



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

---

Volume XLVIII

FOURTH SESSION

Number 1

---

HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

Thursday

April 4, 2019  
(Throne Speech)

The House met at 2 p.m.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** Order, please!

Please be seated.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, the Justices of the Supreme Court have arrived.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Admit the Justices of the Supreme Court.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Admit her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair.)

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

**HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL):**

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:*

I am pleased to open the fourth session of the 48th General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In opening this session, we respectfully acknowledge the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador as the ancestral homelands of many diverse populations of Indigenous people who have contributed to 9,000 years of history, including the Beothuk on the Island of Newfoundland. Today, this province is home to diverse populations of Indigenous and other people. We also acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are proud people, steadfast in their desire to sustain our province and enjoy the benefits of living in a place we love. While our province faces challenges at times, it is through determination, hard work, and perseverance that we succeed and prosper. It is with this strength and focus that we move forward. Our government embraces the spirit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in all that we do.

Our commitment to our people and our province is unwavering. With a strong focus on the future, our government will continue to solidify the social and economic foundation of our province and foster confidence and opportunity for all.

When our government was elected, it was clear that our province needed to build a stronger and smarter economy, that we needed to improve education and health care, that we needed to invest in our future, and that we needed to support safe and sustainable communities. Everyday, through *The Way Forward*, we see successes in these areas.

When our government was elected, we faced a fiscal situation that was unprecedented in our history. Our answer to these fiscal challenges continues to be balanced. We were left with an unfathomable annual deficit of over \$2.7 billion for a population of just over half a million people. Today, we have significantly reduced that number by \$2 billion as we continue restoring fiscal balance.

Our government has stabilized spending. While bringing government spending under control, we have worked closely with industry to attract investment that will advance projects in the mining and oil and gas sectors to continue driving economic activity.

Our government is using every opportunity to make our province a great place to live, work and raise a family. Through partnership and dialogue, we are strengthening the foundation of our province.

Our government has a strong partnership with the federal government, and working together, we will position this province to achieve its potential. It is fitting that, on the seventieth anniversary of Confederation, celebrating our

great union with the Government of Canada, my First Minister stood side by side with the federal government and announced a new approach that was built on partnership and dialogue to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador is the principal beneficiary of the rich resources in our offshore.

The new revenue stream guaranteed by our agreement with the Government of Canada will deliver \$2.5 billion to our province, with the majority of the revenues to come before 2030, when this province most needs it. With no restrictions on its use, this revenue will be used wisely. It will reduce our provincial net debt, reduce our interest payments, and help us stay the course for fiscal stability and return to surplus.

Our strengthened Atlantic Accord includes a dispute resolution mechanism that will ensure Newfoundland and Labrador's rights are respected. This province will continue to receive 100 per cent of its offshore resource revenues, and benefit from their development just as if the resources were on land.

Looking beyond the \$2.5 billion revenue stream and the immense benefits that it will bring to our province over the longer term, our government has also secured conditions that will ensure and support the future growth of offshore developments. *The Way Forward* for our province includes joint management of Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore development in areas such as land tenure, worker safety, regulatory efficiency and regulator modernization. These combined measures will fuel a brighter future for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, for generations to come.

### **Empowering Women**

Our government recognizes and understands that issues affecting women are of great importance. As part of *The Way Forward*, our government committed to supporting and advancing the economic and social security of women and girls. Our government is taking an "all of government" approach to issues impacting women and girls and we will ensure that our response to these issues best meets the needs of women and girls across the province.

Because of this focus our government has, for the first time in the history of our province, dedicated a ministerial portfolio with responsibility solely for the Status of Women. This is representative of the expanded commitment across our government to addressing matters affecting women and girls.

There have been many other achievements over the past year, from legislative changes to program initiatives, that were accomplished because of the solid commitment of our government to strengthening supports for women, ending violence and building both healthy relationships and healthy communities.

These achievements have been possible because of our commitment to collaborative working relationships between our government and stakeholders, including community partners, labour, the private sector and academia. Our government will continue this commitment in the coming year.

Ending violence in all forms remains a critical focus. The second meeting of the full Justice Minister's Committee on Violence against Women and Girls took place in February, with over 60 stakeholders from across sectors providing input regarding next steps in our collective work to end violence. In 2019, our government will continue to build on the work of the committee.

The hon. House of Assembly adopted legislation in its last session to introduce paid family violence leave for workers and to expand the definition of family violence in the *Family Violence Protection Act*. Our government will be building on these efforts by bringing forward new legislation, such as the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol – also known in the United Kingdom as Clare's Law – aimed at increasing the safety of women in intimate relationships. The Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol would allow police agencies, in some cases, to disclose information about a person's criminal and other history to that person's partner. This protocol would complement our government's efforts to help make Newfoundland and Labrador a safer place for women and girls.

Our government envisions a province free from all forms of violence. While we strive for that ideal, we also know that there are survivors who require support. In 2018, our government, together with community partners and the Government of Canada, launched a program to ensure that those who have experienced sexual violence are well informed about the legal system and understand their rights.

This legal support program for survivors of sexual violence has served over 50 clients in its first six months of operation. The program helps break down barriers faced when encountering the justice system by providing up to four hours of free legal advice. We will be engaging in consultations across the province as we develop a new violence prevention strategy. This work will be guided and supported by a diverse committee of community stakeholders and senior staff from key government departments.

Advancing women in leadership is a key priority for our government. We need to see more women at decision making tables – in government, business, industry and community. We will undertake initiatives to build, strengthen and advance the leadership of women in our province. We will also celebrate the successes of women who are flourishing in leadership roles. One such woman is Emily Bland, the “SEED-EO” of Project SucSeed, a local social enterprise that is helping communities take control of their food supply and providing education and work experience for at-risk youth. In 2018, Ms. Bland was recognized as one of the country’s top 30 under 30 in sustainability and won the Satchu Prize at The Next 36 Day Venture. Ms. Bland has a bright future and we congratulate her and wish her continued success.

### **Working with Indigenous Communities**

#### ***Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:***

Our government has made significant strides to build relationships with Indigenous people in our province and to move us toward reconciliation. Reconciliation is a journey and our commitment to that journey is clear and strong.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created as a part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to inform Canadians about Indian residential schools, and to guide a process of reconciliation. Of the 94 Calls to Action outlined by the Commission in 2015, approximately one-third are directed at provincial and territorial governments. Although reconciliation will occur over generations, with systemic changes necessary across all aspects of Canadian society, we all can and must take concrete steps to achieve reconciliation. We have engaged with provincial Indigenous governments and organizations about the recommendations involving our government, and are responding in ways that will build a better future while recognizing and addressing the challenges.

Reconciliation requires close partnership between our government and Indigenous governments and organizations. We have started on this path and will continue to partner with Indigenous people across the province to inform and monitor appropriate and relevant efforts to advance reconciliation now and into the future.

One way our government has moved to support Indigenous people is through our recognition that Indigenous people are currently underrepresented in the legal profession. To help improve this we have developed a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan to support Indigenous people in their pursuit of a legal education. To further build on this partnership our government has allocated two articling positions with the Department of Justice and Public Safety for those students upon graduation.

In the coming months, leaders of Indigenous governments and organizations will be invited to engage in the third annual Indigenous Leaders Roundtable with the Premier, to advance matters of mutual importance to Indigenous communities. At the first Indigenous Leaders Roundtable in 2017, a declaration was signed by Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut, Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation in support of the repatriation of the remains of Beothuk individuals held by National Museums Scotland. In January, National Museums Scotland approved the repatriation of the remains, and our government

is working with the Government of Canada and Indigenous governments and organizations to return the Beothuk remains to our province, their home.

### **Celebrating Excellence**

#### ***Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:***

Newfoundland and Labrador athletes continue to excel while competing on the national and international stages. These athletes have all worked tirelessly to prepare for these events. Their hard work and dedication serve as an example and their achievements inspire us all.

More than 200 athletes recently competed at the 2019 Canada Winter Games in Red Deer, Alberta as members of Team Newfoundland and Labrador. Congratulations to Melanie Taylor of Conception Bay South, who brought home a gold medal in Special Olympics Level 2 figure skating and was named closing ceremonies flag bearer for Team Newfoundland and Labrador. Congratulations also to Emma Mullett of St. John's, on her bronze medal in judo.

Kaetlyn Osmond of Marystown added World Champion to her lengthy list of accomplishments when she won gold at the ladies singles event at the 2018 Figure Skating World Championships. Peter Hynes from Placentia won bronze in mini javelin at the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi.

Liam Hickey of St. John's was a key player in Canada's silver medal win in para ice-hockey at the 2018 Paralympic Games. In December 2019, Liam and the rest of Team Canada will be in Paradise competing at the Canadian Tire Para Hockey Cup against some of the top teams in the world.

Shailynn Snow of Clarke's Beach captured a gold medal at the Under 18 World Female Hockey Championships as a member of Team Canada. This marks the second consecutive year that a Newfoundland and Labrador athlete won a medal for Canada at this event, with Maggie Connors of St. John's taking home a bronze medal last year.

Swimmers Noah Cumby of St. John's and Katarina Roxon of Stephenville both enjoyed success at the Pan-Pacific Championships this past year. Noah captured a bronze medal in the 4 x 100 metre medley relay event while Katarina took home gold, silver and bronze in three different events.

Our province also hosted the Under 18 and Under 20 Male World Junior Ball Hockey Championships in July in Mount Pearl. Team Canada, which included five Newfoundland and Labrador athletes, won gold in the Under 18 championship. The Under 20 Canadian team, which included four athletes from this province, captured a silver medal. Jessica Davis from Conception Bay South competed for Canada at the 2018 Female World Junior Ball Hockey Championship in the Czech Republic and took home a silver medal.

Two prominent members of the sporting community were inducted into the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Hall of Fame this past November. Margaret Tibbo is a prominent and influential advocate of para sport in this province and has supported hundreds of youth to become active and engaged in various para sports. The late Don Johnson had a rich history in the sport of hockey in this province and is considered a pioneer. Mr. Johnson served as President of Hockey Newfoundland and Labrador and Hockey Canada during his volunteer service.

Our government also recognizes the contribution of the Labrador Winter Games to our province, which took place last month in Happy Valley-Goose Bay with other 300 athletes participating from communities throughout Labrador. Our government has been a strong and committed supporter of the Labrador Winter Games since its inception in 1983. The Friendship Games, as they are often referred to, is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the rich, diverse culture of Labrador while promoting the benefits of competitive sport and healthy, active living.

I had the pleasure of being in Labrador for the Labrador Winter Games and I was excited as the first woman Lieutenant-Governor to be there for the inaugural competition of the women in the Labrathon which, up until that point, was only open to men. So, it was a wonderful experience

and I can tell that the women who competed, they could challenge the men for the competition any day. They were wonderful.

### **The Big Land**

Labrador is rich in culture and history, forming an essential part of our province. Just as large as Labrador's cultural footprint is its vast geography.

Our government understands that in a land so vast, transportation is of critical importance for economic development, for social connections and for accessing goods and services needed for everyday life. In 2019 coastal Labrador will have two new ferry services. The *Qajaq W* had its initial run in January across the Strait of Belle Isle and we look forward to launching our new North Coast ferry later this spring. Both services are fully accessible with ice-strengthened bows and will reduce our carbon footprint by half.

Work is continuing along the Trans-Labrador Highway. Our government is proud to proceed with a significant financial investment in partnership with the Government of Canada that will see widening and hard-surfacing continue in 2019.

Our government will continue to provide funding for safe access from isolated communities in Labrador to the nearest service centre through the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy Program. Communities along the north and south coasts of Labrador that do not have year-round access to road or marine service are able to access goods and services through the winter trail system. This year for the first time, there is a trail marking from Hopedale to Nain, providing safe access to all communities on the north coast.

In addition to work on the existing transportation network in Labrador, our government is considering what the future of transportation could look like in that region with the exploration of a fixed link between Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland. An updated pre-feasibility report was released in April 2018, reviewing both road and rail linkages. A fixed link could bring great benefits to both the province and the country, socially and economically. While we continue to consider

this possibility and now know that it is technically feasible, we recognize that such a project would be a long-term endeavour requiring many partners.

Our government remains committed to support community engagement and will continue to play a lead role in the Labrador West Regional Task Force to work with municipalities, the mining sector and the Government of Canada to support the Labrador West region to seize potential opportunities as well as address any potential impacts.

