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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Order, please!

I'd like to welcome the Members back to this House of Assembly, and I'm very pleased to say we have some special guests joining us today.

We have in our audience the Junior Canadian Ranger, Conne River Patrol, and because they've come a long way I'm going to read all of their names. We have Joy Northcote, Delaney Benoit, Carla Benoit, Caleb John, Nicholas Jeddore, Jonah Jeddore, Storm Hinks, Raymond Jeddore, Meghan McDonald, Kerri Keeping, Katie Benoit-Drake and Chandler John.

Chaperones with this fine group are: Corporal Bob Benoit, Master Corporal Claude John, Anita Jeddore and Gerard Joe. I also see up there in the audience with them is Judy White, Assistant Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs and Chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission.

Welcome to all of you.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today, we will hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Torngat Mountains, Humber - Bay of Islands, Mount Pearl - Southlands, Mount Pearl North, and Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

I rise today to recognize the first graduates of the Inuit Bachelor of Education degree program.

This program is the first of its kind offered by Memorial University's faculty of education in partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government. In addition to earning a Bachelor of Education degree in primary-elementary education, the

graduates earned a certificate in Aboriginal and Indigenous studies.

The program's Labrador Inuit educational context and the Nunatsiavut Government Inuktitut language program makes it unique and very priceless to the preservation of the Labrador Inuit culture and language. The 10 graduates will play a pivotal role in leading the education system towards cultural and language renewal.

To quote Dr. Sylvia Moore, assistant professor at the Labrador Institute: This partnership with Nunatsiavut Government is an example of Memorial University's work with Indigenous governments in the province, she said. Such collaboration, particularly in teacher education, is crucial. I was fortunate enough to talk with the students about the excitement they felt and to share in their hopes and their dreams.

So please join me in congratulating the following graduates of the Inuit Bachelor of Education degree program: Roxanne Nochasak, Doris Boase, Catherine Mitsuk, Marina Andersen, Julie Flowers, Jennifer-Rose Campbell, Jodi Lyall, Cheryl Allen, Tracey Doherty and Felicia Edmunds.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to recognize Jackie Barrett, a remarkable athlete from my district.

Jackie joined the Special Olympics as a swimmer in 1987 before switching to powerlifting in 1995, and what an impressive sporting career ever since.

Originally from Nova Scotia, he moved to Newfoundland in 2008 and is affectionately known as the Newfoundland Moose for his impressive lifts. Jackie has dominated powerlifting over the years, accumulating 20 gold medals, representing Canada at the Special Olympics with 13 first place finishes and smashing records, including the Newfoundland Men's Master-1 Super-heavyweight record; and,

in 2015, he set three Special Olympics world records.

He is a recipient of the Male Athlete of the Year award both in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, and in 2015, he received the Special Olympics Canada Dr. Frank Hayden Lifetime Achievement Award.

On November 15 of this year, Jackie will be the first ever Special Olympics athlete to be inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame. Jackie retired in 2015 but continues to mentor and volunteer with the Corner Brook Special Olympics.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Jackie on this prestigious honour and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to stand in this hon. House to recognize the tremendous success, which was the 37th annual Frosty Festival in the City of Mount Pearl.

Once again, this year's festival included various activities for citizens of all ages and interests including: A Night at the Oscars - Frosty style featuring the Spirit of Newfoundland; a Pedestrian Parade of Lights; two community breakfasts; Frosty's Big Birthday Party; a lip sync contest; a concert and dance featuring the Masterless Men, the Irish Descendants and the Navigators; an Irish pub night; a seniors bingo; a jiggs dinner and variety show; Battle of the Brains trivia night, and a dinner theatre, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure you can appreciate, any festival of this magnitude would not be possible if it were not for the hard work and co-operation of a number of community partners. I would therefore ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating the City of Mount Pearl, the Frosty Festival Board of Directors, various community groups and organizations, corporate sponsors and all of the community-

minded volunteers who contributed to the great success story, which was Frosty Festival 2019.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Charles Starkes, one of seven World War II veterans honoured at the 75th D-Day commemorative ceremonies held in Halifax.

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Mr. Starkes was just 22 years old and was a torpedo man on the aircraft carrier that took part in the allied invasion of occupied France.

He recalls their cargo decks were loaded with equipment needed by the forces when they landed on the beaches. Starkes said the coastline was visible during the day as barges continued to come alongside to carry their cargo ashore. He said, he and his young crewmates, most of them early 20s, were not afraid and were glad to be a part of it.

The bravery shown by Charles Starkes and his comrades that day was beyond measure. These young men were willing to give everything they had for their country and for each other.

Closer to home, Mr. Starkes was also one of the original members of the Singing Legionnaires. He is still a member today and has rarely missed a performance in 52 years. As a matter of fact, while Mr. Starkes would love to be here today, he was pre-committed to singing with the Legionnaires at St. Patrick's Mercy Home today.

I ask all those present to join me and pay tribute to Charles Starkes for his brave efforts in preserving our freedom and independence.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MR. LOVELESS:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to acknowledge Brendan Collier of St. Alban's.

Brendan is well known to his community of St. Alban's and over the years held a strong belief in helping and serving his community in many ways.

Brendan, along with many others, began and laid the foundation for the Bay d'Espoir Medical Clinic that is still in operation and continues to serve residents in that community and surrounding areas. He was one of the first employees to begin working at this clinic and held a position as a maintenance worker for 30 years.

In addition, Brendan was, and remains, an avid volunteer for various organizations throughout his community, such as cadets, St. Alban's Fire Department, Beavers, Cubs and the Lions Club. He enjoyed his music and was well known for playing in the Party House band.

Brendan's leadership was so outstanding, he received the Pathway of Heroes award at the town's volunteer evening on May 15. He is well respected by his family, friends and his community.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Brendan Collier.

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

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

**Statements by Ministers**

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Stella's Circle and Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie, President and CEO of the Strongest Families Institute, on receiving Champions of Mental Health Awards from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, this past May in Ottawa.

The alliance, I might add, is co-chaired by Florence Budden, an instructor with Eastern Health's Centre for Nursing Studies.

Stella's Circle, which received the Community (Organization) Award, offers programs in housing, counselling and employment for people, the majority of whom have mental illness or addictions.

Dr. Lingley-Pottie, who received the Innovation – Researcher or Clinician Award, has dedicated her career to improving the mental health and well-being of children, youth and families.

Most recently, she partnered with Newfoundland and Labrador to launch I CAN (Conquer Anxiety and Nervousness), an e-health program for individuals ages 18-30.

This province contributed \$170,000 towards the development of I CAN, which complements our suite of online supports, such as Therapy Assistance Online, Bridge the gApp, BreathingRoom and MindWell-U's 30 Day Mindfulness Challenge.

Both Stella's Circle and Dr. Lingley-Pottie are working to ensure safe spaces for mental health discussions within our communities.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating them on receiving their respective awards.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I join the Minister of Health and Community Services today in offering congratulations to the Champions of Mental Health award winners.

These awards are presented by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health recognizing Canadians who work and help to advance the mental health agenda across the

country. This year, we are proud to have two award winners from this province.

Stella's Circle plays an important role in providing services to many who face barriers to full participation in their community. It is great to see this organization be recognized for the important work that they do in our community.

Congratulations to Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie, president and CEO of the Strongest Families Institute for her award. Her work of improving mental health and well-being of children, youth and families must be commended.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

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

Thank you to the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to both Stella's Circle and to Dr. Lingley-Pottie on their awards. Naturally, Stella's Circle award is recognition for the work of all the people. On a personal note, when I was president of an organization setting up its own affordable housing, Stella's was very instrumental in doing that for us.

It's good to see the province is providing Dr. Lingley-Pottie with more funding towards online supports for people with mental health issues and, often, this is the first point of contact for people looking for help. It's a testament to the resources that people of mental health need in the community.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the achievements of Chief Jodie Matthews of the Pacquet Fire Department. Chief Matthews has been chosen by the National Fire Protection Association to receive its 2019 Rising Star award for her dedication to educating the public, saving lives and protecting the community.

Chief Matthews was selected based on her demonstration of providing consistent and innovative outreach in her community and actively using and implementing National Fire Protection Association resources and programs in her community.

We extend our very best wishes to the chief as she travels to the organization's annual conference and expo next week in San Antonio, Texas to receive her award.

Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that Chief Matthews is one of a small number of female fire chiefs in our province. We are proud to support women in fire services and encourage women to enter into this critical field.

Our government remains committed to investing in quality fire services and working with fire departments to ensure that residents are safe and protected. I would like to extend a big thank you to all the firefighters in the province for their dedication and the sacrifices they make to protect families and communities.

I ask all hon. Members of this hon. House to recognize this special achievement by Chief Matthews as we wish her congratulations on receiving this prestigious award, and on being a role model for young women and men across our province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I join with the minister in congratulating Chief Jodie Matthews on being chosen to receive the 2019 Rising Star award by the National Fire Protection Association.

Receiving such an award is tremendous honour. Not only does Chief Matthews provide an essential safety service in our province, but she works diligently every day to ensure that the service her fire department provides is as high quality as possible.

Chief Matthews is a role model to so many in our province. I hope that the attention bestowed upon her through this award motivates individuals of all ages, genders and backgrounds to consider becoming a firefighter in their community.

I'm sure I can speak for everyone in this House when we have well wishes to all emergency service personnel to stay safe while they're working in their respective roles.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

Again, thank you to the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Congratulations to Chief Jodie Matthews of the Pacquet Fire Department for receiving the 2019 Rising Star award. As one of only a few women to serve as fire chief in our province, Chief Matthews is a strong inspiration for more women to consider joining and taking on leadership roles in their local fire departments.

I would like to thank all firefighters in the province for the vital role they serve in our communities and I join my fellow Members in congratulating Chief Matthews on receiving this prestigious award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, would the Ministry inform the House what is the present schedule for impoundment of the Muskrat Falls reservoir, including start date and completion date? And if this is earlier than previously thought, are there any implications for the date of first power?

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

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

Impoundment is something that is being worked on. As you know, we're making progress with the finalization of Muskrat Falls and making, I would say, good progress in finalizing that project. The date of impoundment is now being considered with an aspect to the IEAC recommendations, Mr. Speaker. I'll inform the House when the date of impoundment has been determined.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. CROSBIE:** Can the minister state when the present anticipated date is?

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, that date has not been finalized at this point. We are anticipating it in the near future but, as I said, we are also considering changes and requirements under the IEAC.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. CROSBIE:** In the near future.

The government is entering talks with Indigenous groups in an attempt to reach consensus measures to mitigate methylmercury. According to the expert panel report in April of 2018, there's already a consensus on capping of wetlands but not on soil removal.

What's the estimated length of time to execute a program of capping once a decision to execute capping is made?

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

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

The Member opposite is correct, that we have had an independent environmental action committee looking at the requirements that Nalcor will be required to do to ensure the concerns around methylmercury are addressed. I can inform the House that, of course, a lot of the work that Nalcor has been doing of late is in recognition of the requirements of the IEAC.

The Member opposite asked specifically about capping. We determine the extent of what is required and, of course, the depth and the necessity of that capping; therefore, that is one of the questions that is being put to the IEAC in advance of impoundment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Prominent geoscientists continue to express concern about the stability of the North Spur.

Given the potential catastrophic consequences to life and property, does the government see merit

in having an independent expert review panel, or review, completed prior to impoundment?

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

**MS. COADY:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. I can inform the House that there have been over 30 studies done on the issue of the North Spur; over 30 engineering studies completed on this. Dating as far back as 1965, Mr. Speaker, there have geotechnical work done on the North Spur.

I can also inform this House that everything for the North Spur, all the containment, all the work that has been done is under the dam safety regulations, and they have to be adhered to and are a requirement of any permitting. I can tell you that Municipal Affairs and Environment is monitoring that dam safety at all times.

I will inform the House that we will continue to monitor and consider what needs to be done for the North Spur.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Geotechnical science has rapidly evolved since 1965, of course.

During the general election, concern arose amongst Hydro workers that a sale of transmission assets is pending between Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power.

Is there a basis, in fact, to this rumour? And what is the current status of any such discussions?

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

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

The Member opposite would be aware that the Public Utilities Board is doing a tremendous

amount of work around rate mitigation, around how we're going to be able to pay for Muskrat Falls. Everyone in the province knows that we have a rather significant bill coming.

Those that decided to build Muskrat Falls did know that at the end of the day the ratepayers were going to bear all the costs. As this government has said repeatedly, we will not allow that to happen. That's why we brought the Public Utilities Board back in. As part of their deliberations, they have been considering all aspects of what can or should be done.

I will inform the House, approximately 80 per cent of distribution lines are owned by Newfoundland Power at present. One of the comments in the Public Utilities Board report was around this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. CROSBIE:** No one would understand the impact that such a transfer of assets between Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power better than the present CEO of Nalcor. However, we assume that due to conflict of interest issues he's not involved in any such talks.

In which case: From where does the minister get her information about this?

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

**MS. COADY:** I appreciate the opportunity to continue my explanation.

This is coming from the Public Utilities Board. In their initial report of mid-February of this year, there was some consideration of this as a potential for helping to mitigate rates. There has nothing been advanced of this by government. The deliberations from the Public Utilities Board are still ongoing with regard to rate management, Mr. Speaker.

I can inform the Member opposite, without a doubt and without hesitation, that the president and CEO of Nalcor is not involved in any discussions or talks around this.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

The Minister of Finance has stated that he has a plan to return the province to surplus, which includes a reduction in expenditure of \$617 million.

I'd ask the minister to demonstrate where the \$617 million will come from? Will he table the details behind his fiscal forecast, including a breakdown of savings by department?

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

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

The Member opposite should know, or ought to know, that budgets are done on an annual basis. It's a one-year projection on where we're going to be. We continue to work on achieving those savings, Mr. Speaker.

We've identified, previously, based on the legislation we put in place in December, that we were looking to our agencies, boards and commissions and looking to work more closely with them to identify some savings. We've got a shared services model that will save government tens of millions of dollars annually, once it's fully implemented. We've got digital government that should save government money. We're consolidating collections within the Department of Finance. Some of that's already happening. Payroll within Finance, we're consolidating for some of the other agencies, boards and commissions. That's already happening.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, this is Public Service Week, and I'm a firm believer in the work that our public service does to provide services and programs to this province. I'm also a believer that they should be acknowledged for their work.

In my district there are three individuals who have waited over two years to have their reclassification heard or processed.

Is the minister aware of what the standard wait time is for reclassifications?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Human Resource Secretariat.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am. It's a very important issue. I thank the Member for raising it because it is important to our public service.

I've had several discussions with our union leaders about this very issue. In fact, we've put additional resources in place to try and look after the backlog that's been in place for a number of years.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Over the last couple of days we've been asking about attrition in the Estimates. One department gave us a dollar target for '19-'20 but could not tell us how many positions would be removed, noting that that would be determined throughout the year. A second department was able to tell us both the dollar figure and the number of positions.

Can the minister please explain why departments are addressing attrition differently?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Human Resource Secretariat.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to address that question.

We have done a different attrition process than the former administration. The former administration essentially said that for every 10 people that retire, only eight come back. It's very rigid. It doesn't give departments the flexibility to determine what positions are needed and what positions are not.

We've placed the attrition target as a fiscal measure. Departments have the ability, deputies, to examine each position as they retire to determine whether or not that position is essential. It's not necessarily based on positions, Mr. Speaker. When you base it on positions, you could have all clerk typists eliminated in order to meet the number of positions without any proper, thorough analysis.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister please table government's attrition plan for the next five years, detailing the savings in dollars and positions by each department?

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

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

I can certainly give an indication as to the previous two years. We put a two-year plan in place. We're nearing the end of that two-year plan at the moment. We will then evaluate the success of the plan. My understanding is it's been very successful. We've reduced the number of positions in core government by over 900 over the past three years. Once we have an opportunity to evaluate what our targets should be over the next two to three years, we'll develop another plan from there.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

The mackerel quota for Atlantic Canada has been reduced by 20 per cent this year. The mackerel fishery starts off in the Gulf. By the time it gets to our shores, the bulk of the quota has already been taken.

Will the minister stand up and take action to ensure our harvesters get their fair share of the mackerel quota?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank the hon. Member, who serves as my critic, for his first question in the House and welcome him back, as we all do to each other, to the House of Assembly to begin this session.

The question of mackerel is very important, not only to the people, to the fish harvesters of the Northeast Coast, but on the West Coast as well. I have reached out not only to DFO and to its ministry, but as well to harvesters. There are – pardon the pun – two schools of thought. There is an option that I asked to be explored, which is should Newfoundland and Labrador get a separate, discrete, balkanized quota. There was some thought that as the mackerel migrate to Newfoundland and Labrador, if it were to come in a larger volume, larger school, a larger quantity than in the past, we could actually limit our chances for a successful harvest or a larger harvest. So we are working on solutions, but it is a very important issue.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

The price of snow crab was set in April at \$5.38 a pound and suddenly dropped at the end of May to \$4.90. The price has just gone back up to \$5.70. But harvesters want to know why the drop in the price, given there is no indication that the market pricing has dropped.

Can you give an explanation of that, Minister, please?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, there are mechanisms in place at the fish price setting panel, the research that they conduct and they're independent decisions that they take. What we can note from the hon. Member's question is that there are several mechanisms. He highlights the fact that there are several mechanisms in place for both parties to the collective agreement, to the collective bargaining process, both harvesters and processors, to be able to assert or put forward their points of view.

The original price today in 2019, there has never been a higher price for snow crab in the history of the snow crab fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador than in 2019. Because market fluctuations do occur occasionally, there is a price adjustment, but there's still a mechanism in place for both harvesters and processors to be able to challenge that, and it was successful.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

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

I do understand the mechanism that is in place. I know it's the highest price this year, but it's also the most reduction that harvesters have ever seen.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the Member to address his remarks to myself.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** In some areas where you will see that harvesters, four years ago, had 29,000, this year they're reduced down to 8,000. Harvesters want to know why there's not more transparency in the pricing of crab. Can you give them that answer?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, a proposal has come forward from the FFAW to allow, as they term, an increased transparency. I have met with the Inshore Council of the FFAW just a few short weeks ago, where we met for three hours. One of the predominant questions or issues that we talked about was allowing this to occur.

