliation, a series of dialogues continue to be held until 2021 in public libraries across Canada. CCUNESCO helped organize this series in partnership with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, the National Film Board, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and the Library and Archives of Canada.

Here’s something interesting about that initiative, a quote from an opinion piece in *La Presse* in 2017, which states: Only 15 per cent of non-Indigenous Canadians are familiar with the history of colonization in Canada, the cultural achievements of Indigenous peoples and some of the obstacles they face such as racism, educational or economic inequalities, for instance.

UNESCO wants to do something about this, not that this initiative is promoting dialogue, a word that points to language. The primary objective of this initiative is to encourage participation by Canadians who are not directly involved in the reconciliation process, or are not exposed to Indigenous history and culture. These cross-country dialogues aim to strengthen relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by creating space where the two communities can interact with each other in a spirit of openness and mutual discovery.

With Qalipu, important discussions about Indigenous heritage and ancestry are opening up, particularly in the Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation organization. This process has encouraged many people to begin telling their stories and all of us are learning things about our province’s history that were not widely known.

The Qalipu Cultural Foundation was formed in 2014 to support Mi’kmaq culture in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are making every effort to reach out to individuals who have limited knowledge of their heritage and providing them with information and experiences that will assist them in the discovery process. We also seek to unite the people who have experience and knowledge of the Mi’kmaq traditions.

At Conne River, Miawpukek reserve was established according to traditional oral history in 1870. In July, people gathered to join the Miawpukek First Nation powwow where Mi’kmaq Nation culture is celebrated.

In Northern Labrador, the Nunatsiavut Government has a Cultural Division that works to ensure the future language and culture of the people. The Culture, Recreation and Tourism Department works on preservation, protection, promotion and advancement of Labrador Inuit

language and culture. The Cultural Division provides a range of language and culture-related initiatives and programs. The department has three interpreter-translators on staff providing Inuktitut-English services for the Nunatsiavut Government and the public. Once a week the OK Society radio station in Nain runs a one-hour radio program in Inuktitut, which is funded and supported by the department

Inuktitut Master Apprenticeship Program is a six-month program in each of the five Nunatsiavut communities where fluent Inuktitut speakers are hired to teach language and skills to students.

These words are not that easy to say, Mr. Speaker.

The Labrador Inuktitut Training Program, known as the LITP, was established through partnerships. The department has developed a curriculum for Inuktitut language-training program to be administered with the Department of Education and Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. The program was delivered successfully through the Inuktitut Bachelor of Education Program which plans to expand the application of the program into additional educational settings.

The department is participating in an effort to develop a unified national writing system and language materials for Inuktitut. Together with partners, they are using CD-ROM learning modules for the Labrador Inuit dialect of Inuktitut. The department has been developing language strategy to target future programs, services and policy directions to increase the understanding and the use of Inuktitut in Nunatsiavut.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2009 a partnership between the Department of Education and Innu Nation resulted in the development of an Innu social studies curriculum and resources for kindergarten, the first for Innu children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The province's Education minister stated at the time: "There has been a great level of consultation and collaboration with Innu over the past several years to adapt the social studies curriculum to truly reflect the Innu culture and

way of life. The new resources have been written by the Innu for the Innu. What's more, the Innu have drawn and photographed the images in the readers and the story-books. This is a first for our province and I am pleased we were able to assist in making this initiative a reality."

"The Kindergarten social studies curriculum was adapted by a working group of representatives from the Innu Nation, the Labrador School District and the Department of Education. It is the first time that the Innu have been so deeply involved in their resource development, which also includes hands-on professional development for Innu participants. This effort has resulted in a curriculum for Kindergarten that is uniquely adapted to Innu, as well as a framework for modifying other subject areas for Innu students at different grade levels and subjects."

Grand Chief Mark Nui said: "For the first time ever Innu children will see themselves in school materials and it will be an empowering experience for them, for their teachers and for the Inuit people as a whole. This has required a collective effort and I want to thank the Innu teachers and teaching assistants, the Department of Education and the Labrador School Board for their dedication to this project."

"In addition to adaptations to social studies curriculum, a number of other initiatives have been introduced in recent years aimed at making the school environment more culturally relevant for Innu students. For example, community elders visit schools to help bring stories and local history and culture of the Innu to language arts and social studies classes, and art and music classes now focus on and embrace Innu art and music."