### **A Solid Foundation for New Growth**

Our government is doing things smarter, diversifying the economy and placing an emphasis on new industries while supporting a historic return to traditional sectors as they reclaim their rightful roles in a sustainable, diverse and long-term economy.

We are fostering a renaissance in renewable resource industries – on land and on water. We are transforming and driving innovation in the fish and aquaculture sector through programs such as the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, with a shared focus on meeting the growing global market demand for sustainably sourced, high-quality, fish and seafood products.

Our government will continue to build on its commitment to support aquaculture and our commitment to double salmon and shellfish aquaculture production. In September 2018, Grieg NL announced a \$250 million aquaculture project in Placentia Bay. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will provide repayable support towards the development, totalling up to \$30 million. The project is expected to generate more than 800 new jobs once full production is reached.

As a result of these types of investments, Newfoundland and Labrador is poised to become one of the largest aquaculture producers in the country.

The aquaculture supply and service sector is creating real opportunities for both new start-ups and established companies in Newfoundland and Labrador, creating new employment and maximizing industry competitiveness.

At the same time, our government is committed to conserve our iconic and treasured wildlife resources through science-based management and collaborations with resource users on initiatives like Year of the Salmon and caribou management planning.

In forestry, our newly launched Forestry Sector Work Plan is guiding us in diversifying the forest industry, creating new business activities and increasing job opportunities for residents.

In our agriculture sector, our government is pushing development to new heights by securing more land for future agri-businesses, and creating opportunities for new entrants and current farmers through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership and the Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program.

Our government is committed to doubling food self-sufficiency from 10 per cent to 20 per cent by 2022. To do this, we are supporting new and existing farmers, making more land available for farming, and carrying out research to support innovation, improve production and increase diversity. Since taking on this ambitious challenge, we have supported 46 new farmers through industry-development programming, which includes awarding two large-scale land development pilots for agriculture production in the Towns of Reidville and Cormack. Since the launch of our Agriculture Sector Work Plan, more than 278 acres of land – the equivalent of approximately 211 football fields – have been prepared for fruit and vegetable production with the potential to produce 5 million pounds of food.

In 2018, we launched a pilot project to produce vegetable transplants for commercial farmers to give them a head start on the growing season and an opportunity to try out different vegetable varieties. Commercial farmers received 255,000 vegetable transplants. Due to the overwhelming popularity of this program, in 2019 we will disperse seven times more vegetable transplants – over 1.5 million – including turnip, onion, kohlrabi, Brussels sprout, kale, leek, broccoli and cabbage to commercial farmers to help jump-start the 2019 growing season.

Our achievements to date mark major progress toward our goals to increase food self-

sufficiency, create new business opportunities, and support the many entrepreneurs working in agriculture. Working with our province's dedicated and hard-working farmers, we look forward to growing our success.

Our government will also expand our efforts to improve access to Crown lands. Amendments to the *Lands Act* have modernized the legislation and streamlined the process for acquiring titles to Crown lands. Our government is continuing to enhance online services for Crown lands.

Our non-renewable natural resources continue to be key drivers for new jobs and economic development and we are continuing to position our province as a preferred destination for oil and gas and mining activity.

Over the last two years, we have announced over \$18 billion in investments in mining and oil and gas projects in our province.

The potential in our oil and gas industry is incredible. In less than 7 per cent of our offshore, we have identified a combined resource potential of 49.2 billion barrels of oil and 193.8 trillion cubic feet of gas. To put Newfoundland and Labrador's resource potential in perspective, our total sedimentary basin is approximately 900,000 square kilometres compared to 650,000 square kilometres for Norway and 545,000 square kilometres for the United Kingdom.

We also have over 650 leads and prospects identified to date, eight new entrants in the past two years, and close to \$4 billion in recent exploration work commitments.

The momentum is obvious. Our plan to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be a globally-preferred location for investment and attraction will ensure lasting benefits. In fact, over the last two years the province has seen unprecedented investment in our offshore and mining industry.

This past November, the province received record bids for offshore exploration totalling \$1.38 billion, with a record single bid of \$621 million from BHP Billiton, a new entrant for Newfoundland and Labrador. This is proof that the *Advance 2030* plan developed between our

government and industry is attracting investment and growing activity in our oil and gas industry.

Our mining industry is also booming; with \$3 billion in mineral shipments in 2018, the mining industry directly employs some 4,800 people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. In the 2019 forecast, mineral shipments are expected to grow \$4 billion with direct employment anticipated to be 5,100 and another 1,200 employed in the construction activities. A world of possibilities is at our doorstep because our geology positions Newfoundland and Labrador to be a global supplier of minerals. Our government has moved swiftly to promote our mining industry and the many opportunities that exist.

We have seen extraordinary new developments in mining. This includes the start of a new fluorspar mine in St. Lawrence with over 255 full-time positions, Vale's underground mine project with 1,700 jobs, the IOC Moss Pit which will be fully integrated into current IOC operations, and expected to extend the overall life of the mine, and the restart of the former Scully Mine with 280 direct positions by Tacora Resources in Labrador West. In addition, Tata has completed commissioning and is starting up its \$700 million processing facility. As well, the restart of the Beaverbrook antimony mine was announced in Glenwood with approximately 100 jobs for the region.

With *Mining the Future 2030*, our plan for growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador mining industry, our province is positioned to be a top tier global jurisdiction for safe, environmentally responsible exploration and mining growth and to maximize benefits and opportunities by competitively producing quality products for global markets.

We also recognize the significant opportunities renewable energy presents in terms of economic development and environmental progress. With an abundance of developed and underdeveloped renewable energy sources such as hydro and wind, Newfoundland and Labrador has much more to offer.

To chart this renewable future, we are committed to working with industry and stakeholders to develop a renewable energy

strategy that is focused on creating employment opportunities and further positioning the province as an energy hub.

Congratulations to our own Mary Walsh, who was honoured at the Canadian Screen Awards with the Earle Gray award for lifetime achievement in television acting. Mary was among 10 other nominees from our province for the Canadian Screen Awards, including writer and filmmaker Kenneth J. Harvey who was nominated in the best documentary film feature category for *Immaculate Memories: The Uncluttered Worlds of Christopher Pratt*. The film has just received the award for best Canadian work from RIFFA which is the largest festival films on art in the world. We are blessed with amazing talented artists in our province, all of whom do us proud with their creativity and the recognition they bring to our province and people.

Looking beyond traditional economic sectors, we recognize our artists who play a critical role in presenting Newfoundland and Labrador on the world stage and we continue to provide support for this vital sector through the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, the Arts Council, the Heritage Foundation and the Cultural Economic Development Program.

### **The World is at Our Doorstep**

Newfoundland and Labrador is a destination of choice for people around the world. Travellers are drawn to our people, our culture and our way of life. Our government continues to grow and support the provincial tourism industry and its over 20,000 jobs by enhancing market readiness, destination development and marketing support in partnership with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Board, regional Destination Management Organizations and tourism operators. We will go further and renew our tourism strategy – Beyond 2020 to position our tourism industry for even greater success.

### **Opportunities Beyond**

This past year has been a tumultuous period for international trade around the world with a shift in United States trade policy. Newfoundland and

Labrador was not immune to the far-reaching US policies but has weathered the storm. Our government fought the imposition of tariffs on newsprint produced by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, protecting 500 well-paying jobs at the mill and securing the means to develop an innovative forestry sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our government also achieved an exemption from softwood lumber duties, and supported the signing of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement.

Trade diversification helps to create a sustainable and stable environment for business, opening up opportunities across multiple sectors in untapped, non-traditional markets. Ratification of international free trade agreements means greater opportunities for businesses in our province. As a province, we enjoy the most diversified trade portfolio of all the Atlantic Provinces, with just 53 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's merchandise exports dependent on US markets – as opposed to 64 per cent for Nova Scotia, 77 per cent for Prince Edward Island and 91 per cent for New Brunswick. Our government is committed to support even greater diversification for our province's global trade presence.

This year, we will enhance our support for business creation by providing early stage seed capital funding to help address the challenges new technology-based firms have in obtaining first financing. A combination of private sector capital, advice and expertise will ensure our innovators and entrepreneurs are able to successfully move the idea stage into development and production.

Our government is also working to support greater market access for more of Newfoundland and Labrador's innovative and ambitious firms, providing the tools companies need to compete and succeed in global markets and maximizing opportunities for our province flowing from free trade agreements.

Last year, Newfoundland and Labrador exports contributed approximately 50 per cent of our gross domestic product. We know that as the value and volume of the province's trade and investment activity grows, so too does the number of well-paying jobs created in our

province, which in turn helps to reinforce our economy and advance our overall quality of life.

Through the five-year, \$20 million Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Agreement, our government is working with federal partners and others to increase our exporter base, including the value of our exports to both traditional and non-traditional markets. We are investing in industry-driven strategic trade development plans to grow exports in select knowledge-based and value-added resource industries in Atlantic Canada, including aerospace and defence, agrifood, seafood, biosciences, clean technologies, information and communications technologies, infrastructure, ocean technologies and extractive industries.

In 2018, new legislation was introduced for the Innovation and Business Investment Corporation. Since then, research and development programming has been integrated with the Business Investment Fund to enhance support for all clients from pre-commercial activity to firm growth and expansion. A program suite will be rolled out in 2019, with a focus on simplifying processes for clients to allow seamless supports for research and innovation.

The Paradigm Hyperloop project is just one example of how Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are showcasing our potential to the world. This collaborative effort includes students from Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic, and Northeastern University in Boston who are aiming to prove the viability of air-based levitation for high speed transportation. This team finished in second place at the SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Speed Competition in 2017 and recently have been accepted at the upcoming competition in summer 2019 in Hawthorne, California. Known as the fifth mode of transportation, the hyperloop has the potential to revolutionize the transportation sector, and students from this province are front and centre of this exciting new development. We congratulate the team on their accomplishments thus far and we will cheer them on as they compete in July 2019.

## Growing Employment

Consistent with the vision set out in *The Way Forward*, our government will continue to collaborate with industry partners in vital sectors to create meaningful employment opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are supporting conditions throughout our province that lead to the creation of business growth and employment. Our Cabinet Committee on Jobs is collaborating with industry leaders and the business community in high-growth sectors to implement priority actions. Through our efforts we are already seeing success. February 2019 marked the eighth consecutive month of employment gains, showing growth that we have not seen since 2013.

We are targeting both traditional sectors that have been the lifeblood of the province for many years, as well as emerging sectors. We continue to promote new and existing business activity and increase private sector jobs for residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, including in the agriculture, aquaculture, technology, oil and gas, mining and forestry sectors. Through our government's focus on increased employment opportunities, we are seeing growth across many sectors.

In every corner of the province, community-based organizations are also contributing to our economy. Community organizations seed economic activity, provide vital services that make our communities livable, employ residents in all regions in our province, and support local business by purchasing their goods and services, and leasing their facilities. Our government will recognize and further support the social and economic contributions of the community sector. The Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador has been an essential partner with our government as we lead a new approach to elevate the important work of this sector, which is central to the province's social and economic progress.

New opportunities are emerging in the agriculture sector, bringing benefits such as new jobs and improved food security for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. In the coming year, our government will continue to work with farmers, producers, industry and stakeholders to develop the agriculture sector.

A new partnership between Anaconda Mining and College of the North Atlantic aims to reach hard-to-get gold deposits and lead mining innovation. Supported by Mitacs – a non-profit national organization that builds partnerships between academia, industry and government to help develop research-based innovation in Canada – College of the North Atlantic students are helping the company devise a cost-effective mining process to extract gold from Deer Cove, while leaving the natural habitat largely intact.

Led by the Council of Atlantic Premiers and based in this province, the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project is aligning policies, processes and standards for apprenticeship in the four Atlantic provinces. This multi-phase project includes the harmonization of 16 trades in an effort to address labour market skills shortages. By working together, pooling resources, sharing best practices, testing innovative approaches, and reducing duplication, we are helping to keep apprentices in Atlantic Canada and increase their success in attaining journey person certification.