We had a very, very frank discussion with each other. There were no back doors. Both the processors and the harvesters would have to be involved in this. Obviously, we would have to respect commercial confidences. We'd have to make sure that the information that would be collected would be aggregated and collected in a way which was defensible, not only from a common sense point of view but from a court of law point of view. But one of the things that we do know is that transparency is always good.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** I remind the minister not according to most of the harvesters.

This week, another harvester raised concerns about having to dump valuable halibut bycatch. Despite being adjacent to the resource, 3Ps inshore harvesters can only access 2.5 per cent of the total allowable catch for halibut. Why isn't the minister fighting for increased halibut quotas for inshore harvesters?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, we have seen some increased quotas in halibut, especially on the West Coast. The question I think that he really wants to zero in on is whether or not bycatch can be retained. This is a common-sense issue, but all elements, all factors of this have to be considered.

One of the reasons why the federal government – not this government, but the federal government, DFO, has chosen not to allow bycatch retention is because, in occasion, in past, there have been instances where instead of catching an incidental through bycatch, there is a

concern or fear that there would be directed harvesting or directed fishing towards the species that would be considered a bycatch.

I would, and have implored the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and have already engaged with them to create a better model for allowing bycatch that stays within conservation limits.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** thank you very much.

I'm sure the minister understands that elsewhere in the world, and EU just recently passed that all catches at sea will be landed now and the same thing in Iceland. So why aren't you proposing the same proposal for our harvesters here?

Last week we heard of a fisherman that had 7,000 pounds of halibut, while he was catching hag, in the same fishery and that is about \$35,000 or \$40,000 to that fisherman. So why aren't you fighting for those people?

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

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

I've had the privilege, the luxury of being able to be in Iceland, where that's one of the jurisdictions where bycatch is regulated and controlled in their alternative methods to be able to deal with bycatch issues.

One of the things that got pointed out to me was that, in Iceland, they do not have 450 landing ports. They have a very discreet, smaller number of landing ports to be able to control this, to monitor this, to regulate this. I think what the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis has said to the House, he would be very much in favour of reducing the number of landing ports in Newfoundland and Labrador to a level consistent and equivalent to what is existing in Iceland.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

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

The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands raised concerns yesterday about whether or not local workers will build the new hospital in Corner Brook, despite assurances from the Premier and the president of the Liberal Party.

I ask the Premier: What is his government doing to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive the maximum benefit from public infrastructure projects like the Corner Brook hospital and the new mental health facility?

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the projects ongoing in the province right now, if you take the new long-term care centre in Corner Brook actually that's being constructed, as of May 31, there were 145 tradespeople on site; 128 of them are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** That's 90 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we would not achieve – highly unlikely we could achieve a community benefits agreement that would guarantee us 90 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on a job site.

Mr. Speaker, if you think about the new hospital that's going to be built in Corner Brook, we've had recent meetings with TradesNL to discuss ways to make sure Newfoundland and Labrador workers are there. We've also, through the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association, hosted a business-to-business seminar in Corner Brook last fall that was

attended by over 100 Newfoundland and Labrador companies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**MR. P. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, we've heard that workers building the new Canopy Growth facility in St. John's have been flown in from Quebec. Did the agreement with Canopy Growth stipulate local hiring?

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

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

When it comes to any particular matter that we have agreement, the Department of TCII, with a company, we make sure that there is adherence to the contract. When it comes to a particular matter, they hire local people when they are able to do so, and that is the case in this situation.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**MR. P. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, in our policy platform, we committed: To receive maximum benefits of public funds when public facilities are being constructed, Community Benefits Agreements will be included in the contractors' bid packages.

Will the Premier or the minister responsible follow our lead and implement a policy for Community Benefit Agreements for this province?

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question. We are actually ahead of them, Mr. Speaker, because we were having

meetings with Trades NL back in January and February around Community Benefit Agreements. So we've been ahead of them. That's not the first time we've been ahead.

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I'll go back to the comments earlier regarding the infrastructure currently being built in Corner Brook. Let me tell you, right now, on May 31, 90 per cent of the people on that job site were Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's a greater number than likely any Community Benefit Agreement would ever achieve.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**MR. P. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments; 90 per cent is certainly a high number, but I would love to see us with 100 per cent.

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

**MR. P. DINN:** What are we doing to ensure that 100 per cent of Newfoundlanders get these opportunities?

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

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

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

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

I would like to remind the Members opposite that while we had a shipyard in Marystown, they were building ferries in Romania, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, we will not take lessons from the Members opposite with regard to building stuff in Newfoundland and Labrador. What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is you have to be very careful when you talk about agreements because we have Newfoundland and Labrador companies building infrastructure in other parts of Canada.

We've achieved an average of 90 per cent Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on the Corner Brook long-term care centre and we will work to achieve the same on the new Corner Brook hospital.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I'm talking about employment here, job opportunities and the equal movement of workers from one province to the other. I would argue that is a one-way street in many instances and I'd like to see the government opposite to do more to ensure that local Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are getting the jobs.

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

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

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

I'm not sure if he doesn't realize that those boats, if they were built in Marystown, would've been local workers.

Mr. Speaker, the reality here is we want to work with Trades NL. We want to work with Newfoundland and Labrador contractors, sub-contractors that will be building the new hospital in Corner Brook.

We're going to have a project here that's going to add about \$500 million of construction activity to the West Coast. We want to make sure that every single Newfoundland and

Labrador worker has an opportunity, and along with Newfoundland and Labrador companies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

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

Information released by the media shows that from 2015 to May 2019, there were 268 instances of inappropriate, non-consensual touching, and 316 incidents of other inappropriate sexual behaviour in our province's schools.

Give these staggering and concerning numbers, how is the minister addressing this issue?

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

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

I certainly appreciate the question from my colleague. It's very disturbing to hear of such incidents, and preventing them must be top of mind in all that we do both in our schools and our communities.

We're working closely with the school board district to ensure a safe environment for all students. The fact that these reports are coming out gives me a sense of relief, the fact that they are being reported. We will do certainly everything that we can as a department to ensure the safety of the students.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**MR. PARDY:** Mr. Speaker, the executive director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre said that the vast majority of sexual assaults go unreported, adding: "It's in every school, it's in every classroom."

I suggest to the minister that our school system has an issue. What training, supports and actions will the minister implement in time for September?

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

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

Again, we work closely with the school district to ensure a safe environment for all students. There has been training for district staff, important amendments to the Schools Act, and there has been active, district-wide sexual violence committee.

Sexual health education is part of the curriculum. Regular reviews of how the curriculum should be enhanced to help build awareness are ongoing, and again, we're engaged as a department in this very serious matter.

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

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

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

We were told in Estimates that government has had some conversations with financiers about building the fixed link tunnel to Mainland Canada as a public-private partnership.

I ask the Premier: Is this true; and, if it is, how could he even consider allowing vital national infrastructure to be placed in private hands for profit?

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

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

Well, I will say that there have been a number of meetings that would've occurred with the MPs, some of which within the Infrastructure Bank as an example, and the interest that would be there. This is a link as part of the MOU, I would say, that we've recently signed back a few years ago with the Province of Quebec about how we best improve infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The particular fixed-link right now, the next step would be for a feasibility study to be done to determine what the cost would be and what the mechanism would be. There's some work already that's been done. So right now the next step for us would be a feasibility study before we finally determine how this fixed-link would be built between Newfoundland and Labrador and mainland Canada.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance told the media yesterday that household incomes, the median wage and employment numbers are higher than they were in 2015, yet his own budget data shows the unemployment growing over the next few years.

I ask the minister: How does his claims in the media square with the numbers in his budget documents?

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

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

The numbers I referred to are for 2018-2019 numbers. But, Mr. Speaker, we do have a megaproject that's coming to conclusion, Muskrat Falls, which will have an impact on employment numbers in this province.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to say that the numbers that were put forward as a projection in 2015 for 2018 were more than 3,000 jobs higher in this province than those numbers. And that's despite the fact that we had no understanding or knowledge at the time in 2015 that Fort McMurray would have such an effect as it is having on our province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance said in the media that the consumer price index is outpacing expectations.

I ask the minister: Does he understand that this means everything is getting more expensive for everyone, and how does he reconcile this with making life more affordable?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I will say that we expect the consumer price index to have an effect every year. I wouldn't say that it's outpacing expectations. What I will say is that the consumer price index has an effect on the services that government provides, on the cost of services, on the cost of equipment and materials that government purchases. Every year the consumer price index will have an impact on the budget in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

In his budget speech of April 2019, the Minister of Finance said since forming government we have made a commitment to reducing the size of the public service, which we believe can be achieved without mass layoffs: attrition.

I ask the minister: Are his attrition policy decisions based on numbers, or is it a needs-based policy with the welfare and needs of the people and the public servants first and foremost?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, like everything we do in government, it is a balance. We take a very balanced approach to ensuring that we reach our fiscal targets with providing the services that are essential to the people of the province.

I think we can say very clearly that on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we've always taken a focus on the people in our province who deliver our public services. Any decisions that we've made on reducing the size of the public service, Mr. Speaker, we've done so making every effort to ensure that we don't shock the delivery of public services and we don't shock the economy.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Has there been an analysis done by which you determine the needs of the people, the needs of the public service in reaching these fiscal targets? Has there been an analysis?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody in the province would dispute that in 2003 we had about 40,000 public servants; in 2015 we had about 49,000 positions in the public service.

Mr. Speaker, we've always taken a very strong focus on those who deliver public services. Deputy ministers have a great deal of say in our attrition. We put fiscal targets in place. Every position who retires, deputies and the departments analyze that position, Mr. Speaker, to determine whether or not the position is absolutely vital or the job can be spread out over other people.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The time for Oral Questions has ended.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** I have one.

In accordance with section 2(1)(4) of the *Elections Act, 1991*, I hereby table the Chief Electoral Officer report for the Windsor Lake by-election.

Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual performance report 2018 for WorkplaceNL.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

I stand here today to present a petition:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand and present this petition on behalf of the people of the whole of Western Newfoundland and all of Newfoundland and Labrador. There are people who signed this petition from the Goulds, Victoria, Ferryland, Fermeuse, Colliers, Avondale, CBS –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can we have some order, please? It's difficult to hear.

Thank you.

**MR. JOYCE:** – from CBS. So they're from all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know yesterday the Premier announced that public sector employees will be hired at the hospital, which is great.

I remember when we were in Opposition there was a big protest out in front of the Confederation Building. I went out on behalf of the Opposition at the time because we made a policy statement, because I know what happened with the government at the time, that we would hire public sector employees, which is great, which is great news.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm asking here, and I said it last year, I was going to work on this. I said it before the election. I said it during the election. I said it after the election and I'm saying it in the House, that I'm raising this issue on behalf of the people because I was elected to do so.

I'm urging government to try to encourage the companies to get them to hire local people. We do it all the time. I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works, I was always encouraged that he was working with TradesNL to get people hired. So I don't know why anybody's surprised here in this House of Assembly or across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, there was one issue that was raised that I just – we have a non ending spree of the government. I never asked the government to spend the money. Last year, the iron workers were going to put in \$90,000.

I know one of the Members got a lot of iron workers in her union; \$90,000 so that – \$100,000, sorry, so that it wouldn't cost any extra money to the taxpayers or to the company. That's the kind of collaboration I'm talking about. Instead of just dismissing it and saying it's too expensive, let's sit down and let's see what we can do to hire local workers. There are ways to do it.

I know the Premier mentioned about some companies, one company in particular from the Humber - Bay of Islands that said, okay, if we do this then he can't go bidding outside of Corner Brook. At least he got an opportunity to bid across Newfoundland and Labrador. Without collaboration, we won't have a chance to get local workers.

I encourage government to do what they can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition. Mr. Speaker, back last fall the Member for Corner Brook and I actually were in Corner Brook and he hosted a business-to-business session where we had, I think, close to 100 subcontractors, small Newfoundland companies that were actually brought into a room to do a – almost like a speed dating with the two proponents that were selected to bid on the new Corner Brook hospital.

We've met with TradesNL to discuss what ways we can ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the ones building the infrastructure in the province, Mr. Speaker, while realizing the fact that we do still have a lot of tradespeople in our province that travel outside this province as well for employment.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier in Question Period, on May 31 approximately 90 per cent of the people that were working on the new long-term

care centre in Corner Brook were  
Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The reality is here, Mr. Speaker, come this fall we're going to have about \$600 million worth of activity in the Corner Brook area employing hundreds of tradespeople. There are going to be great community benefits, Mr. Speaker, not only for the workers and the subcontractors and the large contractors on the West Coast, the reality is we have some large contractors on the West Coast of this province that do work in the Atlantic Provinces as well. So we have to be very careful when we talk about restricting where our contractors should or shouldn't work.

Mr. Speaker, we've done very well on the long-term care at 90 per cent, and we will actually work with the companies to achieve that type of number again with the new acute care facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

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

I gladly present a petition on behalf of the parents and students of Heritage Collegiate in Lethbridge. They recently received its teacher allocation for the next school year and it was given a holdback teaching unit. The school is currently meeting all requirements to keep this teacher but the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District board says if the school loses one student between now and October, then that holdback teacher unit will not be released to the school.

It is worthy to note that the class in particular has 33 intermediate students ready to start up in September, just slightly less than the size of this hon. Chamber. You can imagine what the physical space, let alone the challenge for the instructional environment would be.

If this teaching unit is taken from the school, the student's access to core subjects will suffer greatly in the Lethbridge area. If the board does not change its decision, then one of two things happens: either the teacher will not join Heritage Collegiate staff until October when the

enrolment for the year is confirmed; or, the teaching position at Heritage Collegiate will be permanently lost for the entire school year, impacting students and their access to a sound education.

The petition reads as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to press the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District to release the holdback teaching unit for Heritage Collegiate for the benefit of the school students in the coming school year.

In May 2007, the Teacher Allocation Commission submitted its first report, *Education and Our Future: A Road Map to Innovation and Excellence*. It made 35 recommendations. The pertinent recommendation said teachers assigned to school boards on the basis of the following class size maximum: Grade seven to nine, 25 students. In class size and student diversity, two sides of the same coin, the Canadian Teachers' Federation reported on a national teacher survey and research review. They found that class size matters but so does class composition.

I would say to you, Heritage Collegiate is one of the few schools that offer a semesterized program, and just to end, in 2016 the Auditor General noted: "Despite being directed by Cabinet to evaluate the Teacher Allocation ... three years after it was implemented in 2008-09, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has not completed the assessment and has not reported back to Cabinet."

To end, I would think it's time to review the teacher allocation model –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Sir.

Your time is over.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for his petition. Certainly, he did share with me his concern over Heritage Collegiate, and certainly I respect his position.

Preliminary teacher deployments are determined in May in accordance with the collective agreement and then finalized in September as enrolment numbers and grade configurations may change.

We're making significant investments in teaching resources under the Education Action Plan, hiring 350 teacher resources over the next three years in new and existing schools across the province, with over \$60 million being invested this year and \$180 million over five years.

I've assured the hon. Member that I will look into his issue, we had that discussion again today and I make that commitment to you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

Let me say, I wholeheartedly agree with the petition here from my colleague in Humber - Bay of Islands on local workers.

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

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation which includes the mandatory

establishment of an adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care, and all other applicable regional facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of all patients.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I've presented this now, a lot, and I'll continue to do so on behalf of the group, Advocate for Senior Citizens' Rights, who have had – they have thousands of people who are part of their group and we receive thousands of signatures. Today, primarily, the signatures here today are from Gander Bay and Clarke's Head.

Mr. Speaker, I could get into the same spiel as I do every day, but I would certainly say to – and the minister could either ignore me, as he does a lot of times, or stand up and accuse me of insulting staff at the long-term care facilities and saying they're not doing their job, which is absolutely not true, but what I would say to the Minister of Health and Community Services, I would ask him why not sit down to the table with Ms. Goulding-Collins and the members of her group, Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights, sit down to the table with them and have a discussion. Then I don't have to be standing up here presenting this day after day after day and they don't have to feel like they're being ignored day after day after day.

Sit down with them, have a meeting. I would be more than happy to facilitate such a meeting. I would be more than happy to attend such a meeting. I'm sure some of my other colleagues in the other parties would be willing to sit down as well. I see the Leader of the Third Party has said she'd be willing to sit down as well and talk about what the issues are.

These are our parents, our grandparents and one day, God willing, if we live long enough, it will be you and I and this is an important issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

Mr. Speaker, Foxtrap Access Road in CBS is a vital link to the TCH and the Peacekeepers Way, as well as being a heavily populated area. This road is in need of immediate repairs. It needs asphalt resurfacing as well as shoulder repairs. This road is listed for resurfacing for 2023 in the five-year roads program, not soon enough and needs immediate attention.

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We the undersigned call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide immediate repairs to the Foxtrap Access Road.

I brought this petition to the House many times in the past sitting and I'll continue to do so, I guess. I've have a good conversation with the minister and officials in his department about getting some work done with it, but the thing with this is the people who live in this area have made this an issue. It was their initiative that got these petitions. It wasn't normally, we look for an issue, they came to me and they're very concerned about it.

Outside of that, it's obviously a concern to me. There are two schools on this road, outside of the people who live there, there's a church and two schools. The school buses travelling this road they actually have to move over the centre line because the shoulders of the road has deteriorated in areas that's really bad. There are a lot of cross cuts. Outside of being the link to the Trans-Canada and Peacekeepers Way, it's one of the busier roads in the town. It's a provincially owned road and it will remain that because it's a trunk road. It needs those repairs sooner rather than later.

I know it's on the list and the minister has told me many times when he's discussed it with me, but I can't impress it upon him enough that something serious could happen there. The big concern is it's a safety issue. Traffic is moving over the yellow line to avoid the ruts on the shoulder of the road. It needs immediate repair.