The former minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Ms. Patty Pottle, once said in years past: "By teaching the children of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish with material developed by Innu themselves, inspired by their language and culture, we see an outstanding example of Innu Nation and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador working together to promote and preserve the Innu language and way of life. I commend the Innu Nation for their ongoing efforts to establish a solid foundation of learning

for these children. Thanks to the combined efforts of the Innu community, educators, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Innu children have increased opportunities to grow and prosper within their own culture.”

The present initiative is part of the approximately \$9 million allocated by the provincial government from 2005 onward in both K-12 and post-secondary systems in support of initiatives to enhance educational experience for Aboriginal students, including the Innu and Inuit, for after-school programs, a skilled trades program at Nain and Hopedale and an expansion of the College of the North Atlantic in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to accommodate Aboriginal students.

The minister at the time said: “The nature of social studies easily allows for focus on aspects of Innu culture and history; however, now that we have a framework in place, we can make adaptations in many areas of the curriculum. We can provide culturally relevant learning resources within the prescribed curriculum. Our intent is to ensure that Innu students have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and maintain their language, while acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in our modern economy.”

The NunatuKavut Research, Education and Culture department launched a Southern Inuit Education Program in seven school throughout NunatuKavut in 2016: Cartwright, Black Tickle, Norman Bay, Charlottetown, Port Hope Simpson, Mary’s Harbour and St. Lewis.

NunatuKavut worked closely with school to re-introduce Southern Inuit traditional knowledge and skills into the curriculum. During the school year, students get hands-on experience in building komatiks, making snowshoes, learning crafts and surviving on the land. It’s taught by NunatuKavut language elders in the community.

As well, *Re-Storying NunatuKavut* was collaboratively developed by researchers from NunatuKavut and Memorial University to explain how urban Southern Inuit youth in Happy Valley-Goose Bay could be engaged in researching and documenting NunatuKavut-based historical narratives. They pointed out that the stories and knowledge of Inuit women, in

particular, have not been widely heard or acknowledged within the scholarly literature or within intergenerational community context.

This research aimed to explore how the practice of storytelling by the NunatuKavut women could destabilize established historical narratives and understandings, and how the involvement of urban youth in digital storytelling could create new interpretations of the diversity of experiences and Indigenous identities of the Southern Inuit. Recently NunatuKavut has welcomed Indigenous writers to participate and collecting an anthology of writing, with creations in Indigenous languages especially welcomed.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I’d like to say the efforts of this province to step up in the protection of popularization of Indigenous languages and cultures are moving forward thanks to passionate people in the community. We need to celebrate these efforts more widely and showcase this culture and linguistic wealth wherever and whenever we can.

We’re pleased to support this resolution and join with others in calling on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to officially recognize 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to my colleague across the way for his words and segue in speaking this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, for those who might be just joining us on the broadcast or perhaps tuning in or listening, I’ll just recount the private Member’s resolution that we’re debating this afternoon. The private Member’s motion was brought in by the Member for Torngat Mountains and it states:

“WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages;

“AND WHEREAS the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has estimated that 40 percent of the languages spoken around the world are in danger of disappearing;

“AND WHEREAS there are more than 70 Indigenous languages across 12 language groups currently spoken in Canada and it is believed that 75 per cent of these languages are identified as endangered;

“AND WHEREAS Indigenous languages are a fundamental and valued element of our culture and society and are essential in improving our indigenous identity;

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador officially recognize 2019 as the Year of the Indigenous Languages.”

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Torngat Mountains had a chat with me prior to coming up with this motion. It’s something that he felt extremely passionate about, as he alluded to in his opening remarks. Essentially, the intent of the motion is that the province can now recognize 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages and as a bit of a piggyback, if you will, of the some of the work that the United Nations has done in calling on 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Some of the work that the United Nations has done on this is around awareness and it’s around encouraging other member states and nations to promote and encourage Indigenous languages. This is some of the work that was developed from their declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted in 2007. And in that document that was adopted just over a dozen years ago one of the articles specifically states: “... indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

So, with this work coming from the United Nations, and as we moved on to see some of the work that the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations here in Canada, I think it’s important that as a province we take and lend our voice to this cause. I think that was the intention of the Member’s motion here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, in Canada, as we said, there are more than 70 Indigenous languages across 12 language groups. We are seeing a decline in the ability of folks who are able to speak Indigenous languages. Some of the data from 2016 Statistics Canada is also stating we had about a two-decade decline in the percentage of Indigenous people able to speak an Indigenous language; 29 per cent in 1996, down to 16 per cent in 2016. Mr. Speaker, those figures are quite startling and I think it certainly is the reason why we’re here speaking today.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission have put forth 94 calls to action, as mentioned by multiple Members. A number of the initial –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: It’s just a little bit noisy. If I could just remind the Members, please, to keep their conversations down a little.

