

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of St. John's Centre, the Member for the District of Lake Melville, the Member for the District of Lewisporte, the Member for the District of Bay of Islands, the Member for the District of St. Barbe, and the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand to congratulate the Fish, Food and Allied Workers' Union and Canadian Auto Workers for really making a difference in the lives of women.

Last Saturday I spoke at their women's conference. It was the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Their theme was: The Personal Is Political. We talked about violence against women – in the workplace, in the home, and in our communities. We talked about what women and men can do together to help end violence and discrimination against women.

Their new Women's Advocates program trains women to be advocates for co-workers who may be victims of violence. They offer support and help finding resources. One woman who was helped by a co-worker said "she was like a snowplow clearing the way. I still had to drive my car through the storm but she moved the barriers..."

They are headquartered in St. John's Centre but their members stretch right across Newfoundland and Labrador. I am so impressed with the incredible work the women and men of labour are doing together on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in thanking the FFAW/CAW once again for their leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Lake Melville.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand to congratulate the Mealy Mountain Collegiate female soccer team on their success in capturing gold and the AAA provincial banner at the school sports Newfoundland and Labrador provincial championships in Springdale, from October 11 to 13.

The MMC girls did not disappoint their fans in Lake Melville. They went on an undefeated streak at the tournament beating Mobile Central High, Clarendville High, and Ascension Collegiate during the round robin portion.

In the finals, the Mealy Mountain Collegiate girls played Stephenville and it took an extra twenty minutes of overtime, Mr. Speaker, but the girls were able to win by a goal scored by Striker Amy Rowsell.

Coaches Mr. Ed Turpin and Andrew Rowsell said that the girls represented their school and community with class. They displayed superior skills, excellent work ethic, and exceptional sportsmanship throughout the entire tournament.

The team members were: Amy Rowsell, Caleigh Ivany, Charlene Duffett, Riley Winters, Maria Mullaly, Shila Ford, Rebekah Whey, Andrea White, Laura Baikie, Kim Broomfield, Megan Manners, Sarah Roberts, Crystal Acreman, Haley Battcock, Brittany Baldwin, Tana Pittman, and Kailey Marque.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this hon. House to join with me in extending congratulations to the Mealy Mountain Collegiate female soccer team on capturing the 2012 School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador provincial championship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Lewisporte.

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

**MR. VERGE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding volunteer from my district. Fred Budgell of Norris Arm has been known and recognized for his many works of volunteerism throughout our area.

His achievements include: Mayor of Norris Arm for fifteen years; twenty-five years on the executive of the Lion's Club; service with the denominational education committee; service with the Notre Dame Integrated School Board; served with the Hillview Academy playground committee; fundraiser coordinator for the Canadian Red Cross for Norris Arm; past executive member of the West District United Church Conference; chairman of the Fox Moth Museum; chairman of the United Church Board of Management; service with the Royal Canadian Legion; and program coordinator for the Kids Eat Smart Program at Hillview Academy.

In the year 2000, Mr. Budgell was presented with the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. In October of this year, he was presented with the Senior of Distinction Award by the Minister of Health and Community Services, and also with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Lieutenant-Governor.

Members of the House of Assembly, please join me in recognizing Fred Budgell for the outstanding contributions he has made to his community and to our entire Province.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms Lillian Wells of Cox's Cove, who will be celebrating her 100 birthday on December 6.

Ms Wells was born in Gillams, Bay of Islands in 1912 to Edmund and Margaret Blanchard. Being the oldest of the family, she would go in the woods with her father, cutting wood and bringing it out on oxen, and helping out with whatever needed to be done. She worked for many years in the herring stores and in later years, she operated her own general store and a theatre, as well as taking boarders every winter.

Ms Wells has seven children, four step-children, eleven grandchildren, twelve step-grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren, twenty-one step-great-grandchildren, twenty-one great-great-grandchildren, and two step-

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great-great-grandchildren.

Ms Wells still resides in her own home and enjoys going out to a game of cards or bingo, and enjoys her weekly trip to Corner Brook and a couple of weeks of camping every summer. She is still in good health despite the fact that two years ago she underwent five weeks of cancer treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in extending birthday wishes to Ms Wells on her special day, and wish her continued good health.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize and commend the dedicated volunteers who have made the Voice of Bonne Bay a permanent community radio station that also broadcast on the Internet.

In 2008, the Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital Heritage Corporation collaborated with a private company to operate a radio station for the Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival in Norris Point. Called the Voice of Bonne Bay, this broadcast was so successful that it was repeated in 2009 and 2010.