I'll leave it at that. The minister – we'd had many conversations, I'll let him respond.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is correct, we have had many conversations on this section of road. It's actually a piece of road that – he asked me a while back to, actually, on my way into the city some time, just take a detour down and see for myself, which I did, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt, this section of road is heavily travelled and is in need of repair. It is identified in the five-year Roads Plan.

Mr. Speaker, we've been successful in the five-year Roads Plan. One of the things we've done in the five-year Roads Plan is announce 75 per cent of the projects leading into the next construction season. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why we do this is to allow some room for emerging priorities in situations that occur from time to time.

I can assure the Member opposite that, as we review going into the next construction season, this is certainly something that we will certainly have a look at again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Orders of the Day.

#### Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day, Sir.

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

From the Order Papers, I would call Motion 4, the Budget Speech.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Budget Speech.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand here today, but before I start to speak about the budget, I want to thank my family and friends, my wife and daughter, in particular, who helped me through the last election phase and everybody who voted for me, and my good friends across the way who cheered me on along the way.

To stand in this House – and I know as the new people there, and even now you get jitters when you stand up, the feeling that you stand up here to talk on anything that’s of great importance to this province is an opportunity very few get to have.

I would think – and I know we can’t use props, Mr. Speaker, but everyone has a copy of our budget – this has to be the most important document ever debated in this House each and every single year. You can almost turn to any page, Mr. Speaker, and it’s going to hit something very important of what’s in this document.

We just went through – or I went through seven hours sitting through the Estimates Committee. The Estimates is when you really, really get to understand the budget. That’s when the ministers, I do believe, and their staff, are at their best. They have to be, because the questions that come across, it’s like a three-hour long Question Period for the minister and his staff.

As we debated here yesterday in the PMR, the questions and the answers, the questions do get answered and most everybody nod approval when it’s all said and done that they were very pleased with the outcome. So, the document of

the budget is a very important document for this province, and every province I would think.

When you look at: Working towards a brighter future. You can’t ask for a much better theme than that for your province, because in ’49, when we first joined Confederation –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How old were you then?

**MR. BRAGG:** I was only a young boy then. The Member opposite is asking me how old I was in ’49. I was a young snot, as grandfather would say, then.

In ’49, when they started and brought in the first budget, I can only imagine what they went through because they had nothing to judge anything on, but in our budget, you use your experience from years past, looking forward to years ahead. It’s not only an opportunity to evaluate the money you’ve spent in the last few years, it’s also an opportunity to look at the things you want to do in the future. How we want to leave our mark on this province for our younger generation.

I think the budget is probably, as I see it, the most important document ever to stand in this House. If you look at it, will we do everything in this budget that everybody wants? The easy answer to that is going to be, definitely, no. Because there’s no way you can do everything right for everybody and please everybody, because taxation is the one thing – if you look at it, taxation is something that very few people want to pay.

Let’s go to our levy. The levy has been the one thing that has been – I guess it’s the thorn in everybody’s side. Members opposite talk about how often they heard it at the door, we heard it at the door, but we didn’t put the levy in just because it was on a whim. It’s because we were given a financial nightmare when we took over in 2015, to look forward to in 2016, for something to have to change.

Budgeting comes down to a couple of ways: (a) you increase revenues; or (b) you decrease your costs. Decreasing costs most times is decreasing services. So, a simple budget is almost simple mathematics. If you made \$100, you can’t spend

\$200 without figuring out a way to pay back the other \$100.

I spent 30 years working with the Town of Greenspond in dealing with a budget. In that 30 years – and anybody here who ever served on a municipal council will know what I'm saying. If you're going to raise the taxes by \$20, the seven councillors who sit around the table, I won't say they lose their mind, but you can see everybody's back rise right up. Because they're saying, well, we can't do that because poor old Aunt Maude living up there on a fixed income, we got to be thinking about Aunt Maude. Can she afford that extra \$15 or \$20 we're going to tax to her?

So that's where this budget comes through. It's not a document that's just thrown out there and by a whim we fold and throw figures back and forth. It's a document that the figures are there because the expenditures are needed. Again, we'd love to have more.

We talk about our oil development and the royalties from that. I live in rural Newfoundland. I would like to think the small community I live in of 300 people, what a great way for our community to survive if they struck oil across the causeway. How many times do we say it? What's going to save Greenspond? Strike oil, somebody said. Someone else said find gold. That seems to be the trend of thought for the rural communities, but this budget will keep us in our rural communities.

Our urban centres are surviving on a lot of our rural communities, but the rural communities really depend on the budget maybe more so than anything. If you look at the Northeast MHAs and their challenge, they don't suffer the same consequences that I do. Their roads, their health care, their schools, it's all there. It's all within – you can throw a stone to it.

In the district I represent there are 700 kilometres of pavement, and in that 700 kilometres of pavement there are probably 7,000 potholes. Last night someone used the expression, I think it was the Leader of the Third Party: a whisper of pavement. I just about folded over with laughter with that thought. She said they put out a whisper of pavement. I thought it was the quote of the evening, to be honest with

you, because sometimes if you got 700 kilometres and a truckload of asphalt, you can only put a whisper. You don't get the chance to do the major upgrades.

I drove down Kenmount Road earlier today, and there's nothing only construction crews. I'm just thinking, God it's good that the city got this kind of money to handle this kind of a road, but when you look at 700 kilometres, you have two or three Works depots, you have summer holidays, you have bad weather – we have more challenges in the rural part of the province than we do in those urban parts to get things.

To put it in perspective, Mr. Speaker, if the crew in Lumsden want a load of asphalt, and the asphalt plant – the closest one is in Grand Falls. That's a two-hour drive. So in order for the operator to get back on site, you have to leave work at 5 o'clock in the morning to get back again by 8 or 9 o'clock. So that's a challenge there.

This budget is – like I said, I can't say it enough. This is the most important document this province will ever deal with.

We're in a minority situation, which I'm sure everybody will agree, the best way to spend your money is the right way. I would hope, that's where we're going to come from here. The consensus here is that we're making the best effort possible to spend our money in the right possible places.

It's going to be good to look forward to debate in the next week or two or three, or whatever it takes to bring this budget down. I haven't even struck my notes yet, Mr. Speaker, because I'm probably all over the place here now.

Are we going to do everything perfect? Absolutely not. There's no way. There are people who have been – I don't know, I guess there are people who were condemned years ago for trying to do the perfect thing, but we're going to try and do it as best we can; through consultations, through ongoing talks all the time. Because if you just sit back and don't pay attention to anything, you'll never know how a budget goes.

Again, I'll go back to my – put on my town clerk hat days when we were in. If you look at snow clearing, I know last night we did Transportation and Works. They were talking about the salt and sand that goes on the road. You can only anticipate it and estimate for it. Not one of us, I don't care, the best meteorologist out there is not able to tell us what the weather forecast is going to be next year. So you can only estimate what it's going to be and the volume of salt you're going to need.

I know from the town's perspective, we always went back three years. If you go back three years, it gave you sort of a pattern and a costing of what you would need. So, if you look at it, the last two years you may not have had an inch of snow but you may have had all freezing rain. With all freezing rain, Mr. Speaker, it means salt and sand. Snow is simply fuel. If you can only bring in a boatload of salt.

Last year we had, on the West Coast it must have been one of the longest winters in history, because I think it started Labour Day and went – going to go through until next week some time, because we're still waiting for the temperature to rise. The importance of this to our rural communities – and I say our rural communities because I represent an area, again, on the Northeast Coast of this province, which I would like to think is sort of a four-season resort.

The Member there for the centre of the city, I used to joke with him and say: I live where you would love to come and vacation, because any time of the year, on the Northeast Coast, is a great time to visit. If you come out now, yeah, you may get the rain and fog; the big attraction now is the icebergs.

If you look at the tourism, if you look, again, my district, on Fogo Island, one of the most world-renowned, recognized places to stay is the Fogo Island Inn. Where else in this province can you spend \$2,000 a night to stay in a hotel room? It's not the \$2,000, because no one has ever argued the price because the experience is priceless. You can't put a price on the experience.

If you ever get the opportunity to go over, even if you just toured the rooms, you sit down, it's all this glass front the faces the North Atlantic. So, any time of the year – it's like looking at a

fire. You know when you have those backyard fires and you sit and you can't get your eyes off the fire because the flame is always going different. Well, that's the ocean, and that's the view out that window.

There's no TV in the room because you don't need it, you're there. You get out of the tub and there's the big glass wall. Now, unless a polar bear comes down by you, you're as safe as in your mom's arms, sort of thing, out there. There's just nothing like – so it's an experience.

We have people visiting – and I hate to pick on Fogo Island, but I'm so proud of what they've done. What Zita Cobb and the Shorefast Foundation has done over there. That's just for tourism alone. You could go there any day. There's a small airstrip on Fogo Island. Again, it's all in our budget that keeps putting that there. No doubt, the people's money bring them to Fogo Island, but the ability to get here: our ferry.

The former minister takes a ribbing about the ferry that was built in Romania and the wharf was never built to match the ferry, but now we've got all that together and we got all the wrinkles, it seems to be, worked out of that boat. No one can argue with me now that that is one of the best services, with exception to yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when we had a mishap, no one can argue with me now that is not the best service that we've had on Fogo Island and Change Islands in the last 40 years.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** It is, but it's because of the hard work of their Member that keeps that boat going. Don't forget that.

I'm so proud of that. I'll get back to the inn and the experience with the inn because you have to go there. I would encourage everyone who's in this room today to find the time this summer to visit my district. If you can't stay at the inn, which I understand because I think it's booked up now to 2022, which is not too bad for an inn out in the North Atlantic. But if you just go there, and I talk about the experience, so I'll just walk you through how some people have marketed our province.

If you fly in from any part of the world, you get to Gander. When you get to Gander, and I guess my term for the people that pick them up, they have a limousine service with a town elder. That town person picks you up at the airport, puts you in – and if there are two people in room, there are two people per limo. If there are four, they'll put in four, but if you're alone you have the experience by yourself. That person has all the experience of the history and culture for that area.

So what a great way, you're from God knows where, but if you're from, I don't know, the centre of St. John's – or centre of St. John's, not so much, you might've seen the salt water – but if you're from Toronto or Vancouver and you've never seen the North Atlantic, so this person will walk you through it. And as you know we have our own accent, so we're pretty thick on our accent out there. We try not to change it because that's what people like us for. Because we are one of the friendliest groups ever, and the elders are always good at talking. Not that I'm too bad myself, but the older I get, if I get any more, I'd say my wife is going to put a sock in my mouth, just saying, but what an experience.

Then they got there, they get them on the ferry, they put them on, take them upstairs, they keep talking to them, they cater to them. When they get them to the island, you know a lot of us locals have a shed party. They have a shed party – religiously have a shed party to get the people out so they see the culture. Our own prime minister was there. He got to go ice fishing a couple of years ago – that was mid-August when he did the ice fishing – and any time that you go over, on the runway you might see a small jet there, private jet that flies in, so the experience that is.

But if we weren't committed, as a government, past and present, to the rural communities, that opportunity would never exist. The ability to visit that part of our province would be unknown. So because of what we've done, our road structure, our ferry structures, our health care facilities, because again, in my area, I have two – it's not major health care facilities but major for rural Newfoundland – there's the Fogo Island Health Centre and the Dr. Y. K. Jeon Kittiwake Health Centre which, although the Y. K. Jeon is probably the oldest cottage hospital in

this province, it is far from run down, it's probably one of the best maintained and employs great employment so, again, that's all a budgetary thing.

But over there on Fogo Island, and on the Northeast Coast – I'm going to move off Fogo Island for a bit. I'm an island guy myself; I'm from Greenspond so that's a pretty island guy. I'm going to go from Fogo Island and bring it over to Greenspond. And I never realized my clock was running down. So if you talk about a small community on a mission, I am so proud to be from the community I'm from.

When I started this, you talk about – I'll now go from the budget to what it is. In 2016 we closed the school in Greenspond. I was one of the guys who started that new school, as we called the new school in the late '80s, and then we closed it. We had two kids and then none for the next couple of years. This year, in Greenspond, there are 10 kids going to kindergarten – now, 10 from a community of 300.

I don't know what we doing, Mr. Speaker, but we're on the right track to a brighter future with those 10 kids in that small community. So if I get back to the school, we closed the school and for a couple of years it sat idle. So then it was up – and it came up in my mind last night in the Estimates of a building being sold. The building got sold about a year ago. We had an investor come in and, I'm told, this guy and his wife has invested close of \$750,000. There are six rooms up there now, 1,000 square feet each. If you can go online, Facebook, you can look at the rooms. They are absolutely second to none. They look over the ocean. So now in season – it may not be the view of the Fogo Island Inn, but it's the view of a similar community on the other side of my district.

There are six rooms there. They're bringing in a chef for the restaurant. There's a saltbox corporation that's opening up – I think they're the ones that started it. They bought an old house and renovated it and exposed it to the ocean. Since that time, there are seven if not eight that you can rent this summer in Greenspond, including the new place in the school, the other six. So that's 14 units that are there for rent right now that would rival anywhere, I would think, in this province. Per

capita, if you have an argument with your spouse or you're looking for a place to sleep, Greenspond is the easiest place to find a place right now.

Just to see that, Mr. Speaker, just to walk down the road and look up and see the work on that building and what that's bringing, and then they started up a boat tour business there. The former Member for Bonavista used to say we're not doom and gloom. But we are the example of where this province is not doom and gloom in my very own community. The people there, they're hard-working people, a fishing community.

I used to kid, the Civic that I drove around in up to two weeks ago was the oldest vehicle in our community. No one owned an old vehicle. I can remember when it was a time when you went out and the causeway came across and if you had a wooden box on your truck you were taking a dip, but that day is long gone.

If you come out and you visit my district – I invite everybody to come by, swing by Greenspond. One time I used to say, stay with me if there's nowhere else to stay. You can stay in any second house almost in Greenspond now, because the accommodations there are second to none.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** I want to stay with you (inaudible).

**MR. BRAGG:** You can still stay with me, so the Member says. Yeah, you can still stay with me. You can't stay with me on July 20, just so you know. That's going to be a busy weekend for me.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to rise in this House and speak on the budget and be a part of the group of people that's here, that's going to shape this province and this end of the country, I am so proud to be able to do that.

I see my time is running down. I wish I had the time to get to all the notes I had there, but it's like my wife said: Derrick, sometimes can you just not say anything. So I guess the time has come for me not to say anything more.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak here today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great privilege to stand in the House of Assembly and thank the people for the magnificent and stunning District of Ferryland.

I would also like to congratulate all the Members that were successful in their own districts. It goes without saying that you put forward a great effort in order to be here, and the people believed in you.

Just to get back to the MHA that just spoke from Fogo Island - Cape Freels, you can't always judge a book by its cover, by the way.

I personally would like to thank all the volunteers in my district and anyone else that helped me in any way, I am truly grateful. Also, being Public Service Week, I would like to thank all the public service workers for doing such great work in the area. So I'd certainly like to thank them.

Mr. Speaker, while knocking on doors in my district, I ran into a wide range of issues, especially from seniors regarding the coverage of drugs with the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program. Insulin strips is a big concern with the seniors. With somebody that gets 50 strips a week, it's hard to explain when you're knocking on a door that they got Type 2 diabetes and they need to check their insulin once or twice a day and 50 strips just doesn't cut it. That cuts into their old age pensions and their income. It's a big factor in everything they do and their lifestyle. So we'd love to see that be looked at, certainly, in going forward.

Also, I ran into a young lady that fell out of the age group, I guess, for the insulin pumps, and it's certainly a big issue going forward. She expressed it in a letter and it's pretty tough to read. She certainly had some good points going forward in regard to Medicare costs that could happen; heart and stroke, all that stuff. So it's very important to people to make sure they get the proper coverage.

Housing was also an important issue as well. I went to a place – when you walk into a house, it's pretty awestruck when you open up the door and they invite you in and they have their oven open to heat the house. When you're in your district and you're fighting for your people, it's pretty hard to watch.

With all that being said, we certainly hope, as Members, we can do everything we can to help all our seniors and all the people in our area. Hopefully, we can rectify some of those situations because that's why they voted for us and what we're here to do.

When listening to hon. Minister Sherry Gambin-Walsh talking the other day about her son with autism –

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** – and to hear of the programs available for autism is great.

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Sorry.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I just remind the Member that you're not to address other MHAs in this House by their name. You should use their title.

Thank you.

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** The hon. minister talking about her son and his autism, and to hear of the programs available for autism is great. Programs are needed for autism, and to hear those stories are pretty eye-opening.

I dealt with a different issue being an instructor of power skating, which I instructed in my area. I had a group of 90 kids that I taught for three hours a week in regard to skating, and I ran into

a couple of autistic kids that were in my program. It can go awry pretty quick. If you haven't dealt with it, it's a pretty difficult situation, but with the help of my daughters, one is a teacher and another one who ran our summer program, we dealt with it and got everything back in order.

So to watch that happen, it was pretty heartfelt when I listened to her yesterday talk about her son. I certainly understand that. Training and funding in the Autism Action Plan is certainly a great idea.

Regarding fishing, I came from a fishing family, I guess. The fishing moratorium was announced on July 2, 1992, which happened to be my birthday. It wasn't a great day to celebrate in our family for sure. I had three brothers and a mom who all worked in the fish plant and if they weren't old enough to work, they were cutting tongues.

It struck the area, the economy pretty hard, and being a great group of Newfoundlanders that we are, we certainly moved on and survived and moved forward. That's what happens. That's the way Newfoundlanders are, they learn how to adapt.

One big issue in our area was the schools, for sure. I'm sure you've heard it along the way from our previous minister, the problem with overcrowding. We'll get to move grade five and grade six students this year from one school in St. Bernard's to Mobile Central High to alleviate some of the problems, but not solve their problem. Now we have two less grades but overcrowding is still an issue.