Thank you.

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one of the calls they put forth specifically around some of the Languages Act, and we actually just saw the federal government table some legislation on this, I believe, just about a month ago. What they are doing is they are going to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal languages commissioner. The commissioner should be able to promote Aboriginal languages and report of the adequacy of federal funding for Aboriginal language initiatives.

So this was called upon by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in December of 2015. We understand and know that legislation takes time and some of these calls to action have been acted on, but most recently we just saw

legislation so we can see an Aboriginal languages commissioner. I applaud the federal government; I think that's a step in the right direction, and certainly something that we as a province can build on as well.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, as the Member for Torngat Mountains alluded to, we've seen some great work from Memorial University. I know Catharyn Andersen here this afternoon. For Mi'kmaq I would say kwe', which means hello. So hello and welcome to you, it's great to see you here this afternoon.

In addition to Memorial, I know we've had some initiatives with the Department of Education. We recently had some graphic novels that were introduced into the school curriculum with respect to Indigenous principles and culture. But outside of Memorial and outside of some other initiatives, we have a tremendous amount of groups and non-profit organizations and Aboriginal and Indigenous groups that are continuing to promote the teachings of Indigenous languages.

Some of them, Mr. Speaker, are on the West Coast, where I'm from, in Stephenville. I know the People of the Dawn Indigenous Friendship Centre, which has an Indigenous friendship centre located on Main Street in Stephenville, as well as a friendship centre located on Main Street in St. George's. And they've done some good work with respect to teaching Indigenous languages, but they also have some challenges.

Some of the challenges are directly alluding to the amount of people who are still able to speak the language and speak it fluently. I know they've brought in folks from Eskasoni First Nation. Dr. Bernie Francis, who is a linguist, was brought over and has done some work and they've adopted some of his principles. He was an individual who was able to develop the Francis-Smith method, which essentially when you're speaking Mi'kmaq, there are two different ways to speak the language. It could be the Francis-Smith method or the Listuguj method. And this of course can vary depending on where you live. But he had come over and had helped some of the folks there in terms of some of the teachings. Also, Curtis Michael from Eskasoni had come over to Stephenville and to St. George's as well.

Today, we currently have two individuals who are teaching Mi'kmaq in Stephenville and in St. George's. And that's Marcella Williams and Shane Snook. Both of these individuals have been doing weekly classes. We tend to see an older demographic come to some of these classes. I guess it gets to a certain point where in terms of promoting and reviving the culture, which has been the goal of Qalipu First Nation and some of the revival we've seen over the last number of years in particular, but in terms of promoting the culture you get to a point where in order to recognize the culture's importance, recognizing the language becomes part and parcel. The difficulty around recognizing the language and those who are able to speak the language certainly becomes a challenge but, having said that, they are making some good inroads.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we've learned in terms of promoting culture and Indigenous culture is from our elders and it's been referenced here in the House of Assembly on a couple of occasions. I just want to give a good shout-out to two elders from my areas and that would be Odelle Pike who recently received the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and certainly someone who has championed the Mi'kmaq cause for a number of years and also elder Calvin White, of course, who is someone who is recognized nationally, receiving the Order of Canada for his efforts.

I know both of these people very well. In fact, I've actually had the fortunate opportunity, outside of my role as a Member of the House of Assembly but in my prior life working in non-profit organizations, to work with these individuals in teaching employment skills and programming when Calvin was working in the Flat Bay band and some of these initiatives and working with Odelle Pike from the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network.

We, as a government, have a role to help these organizations to continue to do the good work that they do. I do know that just last year we were able to increase some of our funding provincially to the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, which was certainly welcome, and we continue to help some of our different bands around as well.