The Voice of Bonne Bay also worked with the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance and coordinator Anita Best in October 2009 and 2012 to broadcast a series of meetings and workshops.

Based on the success of the VOBB, the Heritage Corporation formed a committee that ensures the management and operation, with programming the responsibility of the community.

VOBB reflects the aspirations, interests, and individuality of the community; engages seniors, youth, and the community at large in programming; and addresses health, wellness, culture, heritage, the environment, and more.

By adopting a co-operative regional approach, VOBB illustrates how the greater Bonne Bay community can market itself to the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in recognizing these volunteers.

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

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

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

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

I stand today to acknowledge the establishment of the Emma Churchill-Dawson Seniors' Memorial Park in Portugal Cove. On October 12 of this year I had the privilege of attending the opening of the park, located at the Bell Island-Portugal Cove ferry terminal area. Many leaders from the community and the Salvation Army provincial executive attended.

The Salvation Army in Newfoundland and Labrador had its genesis in the Town of Portugal Cove. In 1883, after migrating with her parents to Toronto, Emma Churchill of Portugal Cove enrolled as a Salvation Army Officer, only the eleventh Officer to be commissioned in Canada by the fledgling movement. Emma, along with her husband Charles Dawson, returned to Portugal Cove on their honeymoon in August 1885 and during that time held the first-ever Salvation Army gathering in Portugal Cove.

This park will serve seniors and all residents of the community as a place to relax and appreciate the natural scenery of the area.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Town of Portugal Cove – St. Phillips on the opening of the Emma Churchill-Dawson Seniors' Memorial Park.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we proceed further today, I want to welcome some special guests to both the Speaker's gallery and the public gallery.

Today in the Speaker's gallery we have the former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, the hon. Margaret McCain, who is accompanied by her daughter Ms Eleanor McCain – who, by the way, is playing with the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra – together with her granddaughter, Laura David. Laura is accompanied by her teacher, Ms Catherine Henderson.

Welcome to our Assembly.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We are also quite honoured today to have in our public galleries Ms Mary Shortall, a representative of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Ms Tina Pretty of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union.

Welcome to our Assembly.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members will recall earlier in the week we had a couple of points of order raised, and I want to address them before we start the proceedings today.

I want to respond particularly to a point of order raised by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services on November 27 regarding the accuracy of a statement contained in a petition presented by the Member for St. John's North on November 27.

I want to cite section 90 of our Standing Orders, which states, "A petition to the House shall be presented by a Member in his or her place who shall be answerable that it does not contain impertinent or improper matter...."

In its argument on the point of order, the government has indicated that the phrase "impertinent or improper" means that a petition containing statements that are inaccurate are out of order. Reliance has been placed on the word "improper".

We must look at the meaning of this term within its parliamentary use. According to O'Brien and Bosc, Chapter 22, petitions today are "a valued means of bringing public concerns to the attention of Parliament." Historically and in practice they must be correct as to form and content, but this is taken to mean containing a prayer requesting action, being respectful in tone and bearing original signatures.

Petitions are a means by which members of the public can have their concerns heard. They are not petitions of the members themselves. O'Brien and Bosc further states with respect to presentation of petitions, "Members are not bound to present petitions and cannot be compelled to do so".

It goes on to say, "The Member whose role it is to make the presentation on behalf of the petitioners is not required to be in agreement with the content of any petition he or she may choose to present, and no such inference is to be drawn."

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I also want to quote from Erskine May, 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 814, which states, "The language of a petition should be respectful and temperate and free from disrespectful language to the sovereign, or offensive imputation upon the character or conduct of a parliamentarian...."

It goes on to say in Erskine May, "The language... may be improper, not because of its being offence in itself or indecorous but the statement of which it is the vehicle are not proper to be made by the petitioners...".

It can be concluded from the foregoing that "improper" in the context of section 90 of our Standing Orders does not mean containing inaccurate information. It relates more to "impropriety" and not being suitable or proper in a petition. A member is not usually responsible for the content of the prayer of petitions given to them by the general public. He or she is putting forward the views and requests of others and need not even agree with the content of the petition.

Consequently, with respect to the point of order, there is no valid point of order.

I think this brings us to the real crux of the issue that gave rise to the point of order in the first place. The question, I think, is: What is the responsibility of a member who prepares petitions on behalf of constituents or other members of the public?

In order to discuss our responsibilities, the history and purpose of petitions should be laid out.