Also, to compound the problem, the teachers that got bumped from their positions and the classes that remain, instead of having one teacher, now have four teachers with 25 per cent allocation. Meaning for four teachers, one class note doesn't give much stability to the kids and knowing their teachers.

Also, in the area we have a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I see that a tender has been awarded for the area to do some upgrading. In that area you will – hopefully, along the way we'll get some more but that is going to be a great tourist attraction. If you're ever looking to

go to a tourist attraction site, if you're going to do it this summer, I would recommend that you get out and book early because it's getting booked up pretty quick. Being a new Member, and I have not been there – but being a new Member I'm going to be visiting, and she's telling me to book early. So if anyone is planning on doing that this summer, I would suggest you get ahead, do that and plan that early.

Also, as well, the Southern Shore has an arena which was opened in 1988, and it's a non-for-profit organization. However, with the new changes the government has implemented regarding a carbon monoxide issue that came up in an arena here in St. John's last year – which has to be dealt with, obviously – this has placed a large financial burden on a non-for-profit organization.

It goes without saying, it's a hub for the area. Hopefully, along the way we can work and make this arena get back. It has to be done by September, but it's going to be in the range of \$15,000 to \$30,000. So it's something that we have to get in and get working with the councils. It's not a council building, but it is what it is. We have to see what we can do to get that arena up and running for September.

Also, another big attraction in our area is tourism – tourism for sure – will be our Witless Bay Line. It links to the Trans-Canada Highway; however, it is not considered a priority road. It may be used on a daily basis for people coming across Witless Bay Line to come over to the boat tours all along the Southern Shore, to take part in all the whale watching and icebergs as well.

Also, the Southern Shore line is used as a hub for crab fishermen and processors to be trucking crab back and forth across Newfoundland. Without that, it just cuts into time, money and expenses to do that. So, hopefully, we can get to that and solve that somewhere along the way.

Also, in my work at Hickman's, you see the economy and we talk about the budget. The economy certainly does affect the selling of cars. I've been there for 22 years. In the last three or four years, with the budget being the way it is – people don't stop buying cars, all right. They just slow down in buying cars. People always

need to get new vehicles and upgrade their vehicles, but instead of having it for four years, they might stretch it out to five years. They might stretch it out to six years, but it is a factor when you're selling and you're doing it for a living. So it does cut into your living and it does cut into people's lives as well.

Sometimes with a budget, that's how it affects people. Not so much right away, but over a period of time they're watching their dollars and they're not spending as much as they should – as we would like to see, I guess. So, it's a big factor in everything we do in here in this House, and hopefully we can keep that in our minds.

Again, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

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

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

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

I would adjourn debate on the budget, please.

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

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

At this time I'd like to call from the Order Paper, Motion 8, moving as follows:

That the composition of the Striking Committee be as follows: the Member for Burgeo - La Poile; the Member for Burin - Grand Bank; the Member for St. John's West; the Member for St. John's Centre; and the Member for Mount Pearl North.

And I further move that the composition of the Standing Committees of the House of Assembly for the 49th General Assembly be as follows:

The Public Accounts Committee: the Member for Cape St. Francis; the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; the Member for St. George's - Humber; the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune; the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels; the Member for

Stephenville - Port au Port; and the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

The Privileges and Elections Committee: the Member for St. George's - Humber; the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels; the Member for Burin - Grand Bank; the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island; and the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

The Standing Orders Committee: the Member for Burgeo - La Poile; the Member for St. John's West; the Member for St. George's - Humber; the Member for Windsor Lake; and the Member for St. John's Centre.

Finally, the Miscellaneous and Private Bills Committee: the Member for St. George's - Humber; the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; the Member for Mount Scio; the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi; and the Member for Conception Bay South.

I would do so, seconded by the deputy, deputy House Leader or the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

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

I won't take a whole lot of time. What I'm doing now is something that's par for the course for every new Parliament that is reconvened, which is the composition of committees which, as you can tell, for those that are watching, are committees that are made up of membership from all sides of the House. Usually, it's a case of the government will submit their names for the positions on committees, Official Opposition, as well as the Third Party.

All of these committees are important. Some, I will say – perhaps I shouldn't, but some are more important. Or perhaps the best way to put it, the most diplomatic way to put it, is that some are used more than others.

Public Accounts Committee is certainly one that's extremely important, one that's been in place for some time. They have an important role where they look across government, but especially when it comes to the House of

Assembly, an opportunity to look at the accounting, look at different matters. I think in the last number of years they've looked at – I think they looked at the ferries, I think they looked at the school boards, perhaps, and I know they looked Humber Valley at one point. They have the ability – and the Chair would know this, I think he sits on the committee – to call witnesses and to investigate information. So it's a committee that has relevance and importance during each session of the House.

Privileges and Elections Committee is one that I think had fallen into, we'll say, disuse over a long period of time. I'm not aware of it having met for a long period, but we will say that during the last session of the House this committee was used and dealt with the issues that we faced in the last Parliament. In fact, I believe that committee, once reconvened, will be coming back to this House again with resolutions to be passed as it relates to the conduct of Members and as it relates to procedures going forward.

The Standing Orders Committee, I won't belabour this. We had a long, and I thought very productive debate on Standing Orders of this House. This House and its Members are governed by Standing Orders. The Standing Orders Committee is a group that's made up of Members of all sides to come together, look at our Orders, and in some cases try to find ways to improve them, to update them and to make this House more responsive to today's needs.

Finally, the Miscellaneous and Private Bills Committee. I'm not sure if this committee has met in some time. In fact, I don't know – I have very little to say about this committee, in that it's one that has not had much use over a long period of time.

Again, being a bit of a parliamentary geek, I'm interested to see what this committee has done over the years, but I can say that in the last two sessions I'm not sure how much use they've had. That's something that I would suggest to the Members that are on there, including perhaps the Member, the Chair, knowing his background in this, maybe there's something we can find for this committee to do to improve the working conditions here and improve the work that we do.

On that note, I will take my seat and look forward to comments from my colleagues across the way.

Thank you.

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

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

It's indeed an honour to stand in this House again as we talk about the importance of what goes on in this Legislature. Also, echoing what the Government House Leader has said about the importance of the structure here of committees and the importance of having all parties represented on those committees. Because contrary to popular belief, there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes when it comes to operating the House of Assembly, which in turn operates the general expenditures and policies and programs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We get elected, obviously, as representatives of our districts. We get elected to advocate on behalf of our constituents; but, more importantly, or equally important, we also come in this House to ensure that on a bigger scope, even things that may not be directly relevant to a particular district or our constituents, that we have a stake in ensuring that the policies and the programs and the services and the expenditures are relevant to being able to provide the best standard of living and quality of life for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. To do that, there has to be a multitude of committees that look at what are the best ways to move things forward. Sometimes it's about democratic reform, which we've had discussions about.

Yesterday, to again echo what the Government House Leader had talked about, we did have a good open discussion, an open debate, and came to a consensus of what we could feel from an all-party perspective and independents, a way to move to the next level of having a more open and democratic process in the House of Assembly.

All these other committees here are very important because they have different components and different roles. The uniqueness is that in any caucus you try to look at

appointing somebody to that committee who either has a direct relevance and importance because of their background, or it's something that is near and dear to them when it comes to wanting to be able to move something forward.

For some people it's about the legislative process, and that's what intrigues them. For some it's about financial accountability, and that's what we talk about in one of the committees here, the Public Accounts Committee, for example, which, in principle, does two things. It oversees all the expenditures of government. It is directly, either a right arm or vice versa. The Auditor General is the right arm of this committee to ensure that there are safeguards around expenditures and accountability of all the monies that are spent by every level of government, boards and agencies alike.

So, this committee has an opportunity there to ensure that policies and programs and the safeguards are put in play to ensure everybody's comfortable on how the expenditures of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is being not only spent, but being accounted for. I've had the privilege over the years to be on the committee.

Actually, this is the only year – after, I guess, today – since I've been elected, that I'm not on the Public Accounts Committee. I've had a great opportunity to learn how government actually functions from a financial point of view, and how boards and agencies, where they're autonomous and where they need to be brought closer to government and in line with policies and programs and services, and particularly about their accountability.

For those who may not know it, and you may see it, this becomes almost like a court hearing. The Public Accounts has the opportunity to call agencies or boards or line departments to the House of Assembly in which they're grilled on questions regarding their operations, their structure, their policies –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. BRAZIL:** Yeah. Well, exactly.

As the hon. Member, who was a colleague of mine on the Public Accounts in the past, just noted, it's a watchdog for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We hold these agencies, boards and departments and then certain civil servants to account.

The benefit from there is there's a report presented to the House of Assembly. So it's on record as to, not only what has been identified by the Auditor General or what we have, as a Committee, referred to the Auditor General to do an investigation on, but it's a set of recommendations that we're expecting them to adhere to. If they don't, then there are certain ramifications that can be brought back to this House, and these agencies or boards or departments are held accountable.

So we do have a structure here. Outside of what people think, we do. From an elected point of view, there are other responsibilities that people have.

Over the course of your four years, you'll probably get a chance to sit on various committees. Some, as was mentioned, are more encompassing. Some will be stagnant until there's a need for them, but they all have an important role in ensuring that this House of Assembly is ran properly, that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have faith in what we do here, and that everybody's accountable; us, as elected officials, and the full-fledge operations of government.

I'm looking forward to the new set up with the committees here. We also have the ability here to strike other committees that are necessary on a given time.

We've come a long way in the process of looking at all-party committees and what that means. We've been successful in a couple of counts of getting things to move forward.

We're also now into something totally unique. Sending a piece a legislation, before it comes for debate in the House, to a select committee that will have a look at it, will bring in particular experts to dissect what the legislation is, come to a consensus, maybe make some changes, some set of recommendations, then bring it back. Keeping in mind, all involved should have a

better understanding of what that legislation is intended to achieve, and then have an open debate. Hopefully, the debate is already 90 per cent complete because all parties and, hopefully, all Members here have had an opportunity to have some input.

It's a way of, actually, instead of having to speed up things or not getting the proper time frames in debate, you can have that done in advance, and bring in any experts that may be necessary in advance of that. When we get to the House of Assembly, people can see the effectiveness of that process.

I'm looking forward to see how that rolls out over the next number of months, but it's unique. It's the first time we've done it in this Legislature, but it's not uncommon to other legislatures. So we're going to take that, make that work, and I would hope – and I think everybody here – that would be the template for how we move legislation forward.

The debate doesn't become controversial or combative. It becomes, we've come to a consensus. We found what we feel is the best way to move forward. You may not always agree with everything that's in it, but you've come to a consensus on how you're going to present that piece of legislation to the House. So I'm looking forward to that. I'm looking forward to working with Members on all the committees we have in play here in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to end by saying it's a privilege to be on any committee. I do ask that all Members take it seriously and give their utmost, 100 per cent to be able to contribute. Don't be afraid to ask a question. There's no question here that people might think is embarrassing. You need to know exactly what your responsibility is going to be, and if you're new, ask that.

Any of the people that have been around will be more than open to give you a bit of advice or clarification. Particularly, I have to note, the staff we have that work with our select committees, they are second to none. They don't try to impose their view. What they'll do is they'll give you the logistical information to do the research view. They'll give you good advice.

Sometimes if you start straying the wrong way, they'll give you advice and say this is the process that normally would be used; or, if we're not quite sure how to move forward, they'll say: look, we've done a jurisdictional scan, here's how it's done in 10 other jurisdictions. Then that gives us a template to be able to move things forward.

So, I'm just happy to be able to support the composition of these committees, and look forward to the great work they'll do over the next number of years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'm just going to stand and talk for a few minutes about the committees. There's no doubt of the need for the committees to be in the Legislature and the vital role they play.

Over the years, I think most of us sat on a lot of these committees. A lot of these committees do – I know the Public Accounts and I know the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, we had many discussions on a few of those committees and it's healthy debate. That's what brings this Legislature sometimes to a better place.

You notice on the committees – of course, I just got to bring this up as part of the Standing Orders also – that two independents aren't on any of the committees. This is what we have to do, to bring it up to the Standing Orders. We have to find some way to make all representation. We have to bring it up to the Standing Orders.

I know the people opposite, the government side, Mr. Speaker, they're over there applauding me for this because it's a great idea. It's a great idea to bring this up, to make sure that all people, all Members that are elected – and I thank Members for their encouragement for that, to bring all Members involved, because we do represent a large majority. I know in Humber -

Bay of Islands, where the representation has said that they sent us an independent, almost 70 per cent is independent, they want their voice heard on all committees.

So I'm just raising this point. There's no issue on the committees. I agree that every person who's on the committee is qualified to be on the committee. They're going to bring value to the committee. The committees have a vital role in this Legislature, but I think with the Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker – and I understand you're the Chair of the Standing Orders. So there would be no better person to speak to, you're the Chair.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. JOYCE:** Oh, the Government House Leader is Chair of Standing Orders. Well, there would be no better person, as he was just –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. JOYCE:** Yes, and he just applauded me for bringing this up because that's something else that he also wanted.

So, myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we'll be writing the Chair of the Standing Orders to get us included. Hopefully, then we can get on committees, because we do have experience in the House of Assembly and we are elected officials like every other person in this House.

This is great for the committees, but I think if we're going to be inclusive, if we're going to ensure that we're going to include all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – the next election there may be four or five independents, we don't know, but we have to make room in the Standing Orders for the future because we always said, and we said a couple of times here today, that this is not just for today, this is for future years down the road.

Once you receive a letter from both of us, I say to the Chair or the Government House Leader, that you would bring it to the Standing Orders Committee and that we can work on this so that we could have an equal voice in this House of Assembly. Just to let the people know in both districts that we represent, that we do vote on the budget. We do vote in the Legislature.

The Standing Orders is that we can't get on these committees, but a lot of these committees, Mr. Speaker, when you get in you don't see the work they do. They come out as a committee, but your input is valued within the committee. You'd be a part of it, so you can add to the committee. It's usually not a voice that you're independent from the committee, but you add your input in the committee, your expertise and your value that you have.

I just want to raise that again. I'll look forward, once we write the letter, that we will be included. There are always provisions there that can be, once we come back to the Legislature. I thank the Government House Leader for his encouragement to do this, and I'm sure all Members agree that everybody should be represented on all the committees, not just from the main parties. Everybody who's on this committee is qualified. There is no issue with any Member on the committee. I just think either the committee got to be expanded a bit or the independents got to be included and just have other people move on other committees.

So, I'll take my seat. I just wanted to bring that up again on behalf of the people of Humber - Bay of Islands who, again, put their support and confidence in me, and I'm very pleased with that. I know that there will be people watching this and saying: well, you're speaking up on behalf of the people. Because their voice has to come through me in this Legislature, and I have all intents of being most – any part I can be involved in this Legislature, I will be.

So, thank you again for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all the people for their patience. I look forward to the involvement of the independents in a lot of these committees in the very, very near future.

Thank you.

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

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

At the risk of sounding somewhat repetitive to what my colleague had to say –

**MR. JOYCE:** Partners.

**MR. LANE:** He said partners. Well, listen, he's a lot nicer than what I thought he was, to be honest with you. We're starting to grow a little closer together as time goes on.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Anyway, with that being said, my colleague makes a lot of great points. The reality of it is – and we've kind of alluded to this in other discussions – that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, in two of the 40 districts, decided they wanted to have an independent Member represent them.

In the last election, there were nine people who ran as independents; two were elected. Who knows what will happen in the future. I'm not going to predict the future, none of us can. A day is a lifetime in politics, as we all know. Right now we have two Members that were duly elected that represent a significant portion of our population.

We all know the importance; we've talked about the importance of the budget and we're doing the budget debate here today. I can tell you that a lot of people in my district, because I know the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels – Bonavista North as far as I'm concerned, anyway there's Fogo - Cape Freels and something else, or maybe it's just Fogo - Cape Freels – he was talking about the priorities and the issues in his district, which I can appreciate.

I represent a different demographic. There are issues in my district and a perspective from my district that some other Members in some of the urban areas would share. I can tell you that the big issue in my district over the last couple of years, and I'm not saying this just to rehash *Budget 2016* and so on, but my district was probably the poster child, if you will, for the taxes, fees and levies and so on. Because of the makeup of Southlands and the part of Mount Pearl I represent, a lot of professional people, a lot of nurses, a lot of teachers, small business owners and so on, those were the people and the families that got hit really hard with the levy and the taxation and so on.

Now, what I heard – and I continued to hear even in this last election – was that they found it very upsetting to be hit by all the taxes when they're not seeing on the other side enough cutting, enough expenditures on the expenditure side, and looking for government to find efficiencies and so on.

I will say that when it comes to the attrition plan and zero-based budgeting and some of the work that's been done in Transportation and Works as it relates to consolidation of the fleet, disposing of unused assets and a number of measures like that, I think they're on the right track. Albeit, we have to be careful when we start cutting that there are essential services and things that simply can't be cut. Like the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, particularly when it comes to the protection of children, we can't be slack. We can't be cutting necessarily there, but there are areas we have to find efficiencies.

They want me to represent them and to bring those thoughts forward, which I do in budget debate, but what about when we talk about agencies, boards and commissions? Like, the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation comes to mind and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. We talked about it today. It was a small part of the budget, but you didn't really delve into the weeds. It was not like we were doing a line by line on their staffing and so on.

That kind of stuff does get dealt with, though, by committees, where the committees can call in these agencies and ask those questions and look to where they're trying to find efficiencies and what money is being spent on. The same taxpayers' money – the same money going into those agencies, boards and commissions is what's going into core government. Members who are part of those committees have the opportunity to, as I say, call in those agencies and boards, ask those questions, ask tough questions and see where the people's money is being spent.

In the case of my district, which was really hit with the taxation and the expenditure side, as I said, was very important to the people in my district. Their Member doesn't have an opportunity to participate, to find out what's going on at the NLC or NLHC or Nalcor and so

on. I don't have that same ability to do that right now. I think it would be very important to them that their representative should. I'm sure my colleague here for Humber - Bay of Islands, the people in his district would feel the very same about issues important to them.