Benoit First Nation in Cape St. George comes to mind. It's a band that does tremendous work in the community and we've been able to help them through various Job Creation Partnerships with respect to their building and their upgrading around the Community Enhancement Employment Programs as well. So there are a number of ways that groups can tap in where government can supply help and all of this helps to provide a space, a cultural learning space for individuals to provide this type of training.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to belabour it. I just wanted to lend my voice for a few moments. As we know, we have a 15-minute allotment on private Members' resolutions, but I did want to save some of my time today for my colleague from St. George's - Humber who I know has spent a significant amount of time throughout his district. Both of our districts are very rich with respect to our Qalipu members. I, of which, am a member of the Qalipu First Nation as well.

With that, I just wanted to lend my voice to talk about some of things that the United Nations has done, what has spurred on the Member for Torngat Mountains to bring in this motion today, some of the work that the federal government has done that we can now take and move on and move forward with as well.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will leave you with another word in Mi'kmaq and it is: M'sit no'kmaq, which means "all my relations."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm very happy to stand here and speak to this private Member's motion, and we certainly will support it.

I do have a question, and my question is: What does it mean to ask government to simply officially recognize 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages? It's not enough. We need more than just a simple acknowledgement

or words, because although this is about words, it's about more than just words and memorizing words, it's about a whole cultural expression.

So, really, we need to be asking government to really support the revitalization, the preservation of Indigenous languages here in Newfoundland and Labrador where we know that they are.

I want to commend my colleagues for the wonderful statements that have been made, and the Member for Torngat Mountains who has introduced this private Member's motion. It's so important. It's so incredibly important.

What we are seeing in light of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, and what we are seeing in light of an intentional – in the history of this province, we have seen an intentional suppression of Indigenous languages – intentional. Not just what we see globally in terms of an anglicization, the spread of English in so many languages, it's more than that. We have seen an intentional suppression of Indigenous languages – I'm having a hard time with English today, Mr. Speaker – and so reparation is just, reparation must be done, and that reparation comes with a cost.

We're not talking just because, okay, just pour more money on, but it really comes with specific actions and with a cost in order to ensure that there is reparation, that there is justice, that there is preservation of what still exists, and also revitalization. Because we know how important language is to the expression of culture, and it goes hand-in-hand with, not only the articulation of culture, but the development of culture.

So that is my question: What is it that we really are asking government to do? Again, not simply say: Oh yes, we support this or acknowledge this, but that it must go beyond that.

UNESCO declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages not because it was a nice thing to do but because they recognized they had to encourage urgent action. It's not just acknowledging Indigenous languages, it's saying we need urgent action and we need urgent action to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages around the world.

What we're talking about here today, Mr. Speaker, is urgent action – urgent action to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages around Newfoundland and Labrador. Again, in reparation for this specific targeted suppression of those languages that came along with colonization and now there's a lot of work to be done.

UNESCO also realized and recognized that measures are needed to avoid further loss of these languages and their associated history, traditions and memory. So it's not just words. It's all of the culture as well, the associated history of the language, the traditions that are embodied within the language and how the language embodies tradition and also memory.

When the Member for Torngat talked about the numerous words in Inuktitut for snow, so when you use those very descriptive and very specific words, they also elicit a memory and a picture and an idea and a tradition, so how important that is.

UNESCO says through language people preserve their community's history, customs and traditions, their memory, unique modes of thinking, and we see that as well in different Indigenous communities, a different way of thinking and that's reflected in their language and the language also reflects a way of thinking and meaning and expression.

How, when we learn different languages, all of us, if we've had the fortune, the good fortune of being able to learn a different language, you know that languages also really have very specific meaning and expression and, particularly, again, when the Member for Torngat talked to us about the different words for snow. They have different meaning. They have a different expression.

Language is also used to construct the future. Language is pivotal in the areas of human rights protection, good governance. We know how important language is in our legislation in our House of Assembly, how we conduct our business here in the House. Language is so important for peace building. There's a lot of peace building and reparation that is required as we see through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and, specifically, very targeted

areas in the Calls to Action. It's necessary, it's very pivotal in reconciliation and sustainable development. So we know how important this is.

Many of us take for granted that we can conduct our lives in our home languages without any constraint or prejudice. When we look at the history of colonization on Indigenous communities in our province, we look at the constraints and the prejudice that were enforced upon Indigenous people around the use of their own language. The loss of Indigenous languages has a huge negative impact on the Indigenous cultures that are concerned. We're seeing that, and I think that the Member for Torngat showed us that very carefully, and the Government of Canada has endorsed this declaration.