Petitioning the Crown is an ancient right. It dates from petitions going back to the Medieval times and is a means for "commoners" to bring forward their concerns and grievances that have to be addressed. The rights of "commoners" to lay a grievance before the House in the form of a petition and the power of Parliament to deal with this has been confirmed in two resolutions in the British House of Commons, dating back to the 1600s. I will just share with you these two quotes, because I think it is important to create the context for my further comments.

"That it is the inherit right of every commoner in England to prepare and present petitions to the House of Commons in case of grievance, and the House of Commons to receive the same."

In addition, the second resolution, "That it is an undoubted right and privilege of the Commons to judge and determine, touching the nature of such petitions, how far they are fit and unfit to be received". Again, that is directly from Erskine May, 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 811.

These principles have evolved in our House of Assembly and indeed throughout the British Commonwealth in the Standing Orders with respect to petitions. A private individual cannot present a petition on his or her own behalf. It must be submitted by a member.

If members – and this is an important point – take it upon themselves to draft petitions and arrange for their signing by the general public, it does not mean that the issue is not of great concern to the petitioners. However, the manner in which the prayer and the subject matter of the petition have been prepared places a greater responsibility and onus upon the member drafter to ensure that citations and references are respectful, factually correct and accurate. To do otherwise may bring the role for which they were elected into disrepute.

I want to quote from Erskine May again, 19<sup>th</sup> edition, page 814, "The language of a petition should be respectful and temperate and free from disrespectful language to the sovereign, or offensive imputation upon the character or conduct of a parliamentarian...."

In this House we must assume that members speak the truth and are accurate in their statements.

In this regard, I would like to thank the Member for the District of St. Barbe, who, upon realizing that the information contained in the petition he presented was inaccurate due to the passage of time, stood in this House yesterday and corrected the information.

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The Speaker acknowledges the partisan nature of the House and the thrust and cut of the spirited debate that takes place here. However, I caution members to be mindful not to embellish the truth or manipulate facts for political purposes when speaking in this House.

This must also apply to petitions which may originate with the member; that is the member who is preparing the petition themselves for others to sign.

Erskine May, 19<sup>th</sup> edition, page 813 states, "Any forgery or fraud in the preparation of petitions or in the signatures attached, or the being privy to, or cognizant of such forgery or fraud, is liable to be punished as a breach of privilege and is considered and dealt with as a matter of privilege" in this House.

I would not want in any way to have my remarks construed that any of the hon. members in this House would intentionally make false or inaccurate statements. I am simply making the point that considering the great responsibility that comes with the reliance on and acceptance of each member's words, that appropriate care is taken in the preparation and presentation of petitions and indeed all statements made in this House.

There was a second point of order raised with a similar situation, a similar issue I think at hand. On November 26, the hon. the Minister of Natural Resources raised a point of order about comments made by the Leader of the Third Party on November 22 in which the member cited information in a report on oil production. The matter is not one of order but rather of a difference of opinion between hon. members about the interpretation or analysis of information. The minister has taken the opportunity to offer an opinion on the matter as he sees it. There is no point of order with respect to this issue either.

I would ask members to be guided as they speak in this House, whether it is presenting petitions or making statements or posing questions, any contribution they make to debate, and to be mindful of the responsibility that they have that goes with the privileges that we enjoy by being in this House of Assembly.

Statements by Ministers.

### **Statements by Ministers**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the women who play a vital role in our Province's business community and make a valuable contribution to our Province's economic development.

Earlier this month, the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs, NLOWE, held its annual Entrepreneur of the Year Awards gala. For the past fifteen years, NLOWE has recognized women whose successful businesses contribute to the provincial economy and their communities. These women are using innovative technologies and expanding into new markets. They are leaders in their fields and respected in their industries. They are the best and brightest entrepreneurs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Premier was in attendance to present the awards to the winners. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the 2012 award recipients and offer them our sincere congratulations on their outstanding achievements.

Winner of the Youth Entrepreneur of the Year award was Katherine Hiscock of Beautiful Rock soaps in Gander; winner of the Start-up award was Melanie Caines of Nova Yoga in St. John's; winner of the Entrepreneurial Excellence award and the Community Impact award was Cathy Bennett of Bennett Group of Companies in St.



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John's; and winner of the Innovation award and the Visionary award was Debra Feltham of Feltham-Attwood Certified General Accountants in Mount Pearl.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we value our partnership with NLOWE as we understand the importance of advancing opportunities for women entrepreneurs. We continuously work with NLOWE to advance women-owned businesses into traditionally male-dominated industries such as mining, oil and gas, and energy sectors.