So, regardless of what committee it may be of this House, if we're going to be truly inclusive, if we're going to be truly democratic, then we have to look at the reality of the situation. That we have two duly elected independent Members, and there has to be mechanisms put in place so that we can participate.

Maybe we wouldn't be voting, in theory. Maybe we wouldn't be voting, but at least we should be invited to the meetings. At least we should be able to ask questions. At least we should be able to provide feedback to the committee before the committee votes on it and brings something forward here to this House of Assembly for us all to vote on, because everyone else in the House will have their representatives.

So when something comes forward or a report comes from one of those standing committees, and everyone in the House, 38 Members will be able to vote on that knowing full well that their representative was part of that, part of making that decision. They would understand everything that went on. They would understand their concerns, the pros, the cons and what their Member brought forward to them as to what their position was for 38 Members – not 40, and that is wrong and that is undemocratic.

I certainly urge all Members, particularly the Government House Leader who's bringing this forward – and I see him nodding his head in agreement, and I know he wants to co-operate, I really do. We'll send the letter in. I can assure you, the letter will be in. There'll be a hundred letters if we need to.

My colleague here is tearing up the first draft there now. He's working on a second one – but we'll put in the letters. We'll put in the request. We'll do whatever we need to do, but we want to ensure that we are part of the process. And don't worry about the fact: oh, how are you going to be on all these committees. Let me worry about that. We'll figure out how we get to all the committee meetings. That's not saying

we'll be to all the committee meetings, but at least we need to know when they are, what's on the agenda, and if we decide to go, then we have the opportunity to participate, ask questions, bring our perspective forward before decisions are made by the committees going back to this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. Government House Leader speaks now he will close the debate.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the comments from my colleagues across the way.

I say to my friend for Mount Pearl - Southlands, if you saw me nodding there, it's because I almost fell asleep at the repetitive speech I just heard.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I say that in jest; I say that in jest.

I do have some questions to ask, because they talk about how they're independents, but then they say we are going to write a letter. We are going to write a letter. So I don't know if I'm getting one letter or two, and don't plagiarize each other.

I say that in jest, Mr. Speaker, because I understand what the two independent Members are saying. They're not asking questions that are new. These are points we have heard before from independent Members, and I have no issue with that being considered.

So coming back to the purpose of this resolution, it's for this House to vote on the membership of the committees. And what I would say to the Members opposite as it relates to the formation of the Standing Orders Committee, a couple of points. We haven't had a request to attend a meeting. By all means, that's a start. That's a start, and it will take time.

We have had independent Members in this House before; Members that have sat here for years. Right now, we've been here – it's been less than one month since the last election. So what I would say is that evolution takes time. We cannot do it right away. It does take time, but what I would say is we're willing to see evolution happen, especially in this House of Assembly.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker – again, I apologize perhaps if I was a bit saucy, but I think the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands knows it's all in jest here. I look forward to these committees being struck, and I know there's some enthusiasm for these committees being constituted and the work beginning to happen on many of them starting forthwith.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

We will again go from the Order Paper back to Motion 4, the Budget Speech.

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

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

It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and have an opportunity to speak, and this afternoon, obviously, I'll be speaking on *Budget 2019*.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, like many Members in this House, I'm going to take an opportunity to thank the constituents and the voters in my district for the privilege to be elected for a third time and represent the district here in the House of Assembly; and, no less humbling I think, the third election than the first election. It's a very humbling experience. I congratulate the new Members of the House, and the returning Members as well, as we go forward and do the work that we've been elected to do in the coming years.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde. I want to thank my campaign team who spent four weeks with me and putting up with me in a lot of cases. My friends, who have been a part of all of my campaigns throughout the years, and my family as well. Mr. Speaker, I have my mom as my special ballots coordinator and my dad as my sign person. So we involve our family.

Mr. Speaker, the three people I do want to thank the most – because they were with me day in and day out over the last three elections – are my wife and my two sons, Benjamin and Alexander.

As the Member for Burgeo - La Poile referenced, I think a couple of days ago in his speech – he referenced his younger children. Well, my children right now, Mr. Speaker, are going to be 18 and 20. One has actually had his last day of high school classes today. My oldest son is in his second year of university. So, Mr. Speaker, that's one of my motivations for why I'm here is my children and making sure that their future is solid right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the communities and the people in my district again, I'm as committed now as I was when I was elected for the first time. It's always good to have an opportunity to go out and knock on doors and listen to what people are saying in the district. I pride myself on being accessible to the constituents, not only election time but throughout the term as well.

Mr. Speaker, when you have the opportunity to go and knock on doors you hear concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, the largest concern, I can say without any doubt, that I heard in this past campaign as I was going door to door in my

region of the province was health care. We've had some challenges over the last number of years, primarily in the Carbonear area, which is the hub of the bay. I know my colleague for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and I would disagree over that, but we'll continue to disagree.

Mr. Speaker, those are challenges that we face, not only in this region, in this province, but in this country. There's a lot of work to be done. I want to thank Eastern Health and the Town of Carbonear, and other local municipalities who have done work to form a community for doctors. Because one of the challenges, I think, with doctor retention in our communities is going to be quality of life and making those people feel accepted in our communities, and making them become a part of our communities.

As in every district in the province, Mr. Speaker, at least most of the districts, roads are an issue in my district as well as any other Member of this House, I'm quite sure.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we committed to in our campaign and in our red book this election was the expansion or the improvements, or a new emergency radio system. This is very important as we go forward, but one of the important caveats for the people of my district as we look at the expansion of the radio system in our province is cellphone coverage. We're going to make sure when we go out with that RFP for the new emergency radio system for the province that the proponents coming back with proposals will have to address the issue of cellphone coverage throughout our project.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing you always hear in my district, and many districts in the province, is the fishery. If you think about it, the largest snow crab plant in the world is located in my district, in Bay de Verde. It's a backbone industry in my district, as it is in so many more.

The Member for Corner Brook and Minister of Fisheries, I know, brings our concerns to Ottawa on a very frequent basis on a lot of the concerns that we all have. DFO needs to do better, I think, in listening to harvesters and what they have to say. Mr. Speaker, that's a message we've been delivering to Ottawa since our election in 2015.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's just a little bit about the district I represent, and I want to thank the people of that district for the privilege to stand here again and represent them for the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, the other role I have the privilege of doing is being the province's Minister of Transportation and Works, and going almost for two years now. Just last night we sat here for a little around 3½ hours and fielded questions from Members of the Opposition, the independent Members, and the Leader of the Third Party. She coined a new phrase last night, and I think it'll stay around for a long time. It's whisper of pavement. So I think we're going to hear that for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, since coming to office, we've had tremendous success in our infrastructure program for the situation that obviously we found ourselves in in 2016. This year, through the five-year Roads Plan, we're going to invest \$77.2 million, and we're also able this year to leverage other federal funding. So this year in road infrastructure we're looking at a budget that's going to be somewhere around the \$150 million mark. It takes a lot of money to improve the roads in our province, but we're getting there. It takes time.

I think the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands was quite correct in his remarks last night that we need to find ways, as we go forward, to address the fact that we do have 10,000 kilometres of roads in this province and we're going to have to find a way to address those. In some cases, it's going to take a lot of ingenuity, technology and other things to actually get these roads in good shape.

Also, in the roads plan this year, Mr. Speaker, back last fall in the new Canadian infrastructure agreement we signed on for, I think it's \$104 million over the next nine years through northern and rural roads. This, again, will help us address some of the challenges we face in smaller communities and less travelled roads. One of the criteria we're going to use when addressing those roads throughout the province will be economics and tourism. So it's not necessarily going to be so heavily reliant on traffic counts, but we're going to look at the

benefits that sometimes come at the end of those roads.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, in the department is safety. One of the things that we always, in Transportation and Works, consider when we're looking at infrastructure projects or how we budget our money is always based around safety of the motoring public. Last year, we were able to work with Member of Parliament for Avalon, Ken McDonald, myself and the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. We were able to come to an agreement with the federal government to fund climbing lanes on the Veteran's Memorial Highway. We know the horror stories coming off that piece of road in this province. It's very important that we were able to do that, and we're going to actually see the completion and paving of those climbing lanes by mid-summer. So that was a very important project.

Some of the other things we've done, Mr. Speaker, with regard to highway safety is our continued addition of additional highway cameras. An interesting fact that came to me a couple of days ago, this past year, our highway cameras in the province had 892,000 visits. So if you think about that, Mr. Speaker, that's almost every person in the province visiting our highway cameras at least twice. The use of those cameras is very impressive.

Our new plow-tracker app is also gaining in popularity and usage. We continue to encourage people to use that. This coming summer/fall we're going to introduce 511. We'll be one of the last provinces in Canada to actually introduce the 511 app and, again, this will be another tool to inform motorists as they go out and use our roads. Primarily, 511 will be beneficial obviously in the construction season to find out where the slowdown areas are, but I think most importantly 511 will be utilized much more when we come to the winter months and people need to make informed decisions when they decide to go out on our roads.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget also includes combined spending on health care in this province of some \$42.5 million. From this investment this year, we're going to see a new long-term care home in Corner Brook, new long-term care centres started in Gander, Grand

Falls-Windsor, the start of construction of the mental health and addictions facility. We're going to see improvements at the Green Bay Community Health Centre. I think one of the things we're going to see in the not-too-distant future, Mr. Speaker, is something that's been long awaited, long overdue and finally a reality, and that's the replacement of the Corner Brook Western Memorial Hospital. That's been long promised and long overdue.

There are other smaller health care improvements as well. The budget this year also allocates approximately \$5 million for redevelopment of the third floor at Carbonear General Hospital, where we'll see a new ambulatory care unit which will actually combine all those services to the third floor of that hospital, which will benefit primarily all the residents of the Bay de Verde Peninsula.

Another thing that the department and our *Budget 2019* is able to do is an investment of \$1.6 million for Justice-related infrastructure. I know the Minister of Justice and Public Safety was very clear, I guess, from the onset of us forming government that we needed to have a replacement for Her Majesty's Penitentiary. This facility was constructed over 100 years ago, it's outdated, it's not a healthy facility, not only for the people that unfortunately find themselves in there but for our employees and the people that visit.

Mr. Speaker, this is about investing in people so that they get the health care, mental health that they need so when they come out, they can be contributing members of society.

*Budget 2019* also allocates funding for new and existing schools, including \$39.2 million to begin the construction of a new school in Gander, Paradise, St. Alban's and Coley's Point.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure anybody listening this afternoon can hear my colleague for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; she's long been a champion for the replacement of Coley's Point elementary. Yesterday morning, actually, we had the first concrete for that building being poured –

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

**MR. CROCKER:** – and that's a great achievement to where we've come. You know that school now finally has concrete in the ground and benefiting the local economy. I know we've spoken with the general contractor there and I know the concrete is coming from a local company; the window frames are coming from another local company. So we see the benefits in the local area coming from this over \$16-million infrastructure project, Mr. Speaker.

We've also been able to, in Transportation and Works, for example, reduce our government fleet. Just last year, our department took over the responsibility for all of government's light vehicle fleet. What we have been able to do in the last 12 months is reduce government's fleet by approximately 100 vehicles down to under 1,000 vehicles. That's important.

It's been referenced here in the House that these are the type of changes that we need to actually do for the best value for taxpayers' dollars. One of the hon. Members mentioned this afternoon that, in lots of ways, this is where we need to achieve our savings. We need to achieve our savings in areas of what I would call somewhat of a discretionary area because there are a lot of services that nobody in our province would ever want to see affected.

Quite clearly, again during the campaign, I heard from seniors. When you're in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, a lot of my constituents and many of our constituents today are seniors and we hear their concerns and we have to make sure that they are always kept at the foremost of our thoughts when we're making decisions here, as elected officials, that there's a seniors' lens on our decisions.

We apply a lot of lenses, and I know we have been doing that. We apply a lot of lenses to decisions we make, but one that we always need to keep in the mind is our seniors. They've given a lot and they're a very important part of our society.

In the couple minutes I have left, Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to switch back to my district for a minute and talk about some of the things that are happening there with regard to road

infrastructure. Again, as I mentioned earlier, like most districts in the province, there are considerable roads and there are considerable challenges. We're getting there.

I say to the residents of my district, and as minister responsible through Members of other districts throughout the province, we are doing our utmost to get the best value for our dollar to make sure that we're getting the most road construction completed as possible.

Mr. Speaker, Municipal Capital Works funding is also very important in all of our districts because our municipalities and our elected officials that serve as municipal councillors, they play a very front line, very important role for the people that they represent and it's the people we represent as well.

I'm very pleased this year that this budget will also provide funding for projects such as a new fire hall in Winterton, Mr. Speaker. There's a water and sewer project for the Town of Salmon Cove. The Town of Victoria is constructing a new municipal garage for their outside employees. We're going to see, as well, a new fire truck for the Town of Carbonear.

If you think about the Town of Carbonear, it's slightly over 5,000 people, with a seven-story hospital and a four story long-term care centre housing approximately 300 beds. So it's very important that the necessary infrastructure is in place in a town like Carbonear, because it's not only residents of Carbonear using those facilities but residents from all around the region.

I think it was the Member for Fogo this afternoon referenced the bustle of activity in his district and some of the things that are happening. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing growth in Carbonear. We're seeing new businesses. We see a new industrial park. There are good things happening and I'm sure, as we go forward, we will see centres like Carbonear continue to flourish.

Just recently in Carbonear, we were able to announce a \$1-million expansion to the Princess Sheila NaGeira regional theatre, which will benefit many people throughout the region. This theatre is actually one of the busiest theatres in the province; by far the busiest theatre in the

province outside of the Arts and Culture Centres.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is running out. I'll take my place and look forward to having opportunities in this session to not only talk about the people that I represent and the district that I represent, but also the department that I'm fortunate enough to be the minister of.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The first order of business is to clarify some misinformation put out by the Member for Topsail - Paradise. I'm the older brother, not the bigger brother.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** First of all, I want to thank the citizens of St. John's Centre for their support in electing me, and I also want to thank those people who did not. It's interesting, I had a conversation when I visited one home who had a sign for one of the other people running for the district and said, you do see the sign there. I said yes, but if I'm elected I'll be representing all people in the district.

I think when I look at the election, I didn't look upon the people who were the other candidates as running against me, as we were both running for something. I like to believe that regardless, we have a structure of Opposition and government, that really what we're here is for the benefit of everyone, regardless of what political stripe we are, and this is what makes government work.

I do want to thank my family. In particular, my wife, Michelle, and my children, Katie, Sarah and Jamie. And my grandchildren, who probably did more to get me elected by being in pictures with me. So thank you very much to them. And to the many volunteers who showed their confidence in me, walked the streets with me and made phone calls and so and so forth. It was

a learning experience, even if I hadn't been successful in the election.

Like my brother, know that politics was not a long time ambition of mine. It was not even on my bucket list. Certainly politics, as many would say, it must be an interesting Sunday dinner conversation. I can tell you that politics is not the topic of discussion around the table; unless, of course, it's about NLTA politics at my own home. Probably the biggest discussion or biggest controversy is who gets to hold my grandchildren, my brother or me.

However, I will concur with what my brother did say, that the family life, seven children, it wasn't easy. I have three. I have a real appreciation for when families go beyond that now. Certainly, one thing we learned from our parents was the value of service to the community and you do the best to help others.

In my family, and I'm talking about my siblings, of the seven of us, five are teachers, six are in the field of education, and one works in the area of mental health and social work. So it's not by accident that – for me, my bucket list was to be a teacher, and I was a teacher for 32 years. The opportunity to become NLTA president was there, it was an opportunity to serve teachers. Again, that was not on my bucket list that I aspired to when I first started teaching, and I served with the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

I also served on the board of The Gathering Place. Those of you who know, the organization that serves some of the most vulnerable and the homeless here within the city. I served with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, which is a not-for-profit group of food banks. When I was president, we took it upon ourselves to start and build our own affordable, supportive-housing project here within the city. It was a huge step, and it was a case – when we applied and got the money, it was very much a case of the dog catching a bus. Now, what are we going to do with it?

In our housing project, we do run things from a business point of view, but at the heart of it is the tenants, and I'll come back to that. As to what we do, we do for the good of the tenants.

As I said, politics was not on my bucket list but I do see it as an opportunity to do some good, to make a difference. I like to quote Martin Luther King. One of my favourite quotes, and maybe that helps explain why I'm in this. He said: "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." So, I took the first step and here we go.

The true measure of a society can be found in how it treats it's most vulnerable citizens.

Recently, New Zealand announced a world's first well-being budget. In a recent article from *The Guardian* by Eleanor Roy, she notes that: "New Zealand 'wellbeing' budget promises billions to care for most vulnerable."

She reported that: "The finance minister ... unveiled billions for mental health services and child poverty as well as record investment in measures to tackle family violence." The success of this budget is making New Zealand "a great place to make a life."

She said that this budget is going to be addressing "the growing disparity between the haves and have-nots." The IMF is still projecting economic growth for New Zealand. It's the first Western country that has designed its entire budget based on well-being priorities, mental health front and centre.

Well-being means, she notes, living lives with purpose, balance and meaning, and having capabilities to do so. Now, I'm aware of the pitfalls, the limitations and the dangers of comparisons and how they apply to us; however, it is very much I think about the language we choose to use and the people we choose to help.

Think about for a moment, about the language we use or that often remains unspoken when we're talking about Income Support, health, housing, dental care, drug programs. We hear language about how services are being abused; how we need to get them off them. They're called social services. We talk about them as expenditures. We talk about them as costs to be cut, attrition, welfare; yet, business subsidies and tax incentives, loan guarantees, often to companies that don't need it, or such things as the Canada infrastructure bank, are referred to as investment and growth.

So what if we referred to and really thought about education, rent subsidies, affordable housing, health care as investments in people's well-being and the well-being of our society. If we considered tax incentives and the like to large multinational companies and larger companies as what it really is, corporate welfare, let's look at the language we use. Think about the bailouts of 2008 to companies that just couldn't fail, and to banks.