In addition to work in specific economic sectors, our government recognizes that family-friendly policies are needed to ensure that our residents can balance parenting with their daily work schedules. We have increased the operating grants provided to participating licensed child care centres to improve access to affordable child care for low- and middle-income families. In addition to making child care more affordable, we have also increased capacity.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development supports the creation of affordable child care spaces through the Child Care Capacity initiative. Developmental funding is available to non-profit organizations to conduct a needs assessment of child care spaces in the proposed area and to construct or renovate buildings to create affordable child care spaces. Since 2015, close to 900 new child care spaces have been created across the province, including more than 150 spaces developed through this initiative in 2018-19.

Uptake of an operating grant program and a Child Care Capacity initiative for regulated Family Child Care over the coming year is anticipated to increase affordable family child

care spaces across the province – particularly in rural, remote and other underserved areas. These initiatives will help ensure that parents can access child care in order to go to work to provide for their families.

### **Welcoming Newcomers**

Our government knows that immigration is critical to growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2017, over 5,200 residents were laid to rest in the province while just over 4,000 newborn babies were welcomed into the world. In *The Way Forward*, our government committed to greeting approximately 1,700 immigrants annually to the province by 2022 and we are well on our way to achieving that goal. In 2018, over 1,500 newcomers to the province became permanent residents. Some of these new residents have come here by way of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program. This program demonstrates how collaboration with the federal and other Atlantic governments, along with employers, is allowing us to welcome immigrants to share in, and contribute to, our economic growth.

Over the past year, our government and partners made significant strides in supporting newcomer attraction and retention. Initial results suggest a 25 per cent increase in individual applications approved since 2017, supporting more individuals and families in making this province their home than ever before. In rural and remote areas, provincial-federal settlement program partnerships ensured the provision of settlement services to newcomers.

In the coming year, our government will emphasize our focus on supporting newcomer retention, beginning with assisting migrant workers and international graduates to become permanent residents, engaging employers in facilitating workplace-based language training, introducing empowerment-focused employment initiatives for former refugee women and promoting international entrepreneurship. We will help newcomers in getting to know their new communities, including learning about the cultures of and building connections with Indigenous people, and exploring opportunities to live and work in Newfoundland and Labrador. Welcoming communities promote the integration and retention of newcomers to the

province. Welcoming communities encourage individuals and organizations to work together to provide services and supports to help foster a sense of belonging among residents of diverse cultural and other backgrounds. Such communities are also a means of creating a culture of inclusion and respect for the diversity of all residents of our province.

### **Partnering for Success**

Our government is focused on building positive and meaningful partnerships that ensure lasting benefits to the people of our province. By working co-operatively with our neighbours, other provinces and territories and the Government of Canada, we are able to explore and deliver real opportunities – opportunities that our province lacked in years before.

The Memorandum of Understanding we signed with the Government of Quebec to partner in developing the Labrador Trough and enhancing infrastructure demonstrates the benefits of such an approach. Through this agreement, we are working co-operatively with our neighbour to ensure mutually beneficial opportunities that will stimulate the development of new mining and employment opportunities.

We are also partners in the Atlantic Growth Strategy, which is focused on quickly growing Atlantic Canada's economy. With this broad focus there is significant opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador. The strategy will expand Atlantic Canada's energy future. Working together with the Government of Canada and the other Atlantic provinces, we will improve transmission networks and better integrate markets. Newfoundland and Labrador is actively engaged with our Atlantic and federal partners and is well positioned to take advantage of such opportunities.

Our government's strong relationship with the Government of Canada led to a successful agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while reducing the impacts on the people of our province. The Made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador approach is tailored to the unique economic, social and fiscal realities of Newfoundland and Labrador, while delivering meaningful greenhouse gas reductions.

### **Leaving No Stone Unturned**

We are using our innovative spirit, resilience and partnerships to confront other challenges in our province. We have secured a commitment from the Government of Canada to work together expeditiously to find solutions to manage electricity rates resulting from the Muskrat Falls project. We will protect ratepayers and taxpayers from the impact of the project.

Through diligence and hard work our government is cleaning up the Muskrat Falls project. We have taken decisive action this past year and have reached many significant milestones. Our government looks forward to implementing our rate management plan that will ensure ratepayers of our province will not have to pay for the lack of oversight in the early stages of this project. Our commitment to the people of the province is to deliver a well-thought-out plan that will support the bright future that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians deserve.

The Muskrat Falls inquiry, led by Justice Richard D. LeBlanc, completed phase one of public hearings in December 2018 and launched the second phase in February. Our government looks forward to receiving the final report at the end of the year.

In September 2018, our government brought the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities (PUB) back into the Muskrat Falls project when we filed a reference question to ask the PUB to examine options to mitigate the impact of the Muskrat Falls project. The PUB's final report will be completed in January 2020. As committed, the report will be made public and the information provided will be used to inform the final approach to managing Muskrat Falls.

In short, we have made excellent progress to get the Muskrat Falls project on track for a strong finish and we are making great strides to managing the costs for the benefit of the people of the province.

### **Better Public Safety and Consumer Protection**

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:*

Our government continues to protect the health, safety and well-being of residents and consumers.

We are committed to implementing restorative justice initiatives to help repair the harm caused by crime and to implementing alternative approaches within the justice system.

A new Drug Treatment Court opened in fall 2018 in the province. This court represents a problem-solving, therapeutic approach that offers an alternative to traditional criminal justice responses by addressing the underlying issues that contribute to crime. The court offers hope to help reduce the often tragic health, social and economic costs stemming from drug abuse and aims to help its clients on their path towards rehabilitation and healing.

Alternative approaches within the justice system offer the potential to reduce the burden on various parts of the system all the while improving outcomes. Our government is advancing additional initiatives such as adult diversion, bail supervision, electronic monitoring and a fines option pilot program. Outstanding unpaid fines owed to the province result in a driver's licence suspension, in turn creating a barrier to vulnerable populations trying to gain meaningful employment. Our government will explore the creation of a fines option pilot program, which would enable those in marginalized groups with outstanding fines to settle their debt by performing community service work providing social benefits to the community and to participants.

Building on measures our government has already taken to enhance highway safety and reduce accidents, we intend to introduce legislation in the spring on auto insurance, using information in the report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities.

Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest automobile insurance rates in Atlantic Canada, and the PUB review focused on identifying opportunities to lower rates that will benefit consumers and help bring stability to the automobile insurance industry. Modernizing the automobile insurance system to provide the best value, benefits and affordability for consumers is the foremost consideration.

This hon. House of Assembly passed amendments to the *Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act* in the fall of 2016. In December 2018, the Government of Canada provided us with an exemption from section 347 of the *Criminal Code* of Canada – the criminal interest rate provision – as it relates to payday loan agreements. Regulations came into force on April 1, 2019, and will help ensure that consumers who use payday loan services are protected by being well informed of their rights and obligations.

Our government has completed a review of the *Real Estate Trading Act* and intends to bring forward legislation in the spring. Changes will ensure that our legislation keeps up with the times, providing a modern framework for oversight of the real estate industry and enhancing public protection.

### **Building Critical Infrastructure**

Our government is continuing to deliver on our commitments to enhance our provincial transportation networks and provide vital infrastructure that connects Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with crucial services for healthier and more prosperous communities. Over the past two years, we have paved more than 1,400 lane kilometres through the Roads Plan. This year, we will be maintaining that momentum.

Many key projects are already under construction, with more beginning this year. Our government is finding innovative ways to achieve needed infrastructure improvements for our health care system. Partnering with the private sector to design, build, finance and maintain new health care facilities, our government is committed to increasing access to critical health care services while maximizing value for taxpayers. We have undertaken projects throughout the province.

A new mental health and addictions facility will be constructed to replace the Waterford Hospital. This new facility will be located as an extension to the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's, bringing together mental health and physical health services in one location. This new facility will have 102 beds and will help us advance a key commitment in *Towards*

*Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador.*

An acute-care regional hospital will be constructed in Corner Brook. Our government expects to announce this spring the successful proponent for the design, build, finance and maintenance of the hospital, with construction anticipated to begin in 2019.

The new hospital in Corner Brook will be complemented by a long-term care home already under construction in the region and expected to be operational in 2020. This facility will include 145 beds and provide employment for 200 public service employees. Our government's partnership with the private sector for the construction and maintenance of this facility will provide savings estimated at over \$14 million to the residents of our province over the 30-year life of the agreement.

Our government is using a similar approach for the construction of two new 60 bed long-term care homes in Grand Falls-Windsor and in Gander. We will announce the successful proponent for these homes this spring, with construction slated to begin later this year.

This innovative procurement approach delivers on commitments to provide better services and better outcomes for residents in a fiscally responsible manner. We will continue to explore similar opportunities to save money and improve access to services. These goals are not mutually exclusive but they require innovation and determination. We have the elements for success and we will continue to build upon new approaches as we build the infrastructure upon which our residents depend.

Our government is establishing a six-bed mental health unit in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. We are also undertaking a 20-bed expansion of the protective care unit at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Centre in Botwood. Specialized protective care units provide a safe and secure setting for residents living with Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other similar disorders.

In addition to health infrastructure, our government has been investing in education infrastructure, opening six new schools in our province since 2016. These new schools

represent a combined investment of more than \$139 million and will provide state-of-the-art facilities in which our students can learn and grow.

Our commitment in *The Way Forward* to leverage federal funding will result in significant advantages to the province in the coming years. The coming year will mark the first year that projects will be announced under the new federal/provincial bilateral agreement through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). The agreement ensures a combined federal, provincial and municipal investment in excess of \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years. This is the largest long-term municipal infrastructure program in our province's history.

Our government continues to implement broadband projects satisfying the more than \$40 million investment committed by various partners in the last round of broadband funding. We will continue to engage with the Government of Canada in an effort to close existing gaps. This investment will help connect more homes to broadband Internet and expand existing fibre-op networks.

Our investments in health care, education and communications technology will help us achieve our objective to improve the well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

### **Better Outcomes**

It will take our collective and sustained effort across all sectors of society pulling in the same direction to improve well-being in this province.

While improving our outcomes will take time, we have the potential to see significant progress if we bring the leadership, values, commitment, infrastructure and evidence to the task. In this vein, our government has adopted and continues to invest in a Health-in-All-Policies approach to ensure all sectors are mindful of the influence that their activities have on the health and well-being of our province and its citizens.

Our approach is based on the work of the World Health Organization and we are learning from leading jurisdictions around the world that are employing this same approach. As we forge ahead together with this approach we will

enhance our cultural strengths and shared experiences. Like others, our ultimate goal is to achieve a healthy population living in healthy communities throughout our province.

To catalyze our collective vision, our government will invest in the social and economic determinants of health that contribute to a healthy society: creating more jobs and achieving higher incomes, increasing access to early childhood education to improve early childhood experiences, ensuring our children and youth thrive in our classrooms and achieve higher educational outcomes, supporting university education and training programs, promoting industry development that is value-added and inclusive, investing in better housing for all, continuing the path to reconciliation with our Indigenous people, supporting seniors to stay in their own homes, strengthening strong social connections in all our communities and improving access to preventive and supportive health and community services across our province.

Going forward, for each of our government's decisions – whether for new legislation, programming or spending – more and more of our focus will be on understanding the full impacts and avoiding unintended consequences so that we make the right decision for the health and well-being of our people and of our province. Our future, and that of generations to follow, depend on it.

Our government in enhancing services in our communities and making sure that residents can access the range of supports they need to build and sustain healthy, fulfilling lives.

Our government continues to improve primary health care services to increase access to the right care, from the right provider, in the right place. Building on the success of primary health teams on the Burin and Connaigre Peninsulas and in Bonavista, Gander, Botwood, Corner Brook, Sheshatshiu and downtown St. John's, we will continue to support more primary health care teams across the province. We have identified and are working to establish teams in Stephenville, Bell Island, the Northeast Avalon and the Deer Lake/White Bay area. Since primary health care transformation has begun,

we have seen a reduction in costly emergency department visits for non-urgent care.

We are strengthening the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) to drive innovation, efficiency and patient care by moving towards a digitized health care system. NLCHI continues to make advancements in health and eHealth. More and more physicians are signing on to our Electronic Medical Record (EMR), and more than half of all residents in the province have seen physicians who use the EMR.

Our government will continue to focus on building our highly integrated Electronic Health Record so that all patient health information is available to providers in one place. We will also build on our success by continuing to expand our TeleHealth and Remote Patient Monitoring services so people can access their health care providers without having to leave their community.