Our government is grateful that we have an organization like NLOWE to provide strong supports for new and established women entrepreneurs through a wide range of services.

Once again, I congratulate the 2012 Entrepreneur of the Year Award recipients. I look forward to our continued partnership with NLOWE to advance the success of women in business in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of her statement. We, too, want to join with the government to congratulate the many women entrepreneurs that we have across Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not think it is any secret that more and more we are seeing women engage in business and reaching higher plateaus than we ever dreamed even ten or fifteen years ago.

All of this is possible through the support they have in society, in their communities, and at home. Of course, government plays a role in that through the Office of the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs.

I want to also congratulate Katherine Hiscock, Melanie Caines, Cathy Bennett, and Debra Feltham for the superb work they have done, not only fostering excellence and innovation within our communities and throughout the Province, but for having vision, having the courage to take risks, and having good, new ideas that can be presented in this Province that can earn money and earn excellence in all facets of business.

We see women today, Mr. Speaker, not just engaged in traditional business opportunities but branching out in many other sectors. We see women who are craft producers and entrepreneurs to property investors and bankers. They are in all sorts of business that you can name in between, and they are doing a great job. Not only are they creating a professional career for themselves where they can, in many cases, continue to raise a family, but they are also creating jobs and opportunities for many others in our Province. I congratulate them for that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I, too, want to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I congratulate NLOWE for all the fantastic work they do with women entrepreneurs in Newfoundland and Labrador. As we all know, women have

always been part of the backbone of the economy of our Province. As the late Rhonda Payne wrote in one of her plays: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador work from stars in the sky morning to stars in the sky night.

We still have too many women, particularly seniors, living in poverty in our Province, women who have worked hard all their lives. It is my hope that more women entrepreneurs join us in this House as elected representatives and bring their wisdom, their experience, and their compassion to the decisions we make here on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Once again, congratulations to this year's award winners. Bravo, Katherine, Melanie, Cathy, and Debra, and bravo, NLOWE. Thank you, sisters, for your incredible work.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government Supplier Development Program is helping local companies identify new business opportunities within the public sector, as well as major industrial projects.

Within the public sector, there are numerous opportunities for local businesses to sell their products and services.

The provincial government alone spends millions annually on the procurement of goods and services ranging from office supplies to materials, to maintaining highways, to public facilities. When you factor in other levels of government, as well as Crown corporations and government agencies, that number swells into the billions of dollars.

Since 2005, the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development has organized fifty-nine supplier development events. These were attended by over 1,300 people from local businesses who gained valuable insight and knowledge into supply chain requirements.

Outside of the public sector, we coordinate similar initiatives to create awareness of vast opportunities associated with the development of major industrial projects.

In addition to the significant employment that they create, these projects demand an incredible amount of products and services. As reflected by the success of businesses throughout the Province that are servicing these industrial projects, the sum of these opportunities is exciting and indeed rewarding.

The success of large-scale industrial projects underway in the Province has also led to the development of world-class expertise and capabilities that increasingly are in demand in the global marketplace. It is also attracting major retail and commercial developments to communities throughout the Province that are contributing to the diversification of the provincial economy.

As a government, we are a committed and vested partner in supporting conditions where this growth and development can continue into the future and the high level of business optimism continues to surpass other Canadian jurisdictions.

I encourage all businesses to contact my department to learn more about our Supplier Development Program. It is an important initiative that connects vendors and procurers to help ensure the maximum benefits are realized for Newfoundland and Labrador businesses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. There is no doubt that business is very important to this Province and very important to all economies. It is an important economic driver; it is important for diversification. Businesses large and small are great for communities large and small and facilitate and generate employment.

Mr. Speaker, to quote a very prominent businessperson in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador as stated in the Outlook 2013 for the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council – and that person is Bill Barry: "Global challenges increasingly concern Bill Barry of the Barry Group, particularly the growing debt levels seen in many jurisdictions which are increasing risks for the global economy."

He also spoke of the weakening demographic situation in Newfoundland and Labrador which is facing its own long-term fiscal challenges. Mr. Barry is quoted as saying that this will require business and government to make thoughtful decisions, to implement tough decisions where needed, and to keep chasing opportunities as they emerge.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned, as is much of the business community, with the growth in government debt, the growth in the size of government – and, in particular, government mismanagement of its resources. It is not government's resources; it is the people's resources. It seems that at a time when business learns to do more and more with less and less, government learns to do less and less with more and more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

There is no question there are opportunities for local companies to sell to the public sector and a role for IBRD to partner with Community Business Development Corporations to help current and new businesses be supplier ready. I encourage the government to continue to reduce red tape, but also to consider scale.