In the Budget Speech of April 2019, Mr. Speaker, it states: "Since forming government, we have made a commitment to reducing the size of the public service, which we believe can be achieved without mass lay-offs." Earlier today we heard the Finance Minister note that the department is working with boards and agencies to identify savings and that attrition is part of our fiscal target.

I used the term of budget-based decision making versus needs-based decision making. Think about it in terms of lifeboats. How comfortable would we be if we heard the captain of an ocean liner say: we'll figure out how many lifeboats we need to cut, as opposed to how many lifeboats do we need on board to meet the needs of all those who are sailing on the ship? One is budget-based numbers, the other one is looking at the needs.

I had an opportunity back in February to visit Hamilton, Ontario. Why would a Newfoundlander go to Hamilton, Ontario in the dead of winter is another question, but my daughter was there. The one thing I remember is driving back into the city and seeing the population of Hamilton, Ontario: 534,000. That's larger than the population of Newfoundland. And you look at the services, the number of hospitals they have there and you compare the number of that to the number of hospitals that Newfoundland has to service that same population.

Now yesterday, Minister Haggie and my NDP colleague, Jordan Brown, from Lab West, noted that Newfoundland is a province in name but it's a territory in geography. I think that places the issue in perspective when discussing the size of our public service. Yet, on the campaign – and I use this as way of introducing it to my experiences on the campaign trail in St. John's

Centre – of seniors who are afraid of losing their ability to live independently, watching electricity rates increase.

They're wondering about whether they can afford to feed themselves, if they're going to be able to live in their own home, if they're going to have to move out of their apartment. Especially those who didn't have a home to begin with and they've been renting. They don't have that equity, but now they're subject to the rent increases. They have no control, they're powerless. Or people who are on fixed incomes; yet, the rent keeps increasing to levels where they really have no choice until they got to move. That's what they're looking at, move or eat.

People who are working – I don't know how many times I encountered this – two or three minimum wage jobs, however, still struggling to support a family; or dental care issues, the embarrassment. To put it in perspective, the people I would speak to who had missing teeth would invariably cover their mouths. Here is the interesting thing, they don't feel like going out. They don't want to be in front of people because that's the part they're going to see. Going for a job, they don't have that confidence. Then they're wondering if the person who's interviewing them is looking at their teeth and they're not going to be hired.

The few people I met who are suffering from macular edema, which is a disease primarily brought about by untreated diabetes, and they're facing the caps. There's a cap on the injections, and they're looking at the prospect, well, that means going blind. Or the people – and I think it was mentioned here earlier, the restriction on diabetic strips, and I'll come back to that.

Look at child poverty, and my colleague from Bonavista, the Member for Bonavista will certainly attest to that as a former teacher, about the effects of child poverty and the effects on education and on their ability to learn. We see it as teachers.

I don't know if you're aware of the Keep The Promise campaign. Well, in 1989 the House of Commons unanimously voted to end child poverty by the year 2000. It's 2019. Keep The Promise campaign was a two-year campaign to

reignite the commitment of Canadians to end child poverty for good.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation and teacher organizations, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, were partners in that campaign. And, as teachers, we clearly see it in the classroom. We see the effects. We see it when teachers respond to that through breakfast and school lunch programs and teachers spending money on supplies; yet, we face allocations that are budget based and not always needs based.

So, we need to look at the decisions we make differently, is what I'm trying to say here. Maybe a budget-based decision making is not the only option in constructing a budget. I go back to the housing that the Saint Vincent de Paul took that we built. We started with the approach of not what is the bottom line but what are the needs of our tenants, and how do we go about meeting them. That's what we started with.

We aren't interested in looking at what's in the bank, but what is it we need that we can keep them in their homes, keep them comfortable and make sure their needs are provided for. That's what I'm asking. It's not about how much money we can make from that housing project, it's about how do we best look after the people who are in it.

I think sometimes the focus on returning to surplus – and when we focus on that, when we look at attrition, when we looked at making fiscal targets, that basically we end up solving a debt. We create deficits in our environment, in our education system, in our health system, and we create a deficit in people's well-being.

When we focus on numbers and fiscal targets, as I said attrition, getting back to surplus and cutting programs and savings, I think we missed an essential truth as well. Either we invest now or we pay later; there is no hither or. Because what happens when we don't invest in education? What happens if we don't meet the needs of our students? We see it as teachers. Early intervention saves a lot of problems later on. No early intervention, the student has a greater likelihood of dropping out. That's a loss to the economy and a loss to society.

We know that education is a link to health indicators. A more educated population is a healthier population, and a healthier population is less stress on the health care system. We know an educated population is a population that's employable. An uneducated population is a population that's basically depending on society for that living.

We look at diabetes treatment. We have heard here mentioned about the whole notion of diabetic strips and the treatments, but here is the thing. If we're saving money that way, there's a bigger cost because people living with type 1 diabetes, if it's not treated, are at a high risk of developing one or more long-term complications that can be attributed to diabetes. This is from the Canadian Diabetes Association. These serious complications develop over time. The greatest impact will be on the number of persons experiencing a heart attack. So which is cheaper to treat? Which is cheaper to pay for? Diabetic strips or coronary heart care in an ICU. Which is it?

Then you look here for some of the outcomes. Myocardial infarction, the average cost per person, \$20,935; end stage renal disease, \$188,771; lower limb amputation, \$28,000; stroke, \$34,785 per person. Again, which is cheaper to treat? Which is cheaper to pay for, the diabetic strips, the insulin pumps or this? We're going to pay for it, and sometimes pay for it more.

Dental care – I've already talked about it. There's clear evidence, clear studies that show a very strong link between poor dental health and hygiene and its connection to cardiovascular disease, pregnancy and birth complications, pneumonia, rheumatoid arthritis, pancreatic cancer. Again, it's got to be cheaper to treat dental care now and dental health than to treat these. We will pay now or pay more later.

The environment; climate change, it's already here.

So, I understand the need for a budget. I understand that, but maybe there's a need for a paradigm shift here in our approach and how we look at it and construct it. Now we have a model from New Zealand; maybe we don't have to adopt that.

This budget is on the table right now, but we do have an opportunity in the next year going forth to construct a budget that does focus on the well-being of people. And it's a little bit frightening, but I go back to Martin Luther King's statement: we just need to take the first step and make it happen.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It's always an honour to stand and represent the people of the beautiful and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate. I just want to start by thanking the people in my district for having the confidence to re-elect me again for another term. As I said at a function there a little while ago, I promised them that I'll work just as hard this term as I did my previous term and that I'll be open and accessible to them, as much as possible, and be present to as many functions and events that I possibly can.

For the new Members, lots of times being available at these special events and functions, that goes a long way because no matter where you are, there's always a constituent that will come up to you and talk to you and ask you a question. Lots of times, many of these people are the ones that would never pick up the phone to call you or email you. It is very valuable to get out and be visible in your community and support, obviously, the great events and activities that's happening within the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to serve as parliamentary secretary again for the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. I've had that role since shortly after being elected back in 2015. In my background, being a former recreation and tourism director, it's always good to be able to help with a department that deals with people from infancy to our oldest seniors. It's an honour to serve in that position and it's always great to be able to give and contribute to that department.

As previously mentioned, this week is Public Service Week from June 9 to 15, and I have a number of public service works in my district, whether it be the Transportation and Works crews that are out during all hours and all weathers. As the old saying goes: It's not fit for a dog to be out. Our Transportation workers are out during those winter storms and whatever it takes.

A few years ago in our district, we experienced Hurricane Matthew. There was a lot of devastation and some of the roads were shut down for days, and these crews worked day and night to get our roads back up and also the flooding issues rectified so that the residents can get back to normal, and also to mitigate any damages that would be caused because of that.

Marine transportation workers also are in my district, Mr. Speaker, and deal with a lot of the ferry services throughout our province. We have workers there with Fisheries and Land Resources; Advanced Education, Skills and Labour; and, as I mentioned, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

I just want to give big kudos to our full department. There are close to 700 employees in the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, probably one of the biggest ones, next to Transportation and Works in the public, and they work under some very trying times and we deal with some very stressful situations. This is your week and I just want to say thank you for the great job each and every public service worker does for our province.

Mr. Speaker, as I referenced the election, I just got to take a few minutes to do a big shout-out to all the volunteers that helped during my election. We had three campaign offices, one in Lewisporte, Twillingate and Summerford, and a lot of it was done by volunteers. My success would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many people that helped at the office, manned phones, knocked on doors. Whatever needed to be done, they were there to help and support me and I greatly appreciate their efforts.

Also, my family. Some of the older Members here or some of the Members that served before know I'm from a big family. When I say a big

family, I mean there are 15 of us besides our parents, so I just want to say thank you to all them that did manage to get out and help me and support me throughout the election. Whether it be volunteering, putting up signs or whatever it may be, they were there to support me behind the scenes and everything, so I thank them.

And obviously, behind every good man there's a better woman, and I just want to give a big shout-out to my wife, Tina, she worked a full-time job and still managed to help me wherever she could and took the last week off work, on vacation, just so she could be by my side and help me and make sure that when I came home or went on the road – because most days I was knocking on doors by 10 a.m. and I wouldn't get home 'til 8 p.m., and a good many days you forget that you probably should have a meal or something to keep you going during the day and helped pack a lunch or whatever. So Tina, I thank you for all your love and support that you provided.

Also my children, Catherine, who's here in St. John's, and my son Jonathan and his wife Robyn for all their support, and my new grandson that is nine months old today, Andy. Someone once said to me that if you have a grandchild, you can't explain the feeling that you have, and that's so true. It's what keeps you going. Your own children, most times, as you're growing up, you're working, you're busy and everything else, you don't have the time to spend with them that you'd like to, but a grandchild is a total different world to you, and I love and support them.

Mr. Speaker, during the campaign process, I got to say, some MHAs enjoy campaigning, others don't. I love campaigning; I love the opportunity to get out and knock on doors as much as I can. I have 43 communities in my district. Some of them as small as six households, Kettle Cove, and my largest community is Lewisporte. Unfortunately, in the time, that you don't get a chance to knock on enough doors but during the election, like I said, I punched as many doors as I can and literally ran door to door in a good many cases. It gives you the opportunity to talk to people, listen to people, listen to their concerns and that. Sometimes it's just a general conversation to introduce yourself and to just talk about – nothing to do with politics but other

times there are a lot of people that have some very good, serious issues that they want to address with you.

It's something I'm going to try to do more and more, is to get out during the summer months, go into each community and just knock on a door or two, let me know you're there and if they want to reach out to you at any time, then obviously we all got phone numbers and we all got assistants there. Mr. Speaker, on the election I just want to say thanks to everyone and I'm going to continue to serve to the best of my ability as I was elected to do.

Last Friday, I attended the high school graduation in Lewisporte. I think there was approximately 66 graduates. I have to commend the teaching staff at Lewisporte Collegiate because that school is probably one of the top ones of the province academically. They excel in so much: academics, music. This past year, they won the Rose Bowl at the Kiwanis festival. Their music band was over 100 members and, of a school of approximately 300, one-third of them were in this music band and they're all exceptional music players.

That speaks a lot for the work and the dedication of the music instructors but also the full teaching staff. One of the things I want to highlight from the graduation is an award ceremony, a scholarship fund that's been done. Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure everyone of us can remember the tragic events of September 11, 2001. I know where I was that exact minute when the tragedy was happening. As everyone knows, the airspace shut down and planes got diverted and 6,000-plus people ended up in Gander.

There are a lot of great stories of Gander and *Come From Away* is a prime example of our hospitality, but Lewisporte and the surrounding communities also played a very important role. We took in over 800 people that were stranded, whether they went through schools, the Lions Club, Kinsmen Centre, churches, wherever and also residences. As they say, they opened up their hearts and their homes, and they truly did.

Unfortunately, I wasn't in the town at the time or I would have been heavily involved in my role as recreation director. But a lot of good came out of that there, a lot of friendships made,

lifelong friendships and a lot of stories. There are people that still travel back and forth.

One particular story happened – a Dr. Ferguson and Shirley Brooks-Jones were on their way back – they boarded Delta Flight 15. They were on their way flying back and they were sharing stories about all the great things that happened in our community and they wanted to do something. Shirley was discussing with Dr. Ferguson – by this time, Dr. Ferguson had already started circulating a letter to start a scholarship for the people of the Lewisporte Collegiate because they were so heavily involved in it. By the time – no, I'll back up.

Shirley was trying to do this but her plane was soon going to land, so they made an exception. They spoke to the captain. The captain allowed Shirley Brooks-Jones to get on the microphone and actually speak to all the people on the plane, and she asked if they would contribute to the scholarship fund to help the people of Lewisporte area.

By the end of that trip, they had contributed \$15,000 towards a scholarship. But that was only the start of it. That scholarship have grown and grown immensely over the years. Today, that scholarship stands over \$1 million, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BENNETT:** It's great for our town. People are constantly donating to it. There are a lot of people that did insurance policies to contribute to it.

This past weekend when Shirley did her presentation – she comes back year after year to do these presentations personally – she presented another 21 scholarships to the people of Lewisporte, which now, to date, is a total of 291 scholarships that have been passed out. This scholarship will continue practically forever, Mr. Speaker. Because the interest that they gather on their scholarship, that's what they're giving out as scholarships, so that will last forever and it's a testament of what you do – they weren't looking for it. The Town of Lewisporte or the school was not looking for a scholarship when they opened their hearts and their homes to the

people on the Delta flight, but it's a great appreciation that they received.

Back in 2007, Shirley Brooks-Jones actually received the Order of Newfoundland because of her work on the scholarship. So I just wanted to highlight that, Mr. Speaker, because, like I say, in the heart of tragedy, there are a lot of great things that came from it out there.

I'm just going to talk about a couple of things in my district and the budget and transportation, Mr. Speaker. *Budget 2019* includes a significant investment to improve the province's transportation network, including \$131.4 million for the 2019 provincial roads improvement plan; \$13.6 million for local roads in rural areas; \$3.7 million for construction and maintenance of forestry roads; and \$2 million for brush clearing on our provincial highways.

Mr. Speaker, like most districts, we're challenged with our roads. Probably my area has been, I guess, at the forefront because the pothole man lives in my district. I'm quite sure most people have already heard of the pothole man that drives around the district spray painting circles around all the potholes in the area. He's got a little bit of PR from that there.

But I have to commend our Minister of Transportation and Works on the work that has been done. These potholes, the road conditions did not deteriorate over the last three to four years. It's been largely because of the lack of maintenance for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. So over the last three years, I can proudly say that close to 40 kilometres of road has been done in my district, particularly on Route 340, which takes you from the Lewisporte junction on the Trans-Canada Highway right to Twillingate. And that road is approximately 100 kilometres. So 40 per cent of that road has been either repaved or scheduled to be repaved.

One of the great things that I like that we're doing, or that Transportation and Works is doing, is the fact that we're not just laying asphalt on top of old asphalt. They're getting out, they're doing the ditching, they're replacing the culverts and they're clearing the brush. Then they're doing a leveling surface. Then they're coming over and paving it. I think by doing that work our asphalt will last much longer.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the brush clearing – many of our roads were in very poor condition when it comes to brush. Literally, there are areas that you would drive that you would almost have to pass over the line to avoid the alders growing up on the trees. And over the last short while, since I've been in office, I can say pretty well of Route 340 – like I said, it's close to 100 kilometres – the brush has been cleared. Some other communities are scheduled this year. It was addressed that the road to Embree and Little Burnt Bay, that's gone to tender right now, which is an item in *Budget 2019*. And also the road to Brown's Arm. I'm quite sure the residents of those areas will be quite pleased once that brush gets cut back, because our area does have a heavy population of moose, so the safety of our pedestrians and our residents is paramount for this government.

Next I'm going to talk a little about – gee, I didn't realize how fast time is going – some of the healthy living. Healthy living is obviously an important part of our department, Children, Seniors and Social Development. As I said, I served as a recreation director before being elected. I had 25 great years with the Town of Lewisporte. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the town. Someone was talking earlier about bucket lists, and I can honestly say I don't think serving in this seat or running for politics was ever anything that I considered doing seven, eight years ago. But I have to say it's a decision that I'm very happy that I did make, and I thoroughly enjoy the job. It's very time consuming, but it is a great and rewarding job.

Mr. Speaker, healthy living, as I said, is a big part of our department, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. In our *Budget 2019*, we have approximately \$1.8 million for the Community Healthy Living Fund. For those that avail of that fund, it's something that – sometimes it might be only a \$500 grant or a \$1,000 grant or a \$5,000 grant, but it's grants that do a lot of great work for smaller communities, seniors' clubs, recreation committees, things like that there. It gets some valuable work done.

Mr. Speaker, we also contribute \$861,000 to support athletes to our Canada Games. I have to say that over the last two Canada Games both the Summer Games in Winnipeg and the Winter

Games in Red Deer, I had the opportunity to represent our department and government. It's quite an experience to be able to sit in and watch the athletes and the families and everything else. It's an experience of a lifetime, one that I definitely won't forget. It's money that's well invested.

There's always the balance on should more money go into recreation, to the grassroots sports, or should it be going into our competitive athletes. I think it's got to be a fine balance and I think our department has done a great job to find that balance.

Some other funding that we do: \$130,000 to the Eat Great and Participate program, which helps to promote healthy eating within our communities and recreation facilities and that; \$200,000 to the Carrot Rewards Program, Mr. Speaker. If you're not familiar with it, google it. It's an app that basically helps you to calculate your steps and set goals so that you become more physically active but also there are questions and little rewards that come on from time to time that challenge you but also educate you on things. It could be from smoking to breastfeeding, anything to do with health and wellness. So if you don't have the Carrot Rewards app, I encourage you to download it.

Mr. Speaker, also the Kids Eat Smart program, this morning I had the opportunity to go to the Rennie's River Elementary school where they had a partnership breakfast. Our department donates approximately \$1.1 million towards this program. Kids Eat Smart is a fantastic program that's in 255 schools in our province, which represents a little over 90 per cent. They serve close to 30,000 meals each and every day to our school-aged children, just to ensure that the children have a good, healthy start to their day. As everyone knows, you can't function if you're not properly nourished. So Kids Eat Smart helps to ensure that each child has a meal.