Our government recognizes that mental health and substance use touch the lives of almost everyone in this province. We know that one in five individuals throughout our province will have a diagnosable mental disorder each year. Over our lifetimes, close to 50 per cent of us will experience some form of mental illness.

In 2017, our government released *Towards Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. Since then, there has been a significant reduction in the number of people waiting for mental health and addictions counselling services through initiatives such as Doorways, which is now available in 50 locations province-wide, including at all correctional facilities.

We have secured \$28.8 million over five years for mental health and addictions services through a bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada. We were the first province to sign a bilateral agreement under the new Emergency Treatment Fund for opioid dependence treatment, which will further increase investment by more than \$4 million.

As we continue to implement *Towards Recovery*, we are committed to ensuring that the voice of lived experience is heard in all our work

through the support of our Recovery Council. The Recovery Council, which is composed solely of individuals with lived experience and affected family members, advises the Minister of Health and Community Services on mental health and addictions matters from a lived-experience perspective.

In December 2018, this hon. House of Assembly amended the *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act* to provide presumptive coverage for work-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for all workers in the province covered by the act – or virtually all workers in the province, effective July 1, 2019. Prior to that, in March 2018, WorkplaceNL introduced an updated workers' compensation policy to broaden coverage for work-related traumatic mental health issues.

Our government has added prevention of harassment and worker-on-worker violence to the occupational health and safety regulations, effective January 1, 2020. In the lead up to these changes coming into effect, WorkplaceNL's health and safety advisors are available to help workplaces understand these changes, and update their occupational health and safety programs and conduct risk assessments accordingly. WorkplaceNL also offers workshops and webinars on preventing workplace violence and harassment, and provides learning resources and tools.

Our government has made strides to provide residents with greater control over various community supports they receive. The Departments of Children, Seniors and Social Development, Health and Community Services and Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, along with the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, have worked with regional health authorities and community partners to develop an Individualized Funding Model based on the principles of equity and choice. This model provides a single point of entry for individuals who access social programs and services. We have worked closely with individuals with disabilities, community-based organization and other community partners to implement a demonstration model, the results of which are informing the ongoing co-design.

Our government introduced a streamlined financial assessment process and eliminated liquid asset consideration for those requiring long-term care and community support services.

We will continue to support improvements in home and community care through continued implementation of recommendations from the 2016 Provincial Home Support Program Review, including the introduction of service level agreements with home care agencies to improve service quality and accountability.

Our government is committed to creating accessibility legislation that will prevent and remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities. To this end, we have been conducting a public engagement process in partnership with the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL. The new legislation will be based on similar legislation in other provinces, as well as the pending federal legislation, the *Accessible Canada Act*. This collaborative process will create a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador piece of legislation that moves us all towards a barrier-free province.

Our government provided \$200,000 to Memorial University for a new Aging Research Centre. In 2018, together with Memorial University, our government launched this new Aging Research Centre, which will focus on Newfoundland and Labrador-based primary research, working with seniors throughout the province to support healthy aging and age-friendly communities.

Supporting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in Healthy Active Living remains a priority. We continue to support and expand a variety of successful initiatives.

Over 100 staff have received training in 25 Family Resource Centres throughout Newfoundland and Labrador related to our “Helping Women Live Smoke-Free” initiative.

Our government continues to support six regional wellness coalitions across the province. These coalitions bring together individuals, community partners, regional health authorities and schools to work on common health and wellness areas in their regions. Coalitions

provide networking and capacity building opportunities, community workshops and events and education and training.

Work with municipalities to implement policies and practices that support healthy eating and breastfeeding is ongoing. In 2018, we supported the Baby-Friendly Council of Newfoundland and Labrador in the development and implementation of a community toolkit, designed to support municipalities in creating supportive environments for breastfeeding families. We will continue to work with the council on ways to promote and increase breastfeeding in our province.

In 2018, our government supported an expansion and enhancement of a vegetable and fruit campaign in regional health authorities, designed to raise awareness about the importance of consuming vegetables and fruit and taking action to increase access to fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit across the province. We will continue to work with partners on ways to promote and support healthy eating.

Our government is encouraged by work underway on a national pharmacare program. If done correctly, such a program has the potential to improve access to medicine that residents use to treat illness and restore their health, particularly in newly-developed and expensive therapies for illnesses such as certain cancers. We look forward to working further with our federal partners to determine whether, and how, such a national program could benefit our residents, along with all of Canada.

### **Investing in Our Future**

In 2018, our government launched an Education Action Plan to respond to the *Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes*, 31 of the 82 recommendations in the Education Action Plan have already been implemented and many more are underway.

Highlights include the hiring of 21 new reading specialists this year, which will increase to 104 over the next two years. A new position, teaching and learning assistant, supports teachers in primary and elementary schools. Fifty-four teaching and learning assistants have

already been hired with a plan to hire another 146 over the next two years.

Teacher-librarians and additional resources for school libraries are supporting literacy development. There are 13.5 additional teacher-librarians this year, increasing to 39 over the next two years.

Twelve additional English as a second language teachers are being added over three years as part of a larger plan to support multicultural education.

A mathematics bursary program has been implemented to support teachers wishing to enhance their qualifications in mathematics, and mathematics and reading program specialists are working in regions of the province to support teachers in primary and elementary schools.

These are just some of the measures already in place or in progress to guide the transformation of our education system as we take decisive action to improve program delivery and student outcomes.

In 2018-19, our government invested \$526.7 million in post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2018 we announced the Independent Review of the Public Post-secondary Education System. This comprehensive review will explore how Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary education system compares to other jurisdictions, and recommend options to achieve better outcomes in post-secondary education in a more cost-efficient manner. The review is being led by a Committee of Experts and will help ensure our institutions are well-positioned to meet the needs of students well into the future, address emerging labour market demands and continue to contribute to the province's economic growth. The Committee of Experts will be expected to complete the review in accordance with the Terms of Reference that was just recently released, conduct comprehensive public consultations, provide regular progress updates to our government and produce a final report in 2020.

In a 2018 Research Infosource report ranking the top 50 research universities of Canada, Memorial University ranked 20th with over

\$100 million in research income. Memorial's research income experienced 23 per cent growth between 2016 and 2017, which was the second fastest growth of the top 50 universities. Memorial University also leads the country in corporate research income growth, increasing 160 per cent since 2013.

To support the continued growth of Memorial, our government is investing in the future of the university. The core science facility currently under construction is key to renewing the infrastructure that Memorial's students and faculty depend on. The new facility will help Memorial recruit and retain students and faculty from around the world providing a venue for them to perform cutting-edge research and learning.

We are already attracting more students from outside the province than ever before. International graduate student applications to Memorial University have risen from 2,171 for fall 2014 to 3,963 for fall 2019, an 83 per cent increase.

Memorial is more than just a university – it is an important piece of the province's community. The university is proud of the launch of the Visiting Aboriginal Elders Pilot Project by the School of Social Work and the Aboriginal Resource Office in support of the Call to Action on Education of the Truth and Reconciliation Report. This report will see elders from Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit communities of Newfoundland and Labrador visiting Memorial's St. John's campus during the 2019 winter and fall terms. The presence of elders on Memorial's campus enriches the cultural fabric of Memorial by introducing the university community to invaluable Indigenous knowledge and traditions.

Newfoundland and Labrador's only public college is also adapting to ensure its students receive relevant training to prepare them for the economic opportunities emerging today and tomorrow. An example would be the College of the North Atlantic's Agricultural Technician Program. This program will help the province address gaps in skills and training in the agriculture sector and will contribute to further sector growth.

## Giving Our Children a Good Start

### *Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:*

Our children are a precious gift and they deserve our special attention. In May 2018, this hon. House of Assembly adopted a new *Children, Youth and Families Act*. This act focuses on supporting youth, strengthening service delivery to Indigenous children, youth and their families, preserving the family unit and expanding stability for children and youth in foster care.

The new act supports youth in need of protection by increasing the scope of the duty to report to include youth aged 16 and 17 and removing restrictions so all youth can receive services up to age 21.

The new act also focuses on strengthening service delivery to Indigenous children, youth and their families through increased involvement of Indigenous governments and organizations in service coordination, planning and decision making for their children, youth and families, such as in the creation of a Cultural Connection plan.

It focuses on preserving the family unit through the provision of appropriate and available supports to maintain children with their families where it is safe to do so using tools such as the Triple P Parenting Program and counselling. The act also expands and supports permanency efforts for children and youth in foster care by supporting relatives or another person significant to the child to obtain permanent custody rather than remaining in foster care.

The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development is developing new policies, clinical practice procedures, and regulations to support proclamation of the act, which is expected to occur this spring.

### **Onward**

Against a mountain of fiscal, economic and social challenges, our government has been resilient, and has made progress that can be measured. With *The Way Forward*, we have set out a plan focused on taking control of our fiscal situation all the while building a better economy

and a healthy, prosperous society. We will continue onward and guide our province toward a bright future.

### *Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:*

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you continue and commence this new Session.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Assembly Chamber.)

(Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair.)

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** Order, please!

I remind all the Members and the viewers, please, to hold your opinions. Thank you.

Order, please!

I'd ask you to hold your opinions, please.

Could I ask the security, please, to address the individual in the gallery?

Sir, I'd ask you to respect this House, please.

Please be seated.

Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Environmental Protection Act, Bill 1.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is there leave for the hon. the minister to introduce the said bill?

Leave is granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, that Bill 1, An Act To Amend The Environmental Protection Act, be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 (Murphy):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Environmental Protection Act. (Bill 1)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time? Tomorrow?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 1 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to make a Speech to the Members in this General Assembly. We shall now take a few minutes to distribute the speech to the Members.

(The Pages distribute the speech to all Members.)

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

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. PARSLEY:** On behalf of the District of Harbour Main, I move the motion, seconded by the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

Welcome, everyone. To those in attendance and those at home, it is with sincere pleasure that I

rise in this hon. House today to represent the people of the historic District of Harbour Main.

My first priority is to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for delivering the Speech from the Throne this afternoon. Her Honour is dedicated in the role of vice regal representative of Her Majesty, and equally important is her Honour's and his Honour's devoted service to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of the District of Harbour Main share the traits of others in this province in their work ethic, love for home, fair and decent approach to neighbours. They continue to insist on access to health care, justice, public safety, education, telecommunications and economic opportunities.

Forming government in 2015, we were painfully made aware of the responsibilities ahead. Four years later, we are proud of the strides we have taken and optimistic as to what we can accomplish. Today's Speech from the Throne provides our vision for the province, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and have seen effort and results from our government's *The Way Forward*.

For the residents of Harbour Main, we acknowledge the benefits we already have. As an MHA, a woman, a resident and a participant in mental health advancements, I applaud my government. I subscribe to the plan, and I am a part of that plan.

Mr. Speaker, let me just be one to congratulate our Premier, his staff and the reliable, tireless civil servants who are part of the team that insisted we reach a deal on the Atlantic Accord. We cannot overstate how important this is, and I believe this government addressed it as vital. Thank you, Mr. Premier, Cabinet, the Premier's staff and our civil servants for an injection of pure positive into our future.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have sent a message to this government, and government has responded in areas that need upgrading, refinement, critical thinking and absolute results.

On a personal note, the advancement in mental health approaches do not go unnoticed. I have been exposed to it. I have learned so much in the shortcomings of dated mental health initiatives.

I am encouraged by the government's proactive direction on significant improvements in a short time span with the elimination of mental health waiting lists in targeted regions; especially, this means that this province recognizes that we cannot, absolutely cannot, place a mental health issue, such as a potential of suicide on a waiting list. This government moved to tackle the issue and has received national recognition in its efforts. In incidents like this, there is no time to wait. Waiting is not an option.

I appreciate the redirection of resources so that issues are addressed without extra cost to the province. It is possible to identify, formulate, implement and evaluate this and be mindful of the cost associated with this new approach. Thank you to the Minister of Health, his staff and his determined staff; of course, nurses, psychologists, practitioners and those associated with this change, as a critical component of *The Way Forward*, better service and better outcome has been assured.

Mr. Speaker, there are two topics that mean so much to so many, and this government has been steadfast in addressing issues that, in particular, affect women. First, however, I would like to acknowledge that Newfoundland and Labrador stands proud as the only province in Canada that has a stand-alone ministry responsible for a Women's Policy Office and the Status of Women in its Cabinet. Our minister, the hon. Member for Burin - Grand Bank, oversees a portfolio that this government found essential to good governance and better society.