But coming with endorsing this declaration, again, must come crucial actions. The Government of Canada introduced a federal *Indigenous Languages Act*, it was Bill C-91, and that was introduced February 5 and it's now in Committee. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for that. The act states that the rights of Indigenous peoples that are enshrined in law include Indigenous languages. We need that provincially as well. We need that provincially, we need a similar act. We need a similar law here in the province that enshrines the rights of Indigenous people in law to include Indigenous languages without prejudice, without suppression, without discrimination.

I asked questions in Question Period today about some very specific issues about Indigenous communities having the right to adequate translation, to full translation, when they're accessing health care services, social services and justice. We know the Minister of Justice responded to me saying: We're doing the best that we can. But we know how difficult it is in the justice system in Labrador that, basically, there have been two full-time translators in Innu, and how difficult it is. They go, they're running between court cases, between rooms in the courthouse trying to translate, and in Inuktitut, different translators. What happens is that there are delays in cases.

We know, again, particularly in the law, how particular many terms are, how particular that process is and how important it is for those who either have been victims or who have been

accused, how important it is for them to have a full understanding of what's going on. It's about their basic human rights. We know that the translation services are far from adequate in that situation and more needs to be done.

What needs to be done is a translator in different circumstances, not just about somebody who can speak the language, it's also about somebody who has the expertise in a particular area that they're doing the translation for. So, whether it's health care situations, again, which has very particular and technical language, and the law as well.

I want to do a shout out to those who are doing this work on behalf of their communities, who are providing translation. Sometimes they work really long hours, sometimes under a lot of stress. We need more people who are fully trained, who are working full time, that this is their full-time job. Not just contract work and being called at the last minute. We need people who are very skilled in the particular areas that they are providing translation for.

I'd also like to give a shout out to those who are doing really interesting work. The school in Miawpukek First Nation in the Conne River school. They have one Mi'kmaq teacher. They know that they need another one and they are doing everything they can to ensure that their children are learning the Mi'kmaq language.

Many of us – I don't know if many of us, but I certainly went to Makkipok, which was an Inuit Music for Passiontide and Easter at the Basilica. It was with the Lady Cove and Newman Sound and the incredible Inuk classically trained singer, Deantha Edmunds, who sang in Inuktitut her favourite Handel's "Messiah." It was an incredible event, Mr. Speaker. The Basilica was filled two nights; it was incredible. There was so much pride bouncing around that Basilica those two nights and what a celebration of the Inuit culture and the Inuit language. It was just absolutely amazing.

Then also Jerry Evans, a Mi'kmaq man, an activist artist with Pam Hall is doing an encyclopedia of knowledge and it's of folk knowledge, of traditional knowledge that will be published in Mi'kmaq. I'm really looking forward to that coming out.

Shane Snook and another woman who's doing an online Mi'kmaq course where you can learn different – but again it's not just about learning words and pronunciations of words, it's about learning a language and it's about learning how to speak a language. They're providing that free of charge online and that's a wonderful thing.

Eastern Owl is a music group of Indigenous women who are singing in Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous languages, celebrating that culture and that art. How great is that. Their CDs are available to buy. They've got their second CD out.

The Jerry Cans are Inuit folks from (inaudible) from Iqaluit and they sing in Inuktitut and they're kind of a rock-and-roll type group and they're just so great. To see Indigenous youth and Indigenous artists performing in their languages, how important that is.

The powwow in Miawpukek First Nation Conne River, I went this summer; it was just fabulous. Again, the celebration and the pride that comes with celebrating one's own culture – the powwow in Flat Bay.

Tonight is the opening night of *Huff*, which is a play written by Cliff Cardinal. He's an Indigenous playwright and actor and he has toured across Canada with this play. It's on tonight until the 17th of March at the LSPU Hall here in St. John's. I highly recommend that people go to it. It's a fabulous play that has gotten lots of acclaim and it's a play about the colonization and the implications of that colonization on his people.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is running down, but I want to say, again, that to simply say we support this is not enough. It takes urgent action. It's an urgent issue. We are looking at the disappearance of very important culture and language.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize the hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to have an opportunity to talk about this important issue here in this House today. A number of Members have spoken and it's been a very interesting debate. I want to thank the Member for Torngat Mountains for bringing forward this resolution and giving us all an opportunity to think about and to talk about and have a good discussion about Indigenous languages and the importance of recognizing the importance of those languages.