In order for that program to work properly, Mr. Speaker, 6,100 volunteers help out to make sure that program runs smoothly. Volunteers, as we say, are the heart of the community, and I'm quite sure these volunteers do a fantastic job in making sure the kids are nourished.

Mr. Speaker, today, when I was attending that event, there was a young girl there, Isla Growns is her name. She's a grade six student, and she was sitting next me. She was actually the ambassador to get up and talk about the benefits of the Kids Eat Smart program.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, for a child 10 or 11 years old, the confidence and the ability to public speak, we were all in awe. I'll be honest with you, I'm quite glad she's not living in my district because she definitely could be in for my job. She did a fantastic job there. I just want to mention it because, like I say, our youth are our future and I'm so glad to see them getting involved in that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to jump on through. Fire protection is also a big item in our budget, which I'm not going to get a chance to talk on. Hopefully, I will get another chance to get up and speak a little later.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you to the people of my district. It's always great to get up and represent them in this House of Assembly and always to work and fight for their issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

We've all congratulated ourselves and congratulated each other over the past week here about getting elected, but I'd like to take the time to recognize as well those people who were unsuccessful in their election. They ran a great campaign. They worked just as hard as anybody else, and I think they deserve to be recognized as well.

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

**MR. TIBBS:** I'd like to take a quick moment and just say thank you very much to the people of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans for putting

their faith in me. I really appreciate it. I promise not to let you down. I will give it everything I've got, which is what I said throughout my campaign, and thank my family for being next to me. It takes its toll on our families, our wives, our children, the time that we take out here. So, I'd also just like to take a minute and remind everybody to take that family time as we go here because what else is it for, in the long run, but our families.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this time to talk about end-of-life care. First of all, I want to commend the government for making the commitment, a monetary commitment to the Lionel Kelland Hospice in Grand Falls-Windsor. It's a very important project that we've been putting together here. It's way past the stage of being just put together. More importantly, the funds, like I say, for the Lionel Kelland Hospice in Grand Falls-Windsor, the \$3-million start-up fees and the \$1.3 million committed to run it each and every year.

On May 8, when the Premier stood shoulder to shoulder with the Lionel Kelland Hospice board, we were elated. We were quite happy in Grand Falls-Windsor. Politics was put aside at that point. We knew we were getting something very special. We knew the people wanted it for a very long time, and it was a very exciting time for us. So, again, I commend the government for that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you why it's so important to us in Grand Falls-Windsor, the hospice itself. This province needs it, and we are the last province to have it. All the other provinces in Canada have end-of-life care as a community support system.

It was just us and Nova Scotia, two years ago, that didn't have end-of-life care as a community service. As of today, Nova Scotia has three. They just opened their third one, and we are still without one. So we're looking to get the Lionel Kelland Hospice up and running as soon as possible, as we seem to be very behind the times with such a thing.

The Lionel Kelland Hospice board in Grand Falls-Windsor is made up of many figures in the community. It's made up of doctors, business owners, lawyers, the Presentation Sisters themselves. They've all put a lot of work into

this program, Mr. Speaker, and it's not fair to let these people down. Just to name a few, Dr. John Campbell, Ken Dicks. These are pioneers of this project, and we want to see it go ahead for the board members especially.

With a donation from the Presentation Sisters, this board has a beautiful building. It's not like we're looking to break ground and build a new building for this project, the building is already there. It's a beautiful building. On top of that, the board has also raised over \$800,000 in the time allotted in the past couple of years, and they are committed to staying on and raising money for this hospice as we move ahead with it.

We're just wondering, Mr. Speaker, in what part of the universe a government is presented with a building that we have, the funds that are in place, and this doesn't get to go ahead. The needs assessment was put forth in December. We were told it was going to take three months, and we are still here almost seven months later with an answer, yes, but we want to move forward on this project as soon as we can.

If it is unclear of why we need this hospice, I will tell you why. There are stories, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of them, and we opened this hospice to stories last month. People could come in and tell their stories. There were hundreds of people, and we were all gathered inside the chapel. There were tears, there was laughter. As a community, we all came together and we told our stories. We heard our stories and we seen that end-of-life care is needed in this province.

We heard stories, Mr. Speaker, of people dying in hallways, emergency rooms. Dr. John Campbell himself says the greatest travesty he's seen in his life is of a person dying in a hallway, no family around, nobody around. That's the last way they spend the couple of minutes or couple of hours of their life, and it's totally unacceptable.

Another place in Grand Falls-Windsor in the hospital is an isolation room upstairs. It's fully glassed in, and this is where a lot of people get sent to die. So they're sat there, and people walk on by and they are glaring in at you. Your family is all sat around you and you're waiting to die,

and you have to look at 100 people walk by you. Nobody wants that, Mr. Speaker, nobody.

We are all human beings here first before we became politicians. I think we're all human beings at the end. We all know that death is a very important part of life. It's not something to be grim or to snarl your nose at or not talk about. It shouldn't be that way. We all have to face it sometime. We all deserve dignity with that.

In this glass room, the isolation room, they had a man last month just brought up there to die. He was on his last day or so, and when I heard this story I was absolutely floored. Mr. Speaker, this man was brought out of the isolation room and brought back downstairs because somebody else had to be brought in there to die first. Then that man was brought back upstairs so he could have his turn. Again, I think in this province we can do a lot better than that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll get a little bit personal now. My grandmother represents about 250 people that could have used this service, but, unfortunately, it wasn't there for her to use as well – Nan Budgell, as we called her anyway. My grandmother took sick in late March 2014. Excuse me, I get a little bit emotional, but it's something that's very dear to my heart. My mom and her sisters tried to take the best care of her that they could inside of her home because, again, there was no community hospice available for her.

Mr. Speaker, what my mother and her sisters had to go through to take care of my grandmother – the facilities in her house weren't acceptable. So two of them would have to carry her to the bathroom, try to get her onto the toilet, get her off again and back to her room. She was only sick for two months, but it was a long two months.

They had to put her into a shallow bathtub – the house is an older one, very narrow hallways – put her in and out of the bathtub and the last going off, her last couple of days, she couldn't get a bath. They couldn't bring her in there so they would wet cloths and try to bathe her as best they could.

One of the biggest things, Mr. Speaker, was they couldn't give her her medication. The staff

weren't there, of course, to give her her medication. She couldn't swallow; she couldn't eat. These were the last couple of days of her life.

I just got a text from my mother a little while ago actually because I was talking to her about it and she said the last thing, a couple of days before she died, she put her hand on mother's shoulder, she was coming back to her room and she said I don't want to do this anymore. I can't do this anymore. So, there was no fight left in that woman whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, the struggles that my family had with my Nan Budgell – she couldn't go outside. She loved to go outside. She loved to berry pick. She was 78 years old. She spent her whole life outside. She spent her whole life giving back to the community, and I thought that this was a time for us to give back to her. Unfortunately, there was nothing there to give back to her. This was where she was at and this was the best that we could do at the time.

There was no emotional support for the family, Mr. Speaker. My family didn't know how to deal with it, just like many other families didn't know how to deal with it and that takes its toll on the family. It takes its toll on any family, anybody, trying to deal with death.

But also what they call the guilt. What happened was on the night of May 13 – my mother would take my grandmother to bed every night. It was a twin bed, lie in the bed with her, stay in bed with her, sleep with her that night, show her the love that she deserved as much as she could and about two hours after they went to bed on May 13 of 2014, my mother woke up to some shallow breathing and a little bit of gurgling. When she woke up, she noticed that my grandmother was taking her last breaths.

So, like any daughter would, she panicked a little bit and she was upset. She called the paramedic. She called an ambulance. The ambulance came. When they came in, they assessed my grandmother and said she's going – she's almost gone. Of course, my mother being as upset as she was, she asked to save her, whatever you can do to save her, please. They take my grandmother, Mr. Speaker, laid her on the floor, very crowded room, cluttered, one

arm, one leg under the bed, and they started chest compressions. They started CPR.

I've been a paramedic and a firefighter throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and I'll tell you, if you haven't done chest compressions, it's traumatic. You can hear them; you feel them. If you're in the room, you can hear them as well. And it is absolutely traumatic. Upon starting chest compressions, my mother looked at the paramedics and begged them to stop – just begged them to stop. Of course, if anybody knows, at that point they couldn't. They looked at my mother and said, I'm sorry but once we start, we can't stop.

My mother just told me today – this is five years later – that there's not a day that goes by that she doesn't think about that. And that's the guilt that a lot of people have to live with because they can't give the proper end-of-life care to the people that they love. And this can facilitate up to 250 people a year, and that's what we're looking for.

The start-up money that this board is asking for, Mr. Speaker, is going to be for the facility to get an elevator in there at the front. So the staff that will be in the building – I've been in the building, I've been in the hospice, the Lionel Kelland Hospice. The Premier's been in there and the Leader of the Official Opposition has been in there. It's a beautiful building. What this building will come with, what we can look forward to in the Lionel Kelland Hospice is a staff that's knowledgeable. This staff will be able to give medications; they'll be able to administer food the way it's supposed to be administered. They'll be sincere, personal, and that volunteer list in Grand Falls-Windsor I know, because I'm on it, is a mile long. Everybody wants to help out with this. It's long overdue.

There's a community in Grand Falls-Windsor that, like I say, has brought together \$800,000. Mike Goodyear, a friend of mine that owns the funeral home in Grand Falls-Windsor, ask him. He takes donations in lieu of flowers and stuff at funerals. Most donations go to the hospice, and it's growing and growing and growing. I challenge anybody to find a better sense of community here, you won't find it. So it brings communities together, and that's great.

I'm been in the rooms. The rooms are bright, they're lit and they have windows to the outside. In the room we have cuddle beds big enough for three people. So if you want to get in there with your loved one, with your grandmother or your mother or your child – because it's going to facilitate children as well. It's a horrible thing to talk about, but that's where it's going.

You can bring pets in there. You can put up pictures. You personalize it the way you want to personalize it so when the time comes, you die with a dignity in the surroundings that you want to be surrounded by. You pick them out; you choose them.

They have a spa – a lift into a bathtub with a heated, massage tub so people in their last days, they can feel comfort as well. But my favourite thing of all, Mr. Speaker, there's a group in Grand Falls-Windsor that are waiting to manicure the grounds on the outside. They're going to put up cherry trees. They're going to put up bushes, gardens, flowers, all kinds of stuff, and it's going to be fantastic. That's my favourite thing. So when the time comes, you can get into the lift, the elevator in front of your bed, you can be brought downstairs, you can be wheeled around the gardens. So instead of dying in a cluttered bedroom under your bed, you can die under a cherry tree, with the sun on your face and the soft winds blowing in my grandmother's white hair, and that's what we're looking for.

Put politics aside, we're all humans first, like I said, and everybody deserves this – everybody, because we're all going to be there one day and it's something that we haven't really looked at over the history. It's something we looked at but it's not something we've acted on. So I'm asking that we act on it. That's the only thing that I ask.

A couple of other things in the hospice that I personally love are the kitchens downstairs – there are two kitchens, Mr. Speaker. The first kitchen, of course, is the staff to feed the patients. They have a second kitchen for you to go down with your family and cook your meal, a Sunday dinner – my grandmother loved Sunday dinners. We could have cooked a turkey dinner down there, brought it up to her room. The rooms are huge by the way, with couches and chairs. We could have eaten Sunday dinner in her last days and it would have been great. Even

if she didn't eat, she was there and the atmosphere was perfect for her.

Adjacent to the rooms is a room for your family. You come out of town, there are beds right there for your family. The whole establishment is absolutely fantastic, it's breathtaking, it's beautiful, it's there, it's ready to go and we want to move on it and we want to act on it.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make this vision a reality. We're hoping to make this vision a reality. The chapel in the hospice, you couldn't build it. It was put there by the Presentation Sisters 40 years ago and it can facilitate up to 100 people. That chapel itself isn't just a chapel for bereavement, that chapel you could have a graduation ceremony in there. We could have a wedding in there. So if somebody wants to see their son or daughter get married before they finally pass on, they can facilitate that – a baptism, whatever you wish.

They also have bereavement counsellors ready at this hospice. They have a downstairs room so they can teach you to deal with the emotional stress and how much trauma a death can bring with it.

We're asking for this, for the board, for the community, for the province, but most of all, Mr. Speaker, for the 250-plus people that can have this in their life, in their last couple of hours, the last couple of days of their life. They can facilitate up to 250-plus people a year. How many people have gone without it? Let's not wait one more year before we can get another 250 people in there like my grandmother. God bless her.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Scio.

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

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

In addition to speaking to the budget today, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the residents of Mount Scio, my volunteers, family and friends, and to tell you a bit about myself.

As you know, this is the first time I've been elected to the House of Assembly. It's been an incredible experience so far and I'm very much looking forward to this significant responsibility.

I'd like to thank the residents of Mount Scio. This was the first time that I went door to door campaigning and introducing myself, and I had a lot of really great experiences with residents. We had a lot of good heart-to-heart discussions and, hopefully, some of them are watching now because they told me that they always watch. I look forward to our future conversations as well.

I also learned a lot answering their questions, because the residents of Mount Scio had a lot of questions for me; a lot of which I couldn't answer at the time when I was at their door, but I made sure to take it away and get back to them. I look forward to continuing our discussions with the residents of Mount Scio.

For those of you who aren't aware, Mount Scio is quite a big district. Although, not as big as some of my other colleagues and Members. Mount Scio includes: Elizabeth Park in Paradise, which I now know inside and out like the back of my hand; it includes Kenmount Terrace; everything up around the Avalon Mall in St. John's; Seaborn Street; also includes the area around Larkhall Academy; also includes kind of the Health Sciences; the new site of the Waterford Hospital; Memorial University; my home, I live in the District of Mount Scio; and up until, kind of, Allandale and Bonaventure. So it's quite a big district. I believe it used to be called St. John's North.

I'd like to thank all the residents of Mount Scio for giving me this opportunity to represent them in the House of Assembly.

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

**MS. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my campaign team. This was the first time I had been involved in a political campaign. I do have

a masters in political science from Memorial University. So I've studied how the House of Assembly works, how we pass legislation, in other countries and in Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada; but, I have to say, I don't think that quite prepared me for this experience. I can't imagine how lost I would have been without that fundamental education. So I'm very grateful and honoured to be here.

I made a lot of new friends and spent a lot of time with some old friends. I had no idea how much time and effort went into making signs and buying two by fours and cutting them down and hammering signs in the weeks and weeks that went into that. All the people who helped my campaign team while on that journey doing that, it's just incredible. As a non-political person a few months ago, I had absolutely no idea how much work went into that. So thank you to my campaign team, and to all the people around the province who helped all of my other fellow Members with their election campaign teams. I now have an appreciation for how much time and effort went into that. So, thank you.

Also, to the team who went door to door with me, my new friends who kept me organized and from a strategy perspective as well. So thank you all. Hopefully, some of you are watching. I would not have been able to have been successful, I don't think, without the support of all my volunteers, and old friends and new friends.

I'd also like to thank my parents, Sharon and Dave Stoodley. They live in my fellow Member's District of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans. They travelled in from Grand Falls-Windsor on numerous occasions to spend time going door to door. My mother, Sharon Stoodley, went around to many, many doors on my behalf, convincing everyone that they should vote for me. I think she was able to turn a few people around. She was very helpful.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Thanks, mom.

**MS. STOODLEY:** Yes, thanks mom, yes.

Many people have asked me why I got into politics, why I was interested. It's always something that I've been interested in. When I was in high school I wanted to be a Page in the

House of Commons in Ottawa, actually. I was in Youth Parliament, and I applied for the Page program. I was going to go to Carleton and do international business, but I did not get into the Page program at the House of Commons in Ottawa. I was devastated. I thought my life was over. Anyway, as it turns out I'm here now. So it has all worked out.

I was involved in Youth Parliament, and then I ended up going to Memorial University and studying a bachelor of commerce co-op and I did a minor in political science. I was president of the bachelor of commerce class. Also, my fellow minister was in our class as well.

One of the reasons why I ran and why I'm here today; I ran for an alumni representative seat for the university's board of regents. There were 51 university alumni that ran, Mr. Speaker, and I was successful as one of the top six alumni to get elected to sit on the board of regents.

Part of the regular activity of the board of regents is to travel to the Corner Brook campus to attend convocation in Corner Brook. While I travelled to Corner Brook with my fellow regents, one of the women on the board of regents mentioned that her and a few of her senior friends, senior women in St. John's, friends of theirs, got together and put together a list of women they thought should run, and that my name was on the list. She showed me the list, Mr. Speaker, and it was quite a confidence boost and an honour to see that a group of women in St. John's, most of whom I had never met, thought they would like to see me run. So that kind of gave me a lot of confidence.

Then, while on that same trip, I ended up spending a lot of time with former minister of Natural Resources, Rex Gibbons. I was picking his brain and asking Mr. Gibbons about his history and any advice that he had. He had a wealth of information and probably spent five or six hours giving me advice about running and what was involved. So that was very helpful.

Then, thankfully, a few months before the election was called, Mr. Gibbons called me and said: Sarah, if I was ever going to run, I should do it right now. I thought to myself, how often are you going to get a call like that? So I made a call. It's been a whirlwind few months, but here

I am. He put me in contact with the right people and here I am. So, thank you.

A bit more about me; as I have mentioned, I'm from Grand Falls-Windsor. I grew up there. I come from a family of teachers. Sharon Stoodley and David Stoodley are my parents. They were both teachers in Grand Falls-Windsor; my father in Bishop's Falls. My mom, Sharon, was a Jefferies from Deer Lake, and I believe went to school with the Premier, the Member for Humber Bay –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MS. STOODLEY:** Okay. The Premier, okay.

Thank you.

My sister, Laura Stoodley, is an art teacher. So I come from a family of teachers. I have a high degree of respect for teachers.