This is not mere rhetoric, pandering empty promises or afterthoughts, this is life, this is necessity and this is right. I am very proud to acknowledge this good work.

In 2018, our government brought forward An Act to Amend the Family Violence Protection Act that made changes and clarifications as to what exactly constitutes family violence. The expansion of the definition of family violence in the act now includes psychological, emotional or financial harm. This expanded act warranted a

change to include those who were overlooked when the definition of family violence was considered. Society has recognized that issues such as these require a broader spectrum, and our government has addressed it urgently. To say that *The Way Forward* is a better service, better outcomes have been assured.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to also speak today in my role as parliamentary secretary for Service Newfoundland and Labrador under the direction of the minister, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's. Service NL is making steady progress, providing better services for all residents and building on our commitment made in *The Way Forward*. The list of accomplishments are many.

Last year, amendments were made to the *Highway Traffic Act* that strengthened our impaired driver's legislation in anticipation of the legislation of cannabis in Canada. In December, significant changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act* came into effect. People will now have the option of early termination from rental agreements as a result of domestic violence. Once again, our government is helping those in abusive situations to re-establish their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure we all consider ourselves as supporters of tourism. Oftentimes we assume that our province is an easy sell in the promotion of tourism and cultural assets; however, it requires work, dedication and creativity in order to separate what we often compare as to our destinations.

We have so much display in the District of Harbour Main, often what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians already know of and what these outside the province have learned. I look forward to summertime events like Cupers Cove Soiree, the Brigus Blueberry Festival. The Holyrood SquidFest has grown to match the residential and commercial developments ongoing in Holyrood. New businesses and tourism match up well in Clarke's Beach with the Newfoundland Distillery Company.

I represent a great district who can only commend the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation for its forward thinking with its advancing the Newfoundland and Labrador agenda. I am confident that the

minister accepts that this is a huge responsibility to showcase the province on an international scale. I know the visitors to our province are international, regional and those on a staycation. Thank you for your good work and mindful attention to the District of Harbour Main and all other districts.

In conclusion, I am excited to be a part of a government who is focused on continued good decisions that incorporate all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I am proud that we stand first in the areas, and that in 2019 deserve special, long overdue attention.

This government's approach is honest and appreciative of the confidence that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have placed in it. We continue to work towards a better future because that is what we were elected to do now and always.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

**MR. BROWNE:** I'm doing the work of the Page, Mr. Speaker. Happy to help. I know there are only four of them and they do a great job.

Mr. Speaker, and I certainly want to thank my colleague, the Member for Harbour Main.

On behalf of the good people of Placentia West - Bellevue, I second the motion moved by the Member for Harbour Main to appoint a Select Committee to draft an Address in Reply to this year's Speech from the Throne.

I further thank her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, for her presence and her words to this Chamber here today. I also wish to recognize and thank his Honour for being here today as well. Together, they provide admirable service to the people of our fair province.

Monsieur le president, je remercie la lieutenant-gouverneure de son discours (inaudible), aussi remercie son honneur de sa presence, aussi.

The Speech from the Throne is not an archaic ritual, nor is it a tradition we simply must observe, but rather an opportunity for the government to render focus on its agenda, to put a spotlight on the work undertaken to date, the work which is in progress and, indeed, on the work still yet to do.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear her Honour discuss the important steps this government has taken to promote gender equity and the status of women. I think these words, as part of her Honour's first Throne Speech, are particularly fitting. As a tireless and tenacious leader and advocate for women and girls and role model for many, her Honour has a legacy of public service and trail-blazing of her own. Not only as the first female federal Cabinet minister from this province, but now as its first female Lieutenant-Governor. As Members well know, I had the great privilege to work closely with her during her time as a Member of Parliament alongside my good friend and colleague, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

The Premier's decision to make a stand-alone department for the status of women puts a greater focus on issues relating to violence against women, gender-based analysis and women in leadership. Along with congratulating my colleague from Burin - Grand Bank, I also congratulate Ms. Linda Ross, the newly named deputy minister for the Status of Women, who had previously served as the president and CEO of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. I also congratulate her successor, Ms. Paula Sheppard, a native of my district, having grown up in Come by Chance.

It is very important for women to be empowered but, equally as important, that men support and advance these issues in collaboration with women. I'm proud of our government's commitment to these issues, proud of our Premier, of our minister and, indeed, of our Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. Speaker, I was also pleased to hear her Honour speak of our government's commitment to addressing mental health and addictions. We have often heard it said that cancer touches every family, and this is true; but so to, Mr. Speaker, does mental health. And sadly, it is only in recent times we are beginning to arrive at

this realization as we become more aware, more focused and, rightly, more seized with this important issue.

My family, Mr. Speaker, is not immune. My uncle lost his battle to his inner demons almost 15 years ago, and so many of us in this House and across this province have similar stories to tell. Suicide is not something new for those of us who come from the Burin Peninsula. My uncle was not the only person to lose his battle. Far too many sons and daughters and moms and dads and brothers and sisters could not find the resolve to carry on.

We knew that something must be done, and I am proud the Burin Peninsula became the first region that the provincial government and the Mental Health Commission of Canada partnered for the Roots of Hope initiative. The innovative and caring team of Eastern Health employees developed a new approach supported by government to adjust the model of treatment from an appointments-based system to a walk-in clinic.

On the day I was elected in 2015, wait times on the Burin Peninsula to access mental health counselling were steep. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud to say that the wait-time number on the Burin Peninsula has decreased from 180 to zero.

Improvements in wait times for mental health services are not just happening on the Island. We are seeing improvements in Labrador as well. Wait-lists in Happy Valley-Goose Bay were eliminated as well in August of last year; gone is the lengthily wait-list system replaced by counselling offered on walk-in basis. Our people deserve immediate treatment and they are getting it.

Advocates and health professionals agree that this approach is working. This is real change and I'm very proud of the team on the Burin Peninsula who have recently received a national award. They'll be accepting that in Toronto in June. It's their work that has trail-blazed this across the province.

Further, Mr. Speaker, we have brought forward the *Prescription Monitoring Act*, the *Secure*

*Withdrawal Management Act* and continue to implement the *Towards Recovery* plan.

I am prouder even still, Mr. Speaker, that this government has begun the process of replacing the Victorian era Waterford institution with a 94-bed adult, state-of-the-art mental health hospital, which will not bear the name Waterford, Mr. Speaker.

It is wrong for anyone to suffer in silence. It is wrong to be stigmatized for something outside of your control. We are breaking down these barriers, we are listening and we are making changes for the better.

Mr. Speaker, another area her Honour expanded on today relates to jobs. I am happy to say jobs are being created to generate stability and opportunity here at home in Newfoundland and Labrador. Look no further than in my District of Placentia West – Bellevue, to which I often refer to it as the industrial heartland of the Island of Newfoundland. I'm excluding Labrador, I say to my colleagues.

We see the Come by Chance refinery expanding; the future of Bull Arm is bright; Seadrill's West Aquarius continues to undergo retrofitting there. Vale's decision to proceed with the unground mine at Voisey's Bay in Labrador will extend the life of the Long Harbour Nickel Processing Plant, creating 4,800 construction jobs at peak in 2020 and sustain 1,700 operational jobs both at Voisey's Bay and Long Harbour.

Icewater Seafoods, the province's leading groundfish processor based in Arnold's Cove, is undergoing a \$3.1 million transformation made possible by the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. As her Honour also mentioned, the Greig aquaculture project in partnership with Ocean Choice International is ramping up construction to build the world's largest salmon hatchery based out of Marystown producing some 800 jobs.

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

**MR. BROWNE:** Major supply companies have already come in to set up shop in Marystown to support this industry. One such example, Mr. Speaker, is Aqua Sol which will install 17 kilometres of piping into the hatchery in Marystown. There are pipes everywhere in

Marystown, Mr. Speaker, and it's great to see. We're very proud that Ocean Choice will pursue processing in St. Lawrence nearby to Marystown, creating even more jobs.

Kiewit Offshore Services is constructing the living quarters for the Husky Project. The former Marystown Shipyard will soon be reactivated by Marbase Marystown Inc., creating jobs and activity for years to come, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of that development as well.

Other successful manufacturing businesses in the area such as Smith Snacks in Norman's Cove-Long Cove and Dynamic Air Shelters based out of Grand Bank continue to flourish.

Just south of Marystown in the District of Burin - Grand Bank, the Canada the Canada Fluorspar mine has been reopened in St. Lawrence: 3,000 person-years of employment in the first 12 years of operation and an additional 525 spin-off jobs are anticipated.

Mr. Speaker, this is just my district and my region alone. It doesn't touch of much of the approximately \$49 billion of combined economic activity relating to job creation as a result of *The Way Forward*.

Through infrastructure investments, we are creating 5,300 person-years of employment annually. The West White Rose extension being constructed at Argentina, with its living quarters being constructed at Marystown, has created 5,000 person-years of employment. Equinor's Bay du Nord Project will generate approximately 11,000 person-years of employment.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the technology sector is blossoming: PAL Aerospace, 150 person-years of employment over five years; Bluedrop, up 50 new jobs; S&P Data, up to 500 jobs; Quorum, up to 24 new jobs. Mr. Speaker, you get the picture. This is progress; jobs are being created here in Newfoundland and Labrador. This doesn't even touch on the amazing work happening in the arts, cultural and tourism sectors.

Just this year, the provincial tourism ad featured many communities on the Burin Peninsula such as the iconic and picturesque Parkers Cove. The

video is approaching nearly 700,000 views in the first few months on our tourism YouTube channel.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, the fishery remains successful, as it should be, because it's the reason why so many of us settle here, the essence of so many communities and the backbone of our rural economy.

Mr. Speaker, as I've just noted, we have seen major, major, major progress. That is not to say we do not face challenge. That is not to say there is not work still left to do.

Despite the challenging fiscal circumstances this government inherited we have increased the Seniors' Benefit to better assist seniors to live comfortably at home. We've created the Newfoundland and Labrador Income Supplement to assist low income families, seniors and persons with disabilities. We've brought forward measures to support first responders, presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters, presumptive PTSD coverage for the workplace and a tax credit for search and rescue volunteers.

We have maintained strong support of our fishery, standing up to Ottawa and standing up when required on issues of importance to our harvesting and processing sectors. While there has been much progress, there indeed have been challenges but Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not immune from challenge, Mr. Speaker. We have suffered through tragedy. We have overcome adversity but we have always persevered. We have never lacked the courage to stand up for our freedom or pursue a living for our families. If the courage of members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel didn't prove this, future significant historical events certainly would.

Events which would alter our psyche, change our outlook and cause us to never lose our vigilance. Events like the 1914 sealing disaster, the 1982 *Ocean Ranger* disaster or more recently the Cougar 491 crash, these events are but three of the significant tragedies which have befallen our people and our province. And while these events stretch over a period of more than a century, the common thread of each features

ordinary, hard-working Newfoundlanders and Labradorians seeking a living for their families on the sea. Each event has proven that even while we are sea people, our oceans are not playgrounds of frivolous pursuit. They have helped countless families earn a keep, but have also caused heartache and pain to many.

It is these types of events which we do not forget, that the families of those affected never forget. They are etched into our minds and into our beings as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and strike at the core of our foundation and strengthen our resilience as a people, and it is these foundations upon which our resilience rests. It's who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We will never back down. We will never give in and we will never stop fighting for a brighter future.

When I hear the negative and divisive rhetoric some choose to employ, I shake my head, Mr. Speaker. I am 25 years of age, Mr. Speaker, and I am just as passionate today for the future of our province as I was on the day that I took my Oath of Office here in this very Chamber. I know many young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians share this view and share this vision.

Just this morning, I visited the Chapel Arm heritage fair where students in grade four to six showcased their heroes, from the likes of Allan Hawco to Kaetlyn Osmond to a lemonade stand honouring the life and work of Nevaeh Devine. These young minds see and want a future for our province. It is our youth we must continue fighting for.

We must all pull on the same oar, because a high tide floats all boats. Those who choose to prey on the politics of fear and division have no place in public discourse. Let us disagree with one another, let us engage in policy debates and disagreements, but ultimately the people of this province expect and demand that we rise above partisan interest to make the best decisions and produce the best outcomes for those we all jointly represent.