Language, really, it's not just about the way we communicate, it's the way we think. It's the way we interact with each other. One of the things, the Member for Torngat Mountains talked about the number of words for snow. That sort of language is rooted in the geography and the physical place where we live.

I had a conversation with someone who speaks Mi'kmaq and they were telling me their experiences of learning the language. One of the experiences they had was they started to realize where the words for the months of the year came from and how the words were connected to the things that came at that time of year. Berries and things like this would sort of – the names of the months in the language would relate to some of the physical things that were happening at that time of year.

So, it's a connectedness to the physical environment that, in many ways, sort of develops our language and the way we speak and the way we talk to each other.

I have a little bit of experience with this myself. I had an opportunity to teach English at a university in Korea for a while. One of the things, we, as Newfoundlanders, when we talk to people we often start off the conversation – one of the things, if we don't know the other person, we often start off by talking about the weather. We say: Oh, this is a nice day, right, we're having here today. Or bad weather – what do you think of that weather? When I moved to Korea first, my wife and I, I said: Yeah, nice day we're having today. They were like: What are you talking about? Yeah, it's a nice day and it's going to be a nice day tomorrow too. It's going to be a nice day for the next three months and then it's going to get bad. It's going to rain for a month, right. So, it's the way our language is connected to where we are and that's one reason

why it's important to maintain our language and the way we think about things and the connectedness that we have.

I want to take a few minutes just to talk about the cultural revival that I see happening on the West Coast in the Mi'kmaq people there and some of the people that I've talked with in the area, some of the experiences they've had. The Member for Stephenville - Port au Port mentioned some of the same things that I wanted to talk about here today, but I think some of them, as well, bear repeating.

I guess, really the thing that most people are aware of is the success of the Bay St. George powwow that happens in Flat Bay. It's something that has led to a real pride in the culture. It's led to opportunities for people to reconnect with their culture. It's offered opportunities for people who aren't Mi'kmaq to begin to learn more about the diversity of cultures we have in this province and what we can learn from each other about the way our cultures have evolved and we can learn things from each other.

I just want to congratulate the Cultural Revival Committee on what they've done in the Flat Bay powwow. It's quite the event. If you haven't been there, I would certainly – I know a number of Members of the House have been there. I think the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi was there one year. Who else was there? The Member for Stephenville - Port au Port is always there. The Premier was there one year, I think. So we've had a number of people from the House visit, and I certainly would encourage other Members to visit as well. It really is an exciting few days and I would encourage you to attend.

As well, I just want to talk about some of the people that I've talked to and some of the people I've learned from, some of the elders in the Bay St. George area. One of the people that I've talked to – and the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port mentioned him as well – was Calvin White. He told me some stories about suppression of Mi'kmaq culture in the early days.

He and other people have told me stories about parents and grandparents who would not speak

Mi'kmaq in front of their younger children. There was such a stigma attached to being Aboriginal at that time that people suppressed their culture. As I say, with the Cultural Revival, we're seeing – I see a complete reversal of that. People are taking pride in their culture, but it's a sad part of our history. People talk about truth and reconciliation, and it's a difficult thing. I know, I've talked to a lot of people about the anger that still exists and the injustices that occurred.

It's something we're still struggling with, I think, as a society in this province, in Canada, generally. I think it's important that we continue to make efforts in terms of truth and reconciliation in this province as well. I think having this debate here today gives us an opportunity to talk about some of those things.

Another person that I talked to, John mentioned Odelle Pike. Sorry, I mean the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port mentioned Odelle Pike today. I certainly recognize the work that Odelle has done and she's made a wonderful contribution to the whole area. She's been recognized for it with the Order of Canada and the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Just to go back for a second, Calvin White, as well, recently received the Order of Canada for his work with Aboriginal people in this province and the work that he's done over the years. He's also a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Where I was going first was I talked about Odelle, but also I wanted to talk about Odelle's brother, Victor. Victor is an elder in St. George's. He does a lot of visits to schools, a lot of work with young people and teaching them about their culture and language. He's been very instrumental in promoting the culture. I've had several chats with him. I've learned a lot from him about Aboriginal culture in the area and the history of Bay St. George, generally. He's done a lot to preserve the traditions. He's wrote several books and he's been a very important figure in the cultural revival that's happening in Bay St. George.