I spent a lot of time growing up with my grandparents: Earl Jefferies from Deer Lake, and Mary Ann O'Driscoll from Deer Lake; Roy Stoodley from Grand Bank, Emily Powell from Carbonear – who was then Emily Stoodley. So they kind of shaped me quite a bit, I think, and two of my grandparents were teachers as well.

I completed French immersion. So I'm looking forward to using my French abilities as parliamentary secretary of TCII.

Mr. Speaker, I completed a bachelor of commerce with a minor in political science. I completed an exchange to the Netherlands. I went to the Hogeschool van Amsterdam and I learned a lot about international business and I learned a bit of Dutch. So that was very interesting.

Then after graduation, I received one of three TD Meloche Monnex Fellowships in Canada, which provided funding to learn about university administration. So I received one of those. I learned a lot about the Memorial University and how it works. I got to study in each different department for a while. I completed a certificate of public administration and I started my masters in political science, and I was also the president of the commerce class of 2008.

Then I met my husband and I moved to the UK for three years. So while in the UK, I had quite a varied work experience. In the UK it's a bit different than in Canada. When you're a new grad, most people work unpaid for a while before you get a paid placement, so that was kind of a new experience. I ended up working unpaid at Harrods, the department store. I did food PR. I did that for a while and then I worked for a social enterprise, Pamoja Education, which is run by the Canadian McCall MacBain Foundation. Their mandate is deliver online international baccalaureate courses to schools worldwide.

Then I worked for a digital strategy company in Oxford called UbaGLU and I was the only staff member. There were two owners and myself, and they were former heads of digital at Cadbury chocolate. I was their only employee and so we went around the UK doing digital strategies for companies in the UK. So that was an incredible learning experience.

So my husband and I, we had very long commutes. Commuting in around the UK is quite a nightmare compared to here. We decided we either have to move right into London or move to St. John's, so we decided on St. John's which is very fortunate. My husband Chris Stublely has dual citizenship actually. His mother Sharon Stublely was Sharon Blackmore, also lived in Grand Falls-Windsor. She moved to the UK when she married a member of the Royal Air Force while she was teaching in Goose Bay. My father-in-law was stationed there as a member of the Royal Air Force.

So, for the past six years, I've been working at Johnson Insurance. I was responsible for digital, anything that customers use that cross over 10 brands online, making a change online, buying insurance online and we worked with digital experts in Toronto, India, the UK and Argentina. I learned a lot about that and I think one of the elements that made me successful in that career was my grit. So I saw a local business woman Anne Whelan give a presentation recently and she talked a lot about grit. So I think that's really helped me along the way and, hopefully, I'll be able to use that skill here in the House of Assembly.

Over the past few years since returning, I was a big sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters and I had a sister for three years until she aged out of the program. I was appointed to the Pippy Park Commission, a commission which I live just next door to and is near and dear to my heart. I was elected to the Memorial University Board of Regents and I was on the NATI board, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Technology Industries.

I have a strong interest in driving the technology sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, one which I think fits very well into my parliamentary secretary role of TCII, so I'm thrilled to be a part of that department. Once the House of Assembly closes, hopefully, I can spend more time in that department throughout the summer, Mr. Speaker.

I have a little story about another reason – kind of a light-bulb moment in my career. When I was in high school, I was in youth parliament and I came to the House of Assembly here. At the time, we met with the leader of the Opposition, who was Mr. Williams, former Premier Williams. I remember he told us, as high school students, he said: I'm going to give you one piece of advice. We were up in his office here in this building and he said: As you go into your careers, don't let anyone for Toronto or New York make you think that they know more than you or they're smarter than you.

I remember at the time I was in high school and I thought well, you're ridiculous, you're wrong; of course people from Toronto know more than I do. Of course people from New York are smarter than I am. I thought he was – I didn't think that was a factual thing. That really stuck with me.

While I was working in the UK, I worked for the social enterprise with people who went to Oxford and Cambridge and people who went to the world's top universities, and I just had this light-bulb moment and I realized what Mr. Williams said, former Premier Williams said, was true, that these people who went to the top universities, they weren't smarter than I am. They're not better able to do this job than I am. So that was kind of a huge light-bulb moment for me that gave me a lot of confidence as well,

which certainly has led to my journey here today.

Now, going back to the budget – that’s a bit about me. I’m doing well for time. This is my first time so I wasn’t sure how the time would go. I believe the budget covers many issues that are very important to the residents of Mount Scio. When I was going door to door I learned a lot about, kind of, everyone’s issues and concerns.

One of the key ones was around the insulin pump program. A lot of residents in my district, Mr. Speaker, spoke about their challenges with diabetes or their friends and families challenges. Many of them were very relieved about the potential to remove the cap so that those under 21 would be eligible for the program then for life. That was a significant relief to a lot of them.

I also spoke with a lot of parents who were very concerned about the Autism Action Plan. They had a lot of questions and I spent many hours having conversations with them and sending them information about that, where the ABA program is getting expanded beyond grade three for children and youth up to age 21, the Supporting Abilities Program for adults to encourage employment opportunities, and the JASPER program being available up to age nine.

Another item that was very important to the residents of Mount Scio were the bus passes. So the ability for residents on Income Support to have a bus pass to help them get around the metro region. A lot of them were very concerned about that and thought that that would be a very significant help to their family’s budget.

Another item that I think is very important to the residents of my district, the heat pump assistance. Most importantly, a lot of the residents in my district are concerned about having more money in their pockets at the end of the year and the elimination of the levy this year is extremely significant to the residents of my district, Mr. Speaker.

Other budget items that were not necessarily brought up by residents of my district but I personally am very excited about are the Digital by Design government services. That’s kind of my bread and butter in my former life. So

moving more government services online, increasing the efficiency of our internal processes. And I know that we’ve committed to increasing the number of services delivered online by 50 per cent by 2022, and delivering more and more government services online.

I’ve about four minutes left, but I’ve gone through my notes. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And most importantly, I would like to thank the residents of Mount Scio for their trust and giving me this opportunity. I encourage them, if you’re listening, reach out to myself or my constituency assistant anytime. I’d also like to thank my caucus Members and my family, old friends and all of my new friends, and my volunteers.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Dank Je Wel.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

It’s certainly a pleasure to speak now for, well, I suppose not the first time, but first time on any kind of a motion or on the budget. I just want to take the opportunity as well, as everyone else has, to thank the people of the District of Mount Pearl - Southlands for putting their faith in me for the third time. This was especially humbling for me, given the fact that I ran as an independent, and I got a great mandate from the people. It was actually the largest majority I had of my three times running. So I thank them for that very, very much. And, of course, all my volunteers and family and friends and everyone who helped out with the campaign, because as it has been said, and we all know, you certainly cannot do it on your own.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to a number of the Members – actually, it was very interesting listening to some of the newer Members and hearing about their diverse backgrounds. I’m learning new stuff every day about some of these people, and some very credible individuals for sure. For their first time speaking, a number of them who have spoken now for the first time,

I think they've done a great job and I look forward to working with them all.

We have a unique opportunity this time around, Mr. Speaker, to finally, and I will say finally – again, this is my third time here – to finally see us all work together, to be forced to work together. I don't think we ever should've been forced to work together, but more now than ever because of the minority situation, that's going to be required. We've seen some great inroads already in a number of areas. So I'm looking forward to good things.

After I was elected, probably a couple of days after that, I met with the Premier and I said to him at that time that I'm here to co-operate. That's been echoed now, I think, by all parties, and that's really good to see. I will say again for the record, I am here to co-operate. I am not here to obstruct. I am not here to hinder, and that's one of the reasons why I agreed to take on the role as Deputy Chair of Committees.

I will say again for the record, and for everyone's information, that while I do take on this role, I absolutely reserve the right, and will use that right, that at any time if I am sitting in the chair and there is a bill that is going to be voted on, or if we're in committee and there's an amendment and so on and it's something that I wish to speak to, it's something that I wish to vote in favour of an amendment, then I will recuse myself from the chair and somebody will fill in. I will absolutely have my say and I will absolutely have my vote. That was a commitment I made to the people of my district. It's a commitment that I absolutely intend on keeping. I'm not going to be in any way restricted from speaking out on behalf of the people I represent.

By the way, the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, I listened intently to what you had to say and what you experienced with your grandmother, and certainly my condolences to you and your family on that. It kind of ties in to some of the things that the Member for St. John's Centre was saying as well about the needs of people and we have to put the needs of people to the forefront.

I think we all agree in this House of Assembly that when it comes to things like health care,

when it comes to things like education – when I think about the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and particularly the Child, Youth and Family Services side of it and the horrific things they have to deal with in that department when it comes to the protection of children and so on, I think we all realize there are areas like that in which we really can't put a price tag on it. There are things we simply have to do because it's the right thing to do and it is things that are absolute musts. They're must dos. They're not wants, they're needs. And I think we all recognize that, but by the same – and I understand.

As I said, the Member for St. John's Centre was talking about that stuff, but I think the other thing which I haven't heard talked about a lot at this point in time in relation to the Budget Speech, and I think it's something we are aware of but I haven't heard a lot of talk about it, but it's something we have to be cognizant of, and that is the crippling debt we have in this province and the year-over-year deficits; albeit, we're hearing about balance in 2022. I hope that happens. We'll wait and see how that goes, but when it comes to the money we owe and what we're paying – we're paying, I think, \$1.3 billion a year just to service the debt, if I'm not mistaken, something like that. And that is something we all have to be cognizant of when we're talking about we need more of this and we need more of that.

So I say to the government, when it comes to your attrition plan and so on, I'm on board with it. I really am, and that's not to say – and I absolutely agree with some of the commentary made. There will be areas, such as Child, Youth and Family Services, as an example, children in care who we simply can't cut. You simply cannot say we're not going to fill these positions, because they're critical.

We talk about some of the front-line positions, nurses in our hospitals and stuff like that as an example, it's not an option. There are certain things we absolutely must maintain, but it's also critical for us to realize where we are from a fiscal point of view and we have to really put a strong effort into finding ways to cut those expenditures.

So, utilizing an attrition plan, which I agree shouldn't be simply based on numbers and just slashing a budget item just for the sake of doing it. It has to be done thoughtfully and with proper analysis. We need to look at ways to sometimes replace those services and positions by doing things differently, doing things more efficiently and utilizing technology.

I heard the Member for Mount Scio talking about engaging in technology in government, and I think that's absolutely somewhere we have to go. We have to look at things like telemedicine, which I've heard the Minister of Health and Community Services talk about in the past, things that they're doing.

I think we need to look at things like is being done with midwifery and utilizing our nurses perhaps better with our – I want to say LPN, but that's not what they're called.

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

**MR. LANE:** No, no, no. It's like higher than an RN, almost like between an RN and a doctor.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nurse practitioners.

**MR. LANE:** Nurse practitioners, there you go. So utilizing nurse practitioners more, and making sure everyone is working to their full scope of practice. These are the things we need to do.

What I've seen happening in Transportation and Works in terms of consolidation of fleets, I think that's a move in the right direction. I think trying to get rid of as much leased space as we can and maximizing the space we have, that is a good thing and we need to be doing that.

Getting rid of some of the properties and schools that have been shut down years ago but are costing us money in terms of bills to Newfoundland Power or security or insurance and so on, offloading those – at fair market value, I'll say. That's a point, a good point. But doing that, we need to continue down that road, because if we don't do this and we get to a point – and I hope we never do, and I'm not fear mongering, but if we ever were to get to a point where we absolutely require a bailout or something from Ottawa, then our province

would no longer be in our control. Someone else would be making the tough decisions for us.

So I think it is critical that we start really paying attention to those issues and continue to find ways, wherever we can, without negatively impacting critical services – and I know you can always say, what's the definition of a critical service? What's the definition between a need and a want? Sometimes the lines could be a little bit grey, a little bit blurry, but we need to have the collective courage, I believe, to make some tough decisions. We really do.

I talked to the Minister of Transportation and Works last night about roads, as an example. We need to be looking at: Are there opportunities? I just throw that out as an example. Are there opportunities to work with – and it's not going to work everywhere, obviously, but to work with some of the larger municipalities where we have sort of duplication of service or provincial plows passing through, what one could argue should be a municipal road, with the blade up and so on. Are there opportunities for the towns, I don't mean to download, but perhaps if it's more efficient for them to do it, perhaps we up their Municipal Operating Grant to – one offsets the other, if it could be determined that it's more efficient to do it that way.

Instead of having some small, isolated communities and telling them year over year over year, we're going to pave your road. When the reality is everybody knows, it's never going to happen in some areas. Again, this is not an attack on rural Newfoundland, because I've seen that in the House. The minute you open your mouth about that, someone, because of political purposes and partisan purposes, says, oh, you're against rural Newfoundland. Nothing could be further from the truth, but we all know there may be some areas where there's only 10 kilometres of road and you get down there and there are five or six houses and it's going to cost \$3 million or \$4 million to pave that road.

Is that realistic? Is it realistic or should we be honest with people and say, do you know what, we'll give you a good gravel road and we will keep it graded and we'll do whatever. We have to look at some of those things in the context of reality and what we can really afford because something has to give.

While we talk about reaching surplus in 2022 or whatever it is, that means for the next three years we're going to keep on piling onto the debt. If we do manage to reach a surplus in 2022, maybe we get another oil project that gets up and running or some things happen, some positive things, and we're good for a couple of years and we're reaching surplus. Then, all of sudden, we go into another downturn and then we say, okay, we're going to reach surplus in other five years out, but that means that's another five years that we're building on to the debt, year over year over year over year.

It's fine to look outwardly at these projections. It's fine to be optimistic, to paint rosy pictures, but we all have to live in reality and the reality is that we are living on a geographically challenged area with a half million people, and we are billions of dollars in debt, and that is growing every single year. That's not even counting Muskrat Falls. That's not even counting that. We're looking down the barrel of that in another year, two years out.

And we're hearing about rate mitigation. There's nobody hopes any more than I do, as someone who voted for it, that we can somehow undo what was done or mitigate against what was done, but we are looking at huge potential for power bills to go through the roof. It's fine to say the taxpayers are not going to pay; the ratepayers are not going to pay. Well, who's going to pay it? Are we going to wave a magic wand and pixie dust and all of a sudden it's all going to go away? It's not going to happen.

I've still yet to hear from my colleague across the way, the Minister of Natural Resources. She talked about some of the things that the PUB have said, and I understand that. I absolutely appreciate that. Some of the things make some sense, sell some excess power is one thing they talked about, renegotiating the mortgage, if you will, so extend it over, what is it, 50 years now, pay it off over a hundred years or whatever, I don't know. Basically it's like extending a mortgage on a house to lower the payments, but I haven't seen any details on exactly how that's going to work and how it's going to look.

I know they talk about things like electric cars and that kind of stuff, that's not happening tomorrow, if it ever happens, particularly in our

climate and so on. We're not just going to wave a magic wand in 2022 and we're all going to be driving around in electric cars. The only person I know doing that is the Speaker, and good for him for doing it, but besides him I don't know anybody else who drives an electric car. There might be a few more, but I don't know them.

We have to look at the reality of where we are to from a fiscal point of view. As my colleague, the Minister of Finance says, and I've heard him say it a number of times, and I agree with him, it's about balance. We can't simply just cut the guts out of her and shock the system and put everybody on EI in the province. We can't do that, and then of course the ripple effect and businesses shutting down and so on. We can't do that. We saw the impact even of shocking the system with all the taxes in 2015 and the impact it had on small business and the construction industry and everything else.

So we can't do that; I agree with him. We have to do it in a well-thought-out methodical way. I think they're on the right track. I feel like they're on the right track with the attrition plan; I really do. As long as, as my colleague from St. John's Centre says, it's not simply about the numbers, not simply about the dollar savings and bears in mind where it is you're cutting, what it is you're cutting and so on. But if they do it right, I think they're on the right track.

Because believe it or not, the government role is not to employ everybody in the province. That's not their role. Some people think that's the government's role. There are a lot of people I talk to who feel like everyone should work for the government. That's not the government's role. Government has a role, absolutely, to provide services that we all pay taxes toward and the by-product of providing those services is it creates job, but their role is not simply to employ people. Government's role, although, is to create an atmosphere by which the private sector can step in and do what it does best, or what it's supposed to do best, and create jobs.

Now, they don't create jobs for the sake of employing people either. They want to make money, naturally, but the by-product of that is job creation. I don't really care what their motivation is. I've often said, I don't begrudge anybody – anyone who's willing to sign their

mortgage on the line and put it all on the line and risk it to make some money, and if they make a good return on that, God love them, I'd say. Good for them.

So I don't care what their motivation is or why they do it. I don't care if they don't do it because they want to employ people or they do it because they want to make money – good for them. But as long as the end result is we're creating employment, that's a good thing. We need more and more and more of that.

That's also why I think it's important as well, when we talk about government's role in all this, as my colleague has been raising from Humber - Bay of Islands, reading petitions in this House of Assembly, and it's very important that we need to be working with our own Newfoundland companies to make sure that wherever possible the work that's being generated in this province from our natural resources – ours, nobody else's, they belong to us, belong to the people, particularly the non-renewable resources that are one time, to make sure that the primary beneficiary of that are our own people so they can stay home and work.

And guess what? When they're home and working, where does their money go? Their money is circulating around our economy, in our businesses and we're all benefiting from it. Unlike bringing in people from outside, they come in and their money goes outside and they're spending their paycheque in Quebec or they're spending their paycheque in New Brunswick or in Nova Scotia or wherever it's to. We see no benefit, other than a bit of food and lodging or whatever, or if they go down on George Street on a Friday night to unwind or something. Other than that, we're not seeing any benefit. But when our own people are working, our economy sees the benefit. Our small business sees the benefit and then they're paying taxes and they're hiring more people and there's a ripple effect and it benefits our economy.

Government, in addition to trying to be more efficient, cutting expenditures, we also need to work very hard at creating local employment, ensuring that we are the primary beneficiary or our resources.

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, I see I'm out of time. Government, on a lot of the measures I said, you're on the right track; let's work together to make it happen.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

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

Given the hour, I would further move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This House does stand adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you.

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