Mr. Speaker, I feel a sense of pride each time I rise in my place to address this Chamber. As I reflect on these past four years, I feel strongly a sense of gratitude to those who gave me the

opportunity to be their voice and representative in this hon. House, the good people of Placentia West - Bellevue.

I would be remiss if I did not reflect on the 70th anniversary of Confederation. Joey Smallwood saw the promise joining Canada had for our small country at the time. He had a vision, while perhaps imperfect in implementation, it was pure in motive. He took many families from poverty to a fighting chance, from uneducated to educated. He was a true nation-builder.

This week, the Premier concluded successful negotiations on the Atlantic Accord. This province now has a guaranteed revenue stream of \$2.5 billion, no financial risk and commitments with respect to joint management of the offshore, as well as rate mitigation to deal with the disastrous Muskrat Falls project. The renewed Atlantic Accord is the right thing at the right time for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall the oft-quoted line of: Those who do not learn from their past are condemned to repeat it. Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you, this government has learned from past decisions of past governments. We have seen the damage inflicted upon our people with risky plays in the natural resource sector. We have witnessed the depletion of our Treasury by chasing false promises. We have seen the mistakes that have been made with hard-won cash settlements of the past. We are at a crucial point of our history. The world today is a turbulent place, as uncertain as we've ever seen it in so many years. Our province needs stability, our Treasury needs reliability and our people deserve accountability.

That is why we have chosen stability over risk in a renewed Atlantic Accord. In these uncertain times, we have chosen a prudent approach that will protect all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Further, thanks to this review, the net debt for every resident has been reduced by \$5,000. Our government, led by our Premier, has a proven track record of fiscal restraint and sound financial management.

I have had the opportunity to watch this Premier up close in negotiations of many sorts over these last four years, and I can tell you unequivocally he is the person for this job. He's studious,

thorough, well-versed and sharp as a tack, and this is why we got it, but we got it right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the Lieutenant-Governor for her Speech from the Throne today, and I second the motion by the Member for Harbour Main to strike a Select Committee to formulate an Address in Reply to her Honour.

In conclusion, I reflect on the tremendous progress the Premier and our government have made in fostering partnership and productivity. Potential has evolved to progress. Results have been realized. Mr. Speaker, this is not, as some may call it, razzle-dazzle. It is called good governance, it is called getting the job done and delivering for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, amongst all of this, I'm very proud to say the flags are still flying high in this province.

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

**MR. BROWNE:** We will continue on *The Way Forward*, and for this Premier and this government I am truly and genuinely convinced the best still is yet to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** It's a great country, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank and acknowledge her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor; the mover and the seconder; the Third Party House Leader and the Premier; and all Members for stepping forward to serve in this House. Guests in the galleries, leaders in business, labour, academia, justice, faith, culture, public service, the community sector, municipal governance, seniors, students and youth and the people watching at home.

We've heard this government's fourth Speech from the Throne. We've been told an election is imminent. So the government's Throne Speech is not an agenda they will have time to implement before the election, and there are many indications in the Throne Speech that the government knows this.

Their time to get things done is now finished. This is their election message. So, in that same spirit, I will briefly lay out my own message, speak about some of my own priorities and do my duty to question the record and performance of the government whose term is drawing to a close.

I'm one of the people who are viewers watching these proceedings and those here in the gallery. I'm a former business owner, a husband, a father of three daughters; someone who has made a career and raised a family and had community involvements over a period of decades. I know what we all want for this place.

We love to adopt the expression used by her Honour: we all share a vision of a Newfoundland and Labrador which is prosperous, independent and sustainable.

Prosperous; a province with a growing economy, a compassionate society with a reasonable tax burden and well-paying jobs and hope for getting ahead.

Independent; a province that looks for a hand up from Ottawa but never for a handout.

Sustainable; a province that has control of its financial destiny and leads in the reinvestment of non-renewable energy wealth into the creation of the renewable energy wealth of the future.

The path to this better future, requires leadership, honest leadership that has the courage to create a better future 10 years, 20 years into the future. We are a people whose regiment proudly bears the motto: Better than the Best.

I entered politics because I did not see political leadership calling us to be our best, or even to be better. I saw fake leadership with no courage, calling us to be our worst. I saw the *Liberal Way Forward* leading us to a cliff edge of poverty,

dependency and insolvency. And as a proud Newfoundlander and Labradorian, I could not sit in the comfort of my own home and watch folly unfold. I believe many of you watching at home feel the same way, and you need a voice, the voice of honest leadership.

Honest leadership requires courage; the courage to know when to sit down and listen, and the courage to know when to stand up and speak. I sat down and listened, and I stood up and spoke last summer. I told the Premier he should make a reference to the Public Utilities Board on Muskrat Falls rate mitigation.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** As a former Public Utilities Board lawyer, I know about the uses of the Public Utilities Board. After several months of characteristic indecision, the Premier made the reference. I sat down and listened, and then I stood up and spoke last month and delivered the Crosbie Hydro Energy Action Plan.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, the document was tabled, so I gather I'm allowed to use the term.

My action plan is an exercise in honest leadership. My plan is based on the best information currently available at this time through the Public Utilities Board process. I disclose how I arrive at the amount required to achieve complete mitigation of the impact of Muskrat on rates when it comes into service in 2021, where the cost savings and revenue can be found, and I cite my sources.

The Public Utilities Board process is at a preliminary stage. When better information becomes available, I will adjust the plan. In the meantime, the public has reassurance that under my government electrical power rates will not increase when Muskrat Falls comes into service and all of us have an affordable future.

From the school of fake leadership, the public has only the reassurance that the government will make known its rate mitigation plan,

eventually, as an election goodie. This week, the much-heralded Liberal fake Atlantic Accord review deal was announced. This is a fake Atlantic Accord deal because it has no relationship whatsoever with the Atlantic Accord.

I challenge the media to stop repeating Liberal propaganda terms and find another term, like Liberal re-election plan. In the meantime, I will simply call it the fake Accord deal.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** The real Atlantic Accord is the most important piece of legislation this province has seen since the terms of union. It enshrines hard-won rights over the offshore resources we brought into Confederation.

The Danny Williams 2005 Atlantic Accord financial agreement enforced our rights on the offshore.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** This Liberal government's fake Accord deal is a handout not a hand up, and the only acknowledgement of the Atlantic Accord is an agreement to talk about weakening joint management.

The Liberal fake Accord deal is election time chicken feed and slight of hand – to quote the words of former PC Premier Brian Peckford, the father of the real thing, the original 1985 Atlantic Accord –

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** – which Canada and the province enshrined in mirror legislation.

According to his February 2018 letter to the prime minister, the Premier set out to review and come to agreement on two major issues. The first was equalization, and the fiscal and fairness our province suffers within Confederation. The

second was the imposition by Ottawa of Bill C-69, the *Impact Assessment Act*, and the threat it represents the future jobs and prosperity from the development of our offshore resources.

This premier achieved nothing, zero, zilch, on either of these critical objectives; instead, he accepted what former Premier Peckford calls chicken feed and sleight of hand and locked us into a 38-year deal with no review clause –

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** – worse than the Upper Churchill fiasco.

The 1985 Peckford-Mulroney Atlantic Accord has produced \$22 billion through courageous, honest leadership; money sealed and delivered to the province.

The 2005 Premier Williams Atlantic Accord fiscal arrangement achieved \$3 billion through courageous, honest leadership; sealed and delivered.

The 2019 Liberal fake Atlantic Accord delivered chickenfeed and slight of hand with postdated cheques yet to go in the mail.

The Trudeau federal government is not our friend. Trudeau and O'Regan are attacking our right to control the pace of development through Bill C-69, the *Impact Assessment Act*, and invading –

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** – the powers –

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

Please proceed.

**MR. CROSBIE:** – Bill C-69 and invading the powers of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. Bill C-69 is the no-more-offshore bill. I am not the only opinion leader who is gravely concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the no more offshore bill. Here is

what Noia CEO Bob Cadigan said on CBC Radio only yesterday: The problem we have is Ottawa is infiltrated with folks from organizations like the World Wildlife Fund, lead by Trudeau mentor Gerald Butts, and our own Seamus O'Regan was a director. It's a grave concern. So with that potentially anti-industry kind of view, you know it's a bit scary that Seamus O'Regan is our representative in the federal cabinet, to be frank.

Bob Cadigan went on to say that at a time when we've identified enough barrels of oil to potentially change the face of this province dramatically for future generations, and it's those future generations we should be concerned about, federal government action like Bill C-69 binds our hands before we even try to start. That's why we need, Mr. Cadigan went on, to get these resources developed in order to anchor our economy, create jobs and provide the certainty and security for the people of this province to develop potentially hundreds of billions in royalties.

To defend our rights, we must be aggressive. The Atlantic Accord legislation has a section which declares that it takes precedence over other federal legislation. It is time to enforce our legal rights. If Canadians continue to peer behind the mask of brand Trudeau and put him out of office, aggressive measures may not be needed. In the meantime –

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** – a premier who accepts the mission of defending this province's vital interest will have a strategy which includes making a reference to the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal to seek an opinion on the legality of the no more offshore Bill C-69.

People should have confidence that their political leadership will defend the vital interests of the province, but of those to whom political power is given, much should be expected. The role of honest leadership is to create the conditions in which job creators, like those watching and in the galleries, can do the work of transforming our future into one of prosperity, independence and sustainability.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** A future of lower taxes, less regulations, jobs and hope – that is my vision and the vision of the PC Opposition for the future.

God guard Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

Also speaking in support of the motion, the hon. Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

It's an honour this afternoon to stand on behalf of the NDP and to present our reaction to the Speech from the Throne. First of all, I would like to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for coming here today and presenting the speech to us.

The first thing I want to do is to ask a question, and that is: How do the people who heard this speech today or who will hear it after today, people who are living in poverty, people who are working minimum wage, people who are having a difficult time making ends meet to even feed their families healthy food, how would they see the Speech from the Throne today? That's my question.

The Lieutenant-Governor, as we all know, presents the speech that is government's position. And so I want to not look at this from the eyes of government, which government does, of course, and which their two representatives did very well, in terms of speaking on behalf of government, and I want to present my words from the eyes of people who are having a hard time making ends meet in this province. I want to do it from the perspective of municipal councillors who are so frustrated because they cannot deliver the services that they need to deliver to their communities, build the infrastructure that's needed for safe communities.

I want to do it through the eyes of volunteers who are out there in our communities.

Government, in the speech, does talk about the wonderful work in communities. Yes, there are volunteers out there working day in and day out to try to help other people make it. And it's through those eyes that I want to see this.

Government, as I expected, although they didn't do it in a big way, initially, they did right upfront talk about the Atlantic Accord. It's very, very interesting, because they're presenting the Atlantic Accord as if it will be the answer to all of our fiscal woes. And in the document it says – this is on page 2 or page 3 –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – it will “help us stay the course for fiscal stability and return to surplus.”

Well, I'm going to beg to differ on that. What's missing in this document is a real economic plan. I'm shocked that at this point in time, with the state of things the way they are in our province, that this government does not have an economic plan.

If they think that telling people that overnight – because the Premier did say that in the media; everything was going to be better for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador overnight because of the Atlantic Accord. Guess what? Each of you people, your \$5,000 debt is not going to be there. Well, first of all, do they really think people are stupid enough to think that they are not going to have a \$5,000 debt? What a ridiculous thing to be saying to the people of this province. You have a \$5,000 debt and now you don't have it. Guess what? These people have debt. These people have personal debt because they cannot make ends meet.

The personal debt in this province is extremely high, so the debt of Muskrat Falls, that's not the debt they're feeling. They'll be feeling it when their electricity rates go up, though, in 2021 and this government had the gall to come in here today with a speech that does not even present a plan to deal with the mitigation of the electrical rates.

Being bold enough to say oh, the federal minister of Finance will be here tomorrow and we'll start – we'll start. This is where they should have started. It should have been here today. There should have been a plan before they had the gall of going to the people of this province and asking them to be re-elected without even a plan. They're the ones telling people the rates are going to double and now they're coming forward with a Speech from the Throne, leading into a budget, which will be the last thing they'll do before a general election and daring to say come on, vote for us. We haven't got a plan yet, but vote us.

I'm sorry. That is not acceptable.