As well, I just want to take a few more seconds to talk about some of the efforts – the museum in St. George's. If anyone is interested in

learning more about Aboriginal culture or reconnecting with their culture, the museum in St. George's is in the old courthouse there and it has a lot of displays and lot of material related to the history of Aboriginal people in this province.

Myself and the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, the minister responsible for Culture was out to the powwow as well, and while we were there, myself and the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, we dropped into the museum in St. George's. I think we were all impressed with the displays there and the expression of culture.

One of the other things is we recently had the cultural round tables where the province sought input from various groups about aspects of culture. I attended a session in Corner Brook and also a session in Stephenville. One of the issues that came up was issues around Mi'kmaq language, Mi'kmaq art and Mi'kmaq music as well. I think it was interesting to hear that input and to hear that sort of case put forward that we need to do more to encourage Mi'kmaq music to be heard on the radio, or to make it possible for people to broadcast Mi'kmaq music, Mi'kmaq stories and the use of language. So, I'm hopeful that in the future we'll see some things like that happening.

Also, another positive thing that I see happening is in some of the schools. Some people have mentioned the problems of schools in our past, experiences with residential schools. That's part of our history and that's part of something we're still struggling with.

One of the positive things I see, I've been invited to visit the school in St. George's in particular, and one of the exciting things I see there is the school principal and other teachers are inviting Mi'kmaq people into the classroom, to bring the Mi'kmaq culture into the classroom and they're having events which emphasize Mi'kmaq culture. I'm very encouraged by that. I want to give a shout-out to the principal there, Wally Childs, and the teachers and the people in the community who become part of that as well.

Language and cultural revival is all part of what we're seeing there. I just wanted to mention a couple of artists from the area; Nelson White is someone. I've had conversations with him. He

really doesn't like to be referred to as a Mi'kmaq artist. He says he's an artist who just happens to be Mi'kmaq. Some of his paintings that I've seen are very interesting and I think they show not your stereotypical maybe expression of Aboriginals, it's sort of a new look.

One of his pictures that was really striking was someone getting ready to go to the powwow, putting on their regalia, someone was helping them put on their regalia. While they were doing that, the person had a cellphone in their hand and was checking their email while they were getting dressed in their regalia to go to powwow.

So it's an interesting sort of showing that Aboriginal culture is evolving as well. Other people have mentioned the use of technology to teach language and I'm aware of the possibilities that are being used there.

Marcus Gosse is someone who sort of uses Mi'kmaq art as part of what he does, but he also interacts with sort of art from Andy Warhol and sort of mixes those sort of styles with Mi'kmaq traditional art. Jordan Bennett is someone else who has been very successful in putting forward Mi'kmaq art in the province and has had displays at the Guggenheim in New York and has had big displays in Halifax and is getting recognition from all around the world. He is someone else.

What I'm saying is we've had some very interesting things happen. There's a new pride I think and there's a new sort of attitude developing. I think language has to be an important part of that and it all works together.

I just want to thank the Member for Torngat Mountains for bringing forward his motion, giving us an opportunity to discuss this issue here today.

Thanks very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains to close the debate on his motion.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At some point, maybe a correction will be needed in naming of my district. Torngat is an English word derived from Tongait, which are the godly mountains.

Mr. Speaker, when I opened by remarks and I introduced the PMR, I said that I would have to leave it to my colleagues to address the Indigenous cultures around our province. I'd like to thank them for the job they did because it shed different angles on different cultures from Northern Labrador to the South Coast.

The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune who represents the Miawpukek community of Conne River, an interesting remark that she made was the domination of English and the insults that Newfoundlanders – if I could use that word, Mr. Speaker – had to face in the evolution of the dialects of English around the province – an interesting comment.

I liked her comments that she said that she can only imagine the insults and the suppression that Indigenous cultures around our province had to face. I guess the ultimate payment of sacrifice was the Beothuk nation. So I thank her for her comments in agreeing that Indigenous cultures have taken initiatives. I think everyone said that.

Some comments from my colleague the hon. Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, stories about the almost total loss of language on the South Coast and how a lot of this language was lost through residential schooling and forced teachings of another culture.

She also referred to the apology by the prime minister in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and what it meant to the Indigenous cultures and how it started the healing process to address some of the challenges with the Truth and Reconciliation report.