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** The language in this Speech from the Throne is bogus; the language around the Atlantic Accord is bogus. It's meaningless for the people who are living in real life, who are living –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Excuse me for a minute.

I know we're going to get into something here, but I remind all Members that each caucus is going to have a chance to speak and be heard, and I want to continue with that. Please respect this Member.

Please proceed.

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

I do appreciate that. Unfortunately, government, through this Speech from the Throne, is trying to make themselves look good as they head into the election, while downloading a financial burden on future generations. They say they have a plan for financial sustainability, but they don't, and the Accord is not a plan.

So, why are they saying what they're saying? Well, yes, they did get \$2.5 billion as a fixed amount of money through the negotiations with the federal government, but that \$2.5 billion, that's going to show up right away on this year's books as a reduction in our net debt of \$14.7

billion, which is going to be good for borrowing more money and that's what this is about. It puts them on a standing where they're going to be able to borrow more money.

They don't have, in this Speech from the Throne, a revenue plan. The only revenue plan – the revenue stream is the \$2.5 billion over 38 years. The \$150 million in cash every year – approximately – for the first 11 years is not going to help much with annual deficits. This year it's projected at \$500 million, which Muskrat Falls is going to add to. That amount of money each year is a drop in the bucket to the expenses that we have, we all know that, yet they are using smoke and mirrors to get people to think everything is fine.

So what is the benefit to people of taking debt off government's books and downloading costs onto future generations? Because that's what's going to happen. The only benefit is to the government, because they're looking good right now and they're making it sound good in order to get re-elected, but the reality is, down the road, things are not going to get better. If they are, they certainly haven't got a plan for it in this Speech.

So when I look at the promise of the mitigation plans and the fact that Minister Morneau will be here tomorrow, I just see it as political posturing on the part of this government for the sake of the election. There's no other answer that I have. Or will the federal finance minister come in tomorrow and all of a sudden announce, you know, a huge amount of money, something to help us deal with the \$720 million that we're going to need to run Muskrat Falls? I doubt it – I doubt it very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

So government's plans are about getting re-elected, not about making people's lives better. Nothing in this talks about changing the minimum wage, which is too low and which must advance much more quickly than this government is doing. We cannot just have the incremental movement of minimum wage. We

need minimum wage brought up to the basic – I mean, we’ve been saying \$15 an hour for a long time now. We’re soon going to have to look at inflation and even change that \$15 an hour. We need that to happen, like, in the next year or two. By 2021, it’s not going to happen. Nothing about it – nothing in this.

Really, if we’re going to use gender-based analysis – which they didn’t talk about this year, by the way, in the Speech from the Throne. If we’re going to use gender-based analysis, women are the highest percentage of those on minimum wage. And a lot of those women are women who are single parents. So if you really want to help the status of women, if you really want to help women in this province, which they made a cursory glance to in the Speech from the Throne, then let’s move women out of poverty. Let’s move everybody out of poverty.

Nothing on pay equity legislation – something that they promised. And they’re coming into now the end of their term, begging for re-election, and they’ve done nothing about it. Well, I hope the women in this province are going to have an answer for them on that one.

With regard to justice issues, I will say there’ve been some good steps taken. There have been. The three –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** The three domestic violence courts are to be created; however, the one for Labrador is not there yet. So one good step, a step backwards.

Four hours of legal assistance for victims of violence is a first good step, but victims need funds to use on many needs including legal, counselling, and child care and so on. Other provinces provide this. The drug court is a good first step, but will we see the community programs to support it? That’s essential.

It was interesting to see the focus on our successful athletes, and I too follow those athletes and am proud of them. But those athletes – let’s look at Kaetlyn Osmond, because it’s public. Why did her parents move to Alberta

to get jobs in Northern Alberta? In order to pay for their daughter going on in –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – the profession that she’d chosen.

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** So what this government should be looking at is the under-investment in organized amateur sports in this province. The sports that our children have in their school system, and the fact that children who do not have –

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, I’m really having a hard time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

Order, please!

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much.

Children whose parents do not have adequate money can’t have their children in the hockey team, for example, in the community or in the school, or can’t have their children doing road trips.

I know of a family where the child is a really good athletic child doing – oh, what’s the word I want for it? The jumping and the –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Gymnastics.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Gymnastics. Really good gymnast, but could not afford the road trips that they’d have to take part in if he stayed on the team, and he was one of the stars on the team, but because of the cost of road trips he couldn’t do it. So don’t tell me, don’t take credit for our star athletes that they mention in the Speech from the Throne when they’re not putting money into the programs for our children in school and children in our community.

We've seen some increase in child care investment, that's true, both for parents and for child care centres. Providing money for programming and inclusion is a positive thing. Providing subsidies to more families has been valuable, but many families either have no access to child care in their community or cannot afford it and don't qualify for a subsidy.

Child care lifts women out of poverty, it boosts the economy and increases tax revenue to government. Why this government can't understand that, as they did in Quebec – and that's what I would've loved to see today: a real plan for child care, not band-aids. Why they don't see this as an economically good thing to have a public child care system, I'll never understand.

Many incremental actions have been taken in sectors such as agriculture and technology industries, but I don't see a comprehensive, detailed plan for economic diversification. As I said earlier, the only revenue they seem to be concentrating on is the revenue stream, as they've put it, from the Atlantic Accord. There's no mention of the economic importance of cultural and heritage industries and no new investment.

Government is now finally talking about the need to support green energy, but there is no mention of the conundrum that exists in our province right now of investing in green energy versus increasing local consumption of Muskrat Falls energy. That's the reality, because if we really start using green energy, wind power, for example, if we start using that, fewer people are getting energy from Muskrat Falls, that increases the cost of Muskrat Falls. So we have a conundrum and they're not addressing the conundrum. It's a serious one.

We still have the highest unemployment rate in the country and need a comprehensive plan to create employment with permanent jobs, not jobs that are seasonal or jobs that are related to construction, which are not permanent.

We are still losing too many immigrants to other provinces. When the Speech from the Throne talks about 1,500 new permanent residents –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order!

**MS. MICHAEL:** – that's not new immigrants this year. Some of those permanent residents – and they didn't give us the number – are people who have been here for a while and this year became permanent residents. So that 1,500 is not new immigrants this year. They made it sound that way.

And government, too, is jumping at the new P3 opportunities, but there's no guarantee they'll –

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – they get an easy ride, initially, but there's no guarantee what will happen down the road with the unionized jobs that now exist. Will they continue? There is proof, Mr. Speaker, in research that's done that in many, many of the cases where you start off with P3s, they turn into being totally dominated by the private sectors and unionized jobs disappear.

We have not addressed the environmental impact of mining, and this government does not do that. They didn't do it in the Speech and it's a major issue. I'm not saying that we shouldn't have mining, but we have to have more care with regard to what the environmental impact is, especially when we are endangering sensitive areas that are important to tourism and important to the protection of our land.

What's going on, for example, with the Eagleridge gold mine is totally unacceptable. If that's what their idea of developing mines is, that's not what ours is. We have to have a plan that really looks at how the environmental needs and the economic needs go together.

Then there are the Indigenous issues. Yes, the round tables are an important step, there's no doubt, and collaboration to improve child-protection systems in Labrador is proving extremely valuable, so there are good things happening, but we should seek core funding for friendship centres and a network of these centres around the province. We need more support for maintenance and revival of languages.

Labrador, when we come to Muskrat Falls, is still sitting wondering what's happening with

regard to the methylmercury issue. We do not have adequate support for Indigenous legal students – just two internships. Well, the needs up there are much greater than two internships. I want a much more progressive program around Indigenous legal students.

Another good point – I am pointing out good things, but then the weakness.

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** It is good news that more primary health care teams will be established in our community health centres, and those that are there are proving to be very successful. But, again, I want a fuller plan – and not just I, the people of the province want a fuller plan of how that is going to spell out for everybody in this province.

Home care and long-term care; there is no doubt that the new income-only based assessment process is welcomed. It's something that brings us up to speed with the rest of the country. We should never have gone on this long without it. At the same time, we do not have adequate home care services for people. At the same time that that happened, people had their hours cut back, people were calling our offices saying I can't manage, and even worse, there aren't adequate numbers of trained home care people in this province to take care of our needs.

We need a home care system that's regulated, that is publicly regulated. Where training is demanded, where the regulations around training and the costs of home care are all under government, and this government does not, once again, have a plan for that.

The individualized-funding model is good news for people with disabilities and their families. I'm glad to see that government is collaborating with the community on the new legislation, but disincentives for entering the workforce must be removed and deficits in supportive housing needs to be addressed and, of course, housing, not just for people with disabilities but housing in general. The lack of affordable housing is still an ongoing issue in this province.

One more point, post-secondary education. The infrastructure needs further investment,

definitely. Affordable, accessible, post-secondary education is important for keeping people here –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – preparing them for the workforce, encouraging immigration and increasing our economy.

The state of inclusive education has finally begun to be addressed, but it is important to have enough teachers and teaching assistants so all students can be supported.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is when we look at the Speech from the Throne through the eyes of the different groups of people that I've mentioned in response, the Speech from the Throne does not really give any concrete plan for them in these areas. There are no concrete ideas in there. They are talking about the things that they've done up to now. They're saying we're going to continue taking care of you and, yet, we do not see concrete suggestions of how they're going to do the things that they're claiming.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity for presenting this reaction.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I recognize the hon. the Premier.

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

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

Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise and speak to the Speech from the Throne that was delivered by the first woman LG in the history of this province –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** – that’s the hon. Lieutenant-Governor Judy Foote. I will say that their Honours have been a pleasure to work with and I look forward to working with them in the future.

I also want to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that we have Members in this House of Assembly that this will be their last Throne Speech. We know there are a few Members here who have already made it publicly known that they would not be seeking re-election, and I will say that it’s been my pleasure to sit with them in their years that they have been here in their tenure, representing the people who elected them many years ago.

As the leader of the Third Party just said, I remember first coming into this House of Assembly back in 2007 and she was a Member there, and I remember at that time it was about the Cameron inquiry, which was in the news at the time. I know at that point we were able to work in collaboration and partnership to see some changes that still exist, and changed in a profound way the health care system in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish all the Members that are leaving – this will be their last Throne Speech, I want to wish them all the best in their endeavours.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I also know, Mr. Speaker, we have many people who are watching this webcast and watching this telecast that we see here today. I just have to say, we’ve named a few people here today and some people have taken liberties to actually throw out certain names, but there’s a lady who lives in New-Wes-Valley and I just have to send out a big shout-out, and that is to Vera Barbour.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I get a chance to talk to Vera quite often. She’s a good Liberal, we all know that, but she really respects what happens in this House of Assembly. I know Vera and my mother now have regular calls on the weekends. Of course, I get a feeling they’re probably talking about the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I could say that the words that they refer to when they speak to me, I doubt is probably not language – I would guess Vera’s heartrate went up quite high today as we heard some of the comments made in this House of Assembly. But in respect to all the people who are watching today, it is my intentions to try and rise above some of the rhetoric that we’ve seen here today and really focus on what this Speech from the Throne was all about.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of comments in the responses that we’ve seen here today about: Where are we with economic development? What is it about the future? As the theme in this Speech from the Throne, there’s been one of optimism. I know there are certain Members, if you’re in Opposition, speaking of hope and optimism, speaking about the future of our province and saying the good things and just reminding people of a lot of the great things that we’ve been able to do in the last three-and-a-half years.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn’t help but reflect on the difference this province is in 2019 and what this province was in 2015 when we took (inaudible).

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Many people have heard me speak out about that first 45 minutes.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** And, yes, Mr. Speaker, they can heckle because what I knew coming into office in December of 2015, they knew when they were going out the door. They knew what was left. They knew about the grenades that were left in the budgets and the things that were not disclosed to the people of this province.

The PC administration, leaving office in 2015, knew that the next administration would be facing a \$2.7 billion deficit. They knew that, but they did not tell the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So when I hear comments that I’ve heard today, I am going to stand up and defend people on this side of the House that, yes, had the courage, and everyone in their seats here today had the leadership and the qualities that it took to put

this province on a bright future and better path for Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, when I make those comments, I have the courage to look people straight in the face, right in their eyes and explain to them that, yes, we are turning this province around. It is called *The Way Forward*, it is called growth and sustainability, Mr. Speaker, and we are making a difference.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, we are doing it with partnerships and people in aquaculture, in the oil and gas industry, *Advance 2030*.