My hon. colleague for Conception Bay South, Mr. Speaker, said that language is pivotal in areas where culture is needed. He talked about the international initiatives of dialect diversion. He mentioned the Miawpukek powwow and I'm assuming it was the Torngâsok Cultural Centre.

I have to give my hon. colleague from Conception Bay South thumbs up for his efforts at actually speaking some of the Indigenous languages. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, when he started to speak Inuktitut, it's probably the clearest I ever understood him since he became Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: My hon. colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port, Mr. Speaker, focused on the declarations from the United Nations and the clearance that it gave for Indigenous cultures to go forward in reviving language. He focused on the initiatives by Memorial University and the Indigenous groups in our province. He mentioned some of his elders: Odelle Pike and Calvin White, who have been recognized for their efforts.

My hon. colleague from St. John's Centre, Mr. Speaker, mentioned there's more need for recognition, there's more need for action. She talked about international suppression and that reparations must be done, and it comes with a cost. She mentioned the questions in Question Period today.

I'd like to take it one step further for what translators have to deal with. When we started introducing another culture, the English culture, the translators, our elders that did translations, actually had to invent words because some of the terminology and some of the issues that came forward, there was never an Indigenous word for it. So these are some of the challenges around that.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. George's - Humber talked about the contrast in cultures and the connectedness required. But he also talked about the revival in his district, the powwow in St. George's, the pride in the culture and the reconnection revival.

Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone for their comments on all this.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the repatriation, both in the Inuktitut culture that I mentioned in my opening remarks and the work that's been done by Chief Misel Joe and the Miawpukek

nation on the repatriation of our Beothuk remains: Nonosabasut and Demasduit.

Mr. Speaker, there are a bunch of different Indigenous groups around our province. I just mentioned the Beothuk and the Miawpukek, the Qalipu First Nation, Benoit First Nation St. George's Band, Burgeo Mi'kmaq band, Northern Peninsula Makep'sk Mi'kmaq Band, Flat Bay Band, NunatuKavut Community Council, Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council, the Mushuau Innu Band Council that make up the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government, Mr. Speaker. All of these have a mandate to promote, preserve and, in some cases, revive or restore language as a part of their culture.

In our own government that started off in the '70s as an idea, members like Sam Andersen who was the first president of the Labrador Inuit Association; Bill Edmunds, my father; William Anderson III, Catharyn's father; Fran Williams, Jim Lyall; Sarah Leo; Johannes Lambe; William Barber, all of these leaders had a mandate and they've done what they could over time.

With the Innu Nation we had great leaders like Ben Michel and Katie Rich, Peter Penashue, Prote Poker, Mark Nui, Greg Rich. All of these that play an important role.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I'd just like to, I guess, talk about the past, the present and the future in my closing remarks. I think we need to focus on recognizing the suppression and the ridicule that our elders faced with the change in culture being forced upon them. These people, Mr. Speaker, faced the worst discrimination that you could ever imagine and they still managed to hang on to what culture we have. I think that by no means was an easy feat. I took a lot of suffering, it took a lot of pain, but it took perseverance, Mr. Speaker, and the one thing about our Indigenous cultures, we persevere.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Now, Mr. Speaker, I just mentioned a whole bunch of Indigenous leaders from around our province who are the leaders of today, who have taken this knowledge that has been passed on from the elders and there's been a movement across this country, Mr. Speaker, and the movement is gathering steam.

We have in our province, band councils. We have governments, Indigenous governments. We have Indigenous governments in the making. We have a land claims agreements that is in negotiation, and if you look at the mandate of every one of those governments and band councils and councils, the number one mission statement, the one number mission is to promote and preserve culture.

Mr. Speaker, they're doing their job, and every Member in here has talked about the revival of Indigenous culture, Indigenous language around our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my opening statements, our young people are hungry and thirsty for knowledge, for Indigenous knowledge. The elders held on to what they could with what was placed upon them. Our job is to take that knowledge, mould it, restore it and pass it on to our children because they're excited and I think that our future generations will make us proud because, internationally, we have given them the go-ahead.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

I'd also like to say, if I may, wela'lin, tshinashkumitin, nakummek to our Indigenous languages.

It being Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, this House now does stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you.

Members of the Management Commission will meet immediately in my office, I will say, at 5 o'clock, 1700.

Thank you.