If you listened today, Mr. Speaker, about what's happening in agriculture, just with the – in the Speech from the Throne we saw about people transplanting vegetables, setting record highs throughout this province, because we are concerned about food security, Mr. Speaker.

Then they made comments about mocking what's in the Speech from the Throne, as if there's nothing there about the future of this province, Mr. Speaker. Look no further than the aquaculture sector, some-800 jobs on the Burin Peninsula.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Is that doing nothing for people in our province? Eight consecutive months of job growth, Mr. Speaker, month over month. Is that doing nothing for people in our province? That is creating jobs and putting prosperity in every single community in this province, Mr. Speaker. That is what *The Way Forward* is doing.

Those young people in the technology sector who are coming back home to work, that is what they are doing, Mr. Speaker. The mining industry in Glenwood just a few weeks ago, in Lab West, the Voisey's Bay mine in Labrador, in St. Lawrence, CFI – a mine that was there for nearly 17 years and the former administration couldn't get it going. Today, nearly 300 jobs working in St. Lawrence, Mr. Speaker.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Is that doing nothing for people in our province?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, these are all good news projects that I am talking about. This is what this Speech from the Throne is all about, but I will tell you, I have to give credit to the people that we are working with, the communities, the associations, the industry leaders, in a partnership, putting in place sector plans that are accountable and transparent. Go look at the website, Mr. Speaker, it's all there. The information is available. Making progress for people that live in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this province is becoming a beacon of investment. Why is it – it's not this government saying this. When people are over there shouting at me now, Mr. Speaker, I can hear that. They don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker, because this is good news. The doom and gloom Opposition want to hear nothing only the dark side, but I am going to talk about the future that we have in our province, \$18 billion in investment in mining and oil and gas.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** That is nothing to frown on, Mr. Speaker. That is good news for the people of this province. It means jobs for people in this province. And, yes, we are proud. We are proud to have that kind of partnership in place in this province.

Mr. Speaker, if you noticed, the Opposition –

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** – never made mention about the GDP for Newfoundland and Labrador. Did you notice that? They didn't say that. They didn't say that Newfoundland and Labrador would lead the country in GDP next year.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** We would lead the country in GDP –

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** – and eight consecutive months of job growth.

They're over there yelling at me now, Mr. Speaker, because they don't want to hear the good news. They don't want to hear the good news, but I am going to talk about the good news and the good things because we are getting results. Not just for all areas of this province, Mr. Speaker, rural Newfoundland and Labrador, the larger centres. We're putting in place infrastructure, long-term care sites, Grand Falls-Windsor, Gander; making improvements in Botwood, in Corner Brook.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say this, I have to talk about this, because back in 2007 I remember going in to Corner Brook at the time and getting invited to an announcement – got invited to an announcement, and guess what the former administration were going to do? This is what they were going to do. In 2007 they were going to build a hospital in Corner Brook. In 2008 we went back and they were going to announce it again. In '09 they announced it again. In 2010 they announced it again. In '11 they announced it again. Guess what, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** When they were –

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I know they don't want to hear the good news.

Mr. Speaker, when they –

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** They do not want to hear the good news, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for defending me, but I can do a good job with that. I've got a little bit of courage, Mr. Speaker; don't worry about that.

Mr. Speaker, going back to the hospital in Corner Brook, eight or nine announcements, never delivered a thing, only a sign. That's what was there: a sign.

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** If you remember, they were flush with cash, Mr. Speaker – they were flush with cash at the time. They couldn't get the hospital built.

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Yeah, I'm being asked now how many patients are in the hospital, Mr. Speaker. Well, I will guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, the ones that are there are looking forward to the new one that they could not deliver.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, *The Way Forward* talks about making sure –

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as many people would know, I talk quite a bit about coming into politics. It's about making a difference in mental health and addictions. I would put the track record of this government and compare it to anyone in this country.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Community Services, with the support of every Member on this side of the government, we have now reduced wait times by 68 per cent – 68 per cent, Mr. Speaker – and

we've been able to do that in just over a couple years.

I was in Labrador just a few days ago at the Friendship Games, the Labrador games, Mr. Speaker, and I had a young woman that came up to me that works in this area and she made this comment to me. She said: You know, I didn't believe we could ever do this; I didn't believe that we actually could take away appointments. There were no appointments. You do not have to wait, make an appointment.

Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because you can walk in and get the service. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, it's happening now; it's also happened on the Burin Peninsula; it's happening in Corner Brook; it's happening here in St. John's, as well. That is making a difference. You imagine when you're in a time of need and you feel like you need help. Just think about it, how it must be. We all know that one in five people live with mental health. They're friends of ours; they're family members. We all know those people. Just imagine making that call and they say: We can't talk to you today; we have no time for you today; we've got to put you on a wait list.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you're living in Labrador, you're living on the Burin Peninsula, you're living on the West Coast or places here in St. John's, you can walk in.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about we're going to do it and doing it. There is a big difference. You can tell people many times: Yeah, I'm going to go do it, when I get around to it. Remember they used to have this little thing on the go that people used to have put up in their houses, like getting a round tuit? Getting a round to it? Mr. Speaker, we're getting to it.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** The new Waterford Hospital, Mr. Speaker, is a prime example. Imagine this day and age using a building as your mental health facility in this province that opened its doors in 1855 – just imagine. And when we were flush with cash, having surpluses like never before, they couldn't do it. We're

going to do it; we're going to get around to it; going to do it. We're going to study this, and we're going to study something else. They never did it.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is in place. We're advancing the replacement of the Waterford Hospital, and I am looking forward –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** – to the day when this Liberal government will deliver to the people of the province the new Waterford Hospital right here in St. John's.

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Yeah, they're shouting again, Mr. Speaker. I hear them over there. They don't like to hear the good news; they don't like to hear all of this.

So, Mr. Speaker, we talked about long-term care facilities and we talked about the replacement of the Waterford Hospital. And yes, we're doing that, I say to the leader of the Third Party, the leader of the NDP. We're doing this using a partnership model and we've made a commitment to unionize workers and organize workers in this province that they would deliver the front-line services. I will tell you that it's this government here that has put collective bargaining in place and we have not had to deal with a strike. I want to give the Minister of Finance a big shout-out for the work that's been done.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** And who would've thought that in 2015 that we would find ourselves in 2019 working with those organized unions or public sector workers, Mr. Speaker, to get those agreements in place.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell you that that is not fake leadership; that is real leadership.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I didn't expect a look, Mr. Speaker, from the opposite when I said that, and calling people out in this House of Assembly is often not always easy to do, but I don't mind doing it. I'm going to stand up for the decisions that we made. I'm going to stand up for the people in this province. We will provide the leadership that this province rightfully deserves. The information will be out there, just like we did with our Education Action Plan.

We went around this province, spoke to parents, spoke to students, spoke to educators. At the announcement that day, we put in place a plan that will transform the education system in this province, and it's working already: 82 recommendations; 31 of those recommendations already implemented. We're seeing educational learning assistants, young people that were looking for a way to get into the teaching role are doing it this way – some 54 of them in place, another 146 coming into the education system. It talks about math, reading, inclusion. There are so many good things that are happening within our education system that are making a difference. Giving people in the K-12 system a good start in life is what it is all about.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would challenge anyone in this House of Assembly today, when you look at the improvements that we have made with very little money in the justice system – and I got to give credit to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety here, who has been directly involved in so many of these matters. And when you look at the Sexual Assault Response Pilot Program that's been put in place, I just think about the young people out there looking for support services, looking for help when they need it the most. Mr. Speaker, now they know there's someone there to support them when they need that legal support in some of the most difficult times in their life.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also the person, as Premier, who has taken on the responsible role for Indigenous Affairs within our province. I get a chance to work with the Indigenous communities and leaders. We have a parliamentary assistant to me that certainly gives me a big hand in working with those communities. Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way and putting in place the first roundtable at a government-to-government level, putting in

place the first roundtable in the history of this province within Indigenous leaders, and we are making a difference.

One of the big things that we've been able to do in working with this group is the repatriation of the Beothuk remains back to our province, Mr. Speaker. It's a proud moment for Indigenous communities from the National Museums Scotland. We've done this with the support of the Canadian national museum.

So, there's quite a bit of activity. We've taken a similar approach with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, putting in place the concrete action plan that's delivering results to communities, Mr. Speaker. So, when higher people reach out here and talk about the engagement and the work and all the communities who are out there not working with government, it's not what I'm hearing. It's not what I'm hearing at those municipal roundtables.

We have Members here today that have listened intently. We've been able to put in place some of the largest infrastructure agreement that we've ever had in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker; put in place clean water, waste water, roads, community buildings. Using the partnership that we had with the federal government is unprecedented. Over \$949 million in labour development market agreement, Mr. Speaker, and they're saying that that's not results. They're saying that this is not results for the people in our province. Well, you go around and watch people in this construction season, and I'll tell you, you will see results. You will see results, Mr. Speaker. It's happening.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to go back to a point in our history. In July 1 of this year, I had the privilege of being in France at Beaumont-Hamel. I will tell you that with the support of the Speaker's office I have to say, because this was some great work that we've been able to do in finalizing the Trail of the Caribou.

It's important for us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, it's an important part of our history to be able to do that for those young people, those brave young people that paid the ultimate price during some of the difficult conflicts that we've had in this world, Mr.

Speaker. And they've done it, going into parts of the world that they knew nothing about it, but they did it unselfishly and they did it with bravery. I know when I was there and participated in those events in July of this year, I can tell you, it was a sombre moment, but I can you I was a proud Newfoundlander and Labradorian when I saw the impact and how people in those areas still look at Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the role that they do and the role that they played back during those conflicts.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, I am proud of the achievements and what we've been able to do. Just in the last week here, of course, with the Atlantic Accord, \$2.5 billion, and, yes, I've listened to one or two pieces of rhetoric, but for the most part, this is a great day. It's a guaranteed revenue stream, we can use it at our discretion, however we see fit. As I said in the House here the other day, this is putting money in the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on programs that are priority for them.

This is a guaranteed revenue stream, and yes, we – the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the PC Party, said it was a weakening. Mr. Speaker, they obviously haven't read the agreement because the word is even there in the agreement, as it says, deepening joint management. Joint management on things like land tenure, on labour and worker safety. Are you saying that these are not important things?

I get appalled when the Leader of the Opposition says that that is weakening when you're talking about labour standards, when you're talking about land tenure. How can you say that is weakening of joint management? That is strengthening it.

Mr. Speaker, I have to draw the attention, too, because when you talk about some of the language that I've heard here today, when I've listened to the language that I've heard here today and they talked about fake leadership and all that, it just kind of reminded me of a president just south of the border. I couldn't help but wonder while I was watching what was going on in this House and listening to that kind of rhetoric, but I'm thinking more about respect and integrity, Mr. Speaker.

We've made a commitment that regardless of the mudslinging that's going to occur, we're going to put the priorities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** So, Mr. Speaker, yes, this Speech from the Throne, over 10,000 words they tell me that was in it, there was a lot of good information in it. Yes, we celebrated the work of our athletes. We talked about the work of our artist community. We talked about natural resource development. We talked about education. We talked about health. I would challenge anyone when you read that book to look at it what they will see in that Speech from the Throne today is the work of this group, the work of this government, the work of this group of MHAs that we have on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, when we leave here we'll have a budget in place. As I said, we said in April of this year, I will tell you that we will look to the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we will clearly be able to look at every single person that we meet on the street, and I can say this with all honesty, this province is in a better spot in 2019 than it was in 2015, no thanks to the work of this group of people over there. The doom-and-gloom crowd, they can do what they want. They go black, dark, do what they want. We are going to stay true to our word and our integrity, Mr. Speaker. We will go high when you go low.

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

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

It is moved and seconded that a Select Committee be struck to draft an Address of Thanks to be presented to her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, in reply to the gracious Speech from the Throne from which she has pleased to open the present session of the House of Assembly.

The Members of the Select Committee will be the Member for Harbour Main, the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue and the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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.'

I declare that the motion is carried.

Notices of Motion.

**Notices of Motion**

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act, Bill 2.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Regulation of Real Estate Trading in the Province, Bill 4.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Disclosure Of Information Under An Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol, Bill 5.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources that the House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, the 8th day of April at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you very much.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 p.m.