Mr. Speaker, procuring government contracts is out of reach of many small businesses because of the need to supply more than just localized departments and agency offices when contracts are typically tendered. Maybe this could be something that could be reviewed.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the Member for St. John's South have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No leave.

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

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

**MR. FRENCH:** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the recent designations appointed under the Provincial Historic Commemorations Program.

The Provincial Historic Commemorations Program allows us to recognize, honour and interpret our cultural and historic treasures. The program also acknowledges the unique examples of our intangible cultural heritage that

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deals with the customs, cultural practices, traditional skills and knowledge that define the Province and its people.

Citizens of the Province have the opportunity to submit nominations for consideration in the categories of Exceptional People of the Past, Outstanding Historic Events, Unique Places, Distinctive Cultural Traditions and Practices, and Tradition Bearers.

Mr. Speaker, the latest commemorations ceremony was held in Grand Falls-Windsor in October to pay tribute to six new designates.

In the category of Distinctive Cultural Tradition of Practice the inductees were the Trapper, Fish and Brewis – certainly, an important event in my house on Christmas Eve, Mr. Speaker – and the S. S. Newfoundland Sealing Disaster of 1914. In the category of Event of Provincial Significance, designations were Resettlement, and the Founding of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. John Nicholas Jeddore of Conne River was also designated as a Tradition Bearer.

These inductions into the Provincial Historic Commemorations Program are provincially significant as they have influenced the history, culture, and the way of life of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Since the launch of the cultural strategy, the provincial government has invested more than \$56 million into arts, culture and the heritage sectors. It is encouraging to see more individuals preserving and celebrating our cultural heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of the statement.

Members on all sides of the House would like to recognize all the events and groups, and Mr. John Nicholas Jeddore, for being recognized. As we all know, Newfoundland and Labrador is rich in our history and culture, and as we say: If we look where we came from it will help us where we are today and will help bring us into the future.

Some events there – like the Sealing Disaster of 1914 – are very ingrained in our history and our culture and are still part of our sealing industry today. If we look at some of the traditional foods, like fish and brewis, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, many people just love the taste of fish and brewis. This is part of our staple for years in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I say to the minister, anything that the government can do to uphold our traditions, help let the younger people understand our traditions from the past, we on this side will support anything that government will do to ensure that it stays alive in our culture and in our history of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am quite pleased to stand in response to the minister's statement. I was quite glad, also, to receive notification from his department that an event related to a group from my constituency, the Founding of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, was being recognized, and was glad that I was able to attend the ceremony.

It is so important that we keep alive our history, customs, cultural practices, and traditional skills and knowledge. I encourage the minister, though, to ensure that this program is given more profile and publicity so that more of the population will begin making nominations for the honours and that more people will learn about our heritage.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the Member for St. John's South have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, SNC-Lavalin are in the news again today as their former CEO has been arrested on three fraud charges, and a former senior executive has been charged with \$139 million in suspected illicit payments. This is more than double the amount of missing money that was first reported by the company.

I ask the Premier today: Since SNC-Lavalin has the \$60 million Muskrat Falls contract on lead engineering and project management, will you reveal the complete details of their contract with government and Nalcor, and tell us who you are communicating with at that company?

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

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

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

It is my understanding that the individual who was charged today in relation to Quebec was also charged earlier in terms of what was going on in Switzerland.

We answered questions in the House of Assembly last year, Mr. Speaker, that SNC-Lavalin is one of the biggest engineering companies in the world, and they were hired in early 2011 to do the engineering procurement and construction management.

At that time, there were discussions with a high level of officials to ensure that what was happening elsewhere in the world was not affecting what they were doing at Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker. Nalcor has 100 employees up there working with SNC-Lavalin, so everything is being monitored very closely. They are a big company, a multinational-international company, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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There is another individual who has been charged as well, I say to the minister.

Cost overruns are typically in the 30 per cent to 50 per cent range, but the Premier and the government has only budgeted 12 per cent for Muskrat Falls. We feel that allowing only 12 per cent for overruns is absurd and unrealistic in today's larger projects.

All government has to do is look at what is happening with the construction here on this building, Confederation Building, which is 150 per cent over. Look at Vale Inco's plant in Long Harbour, 66 per cent over, and projects by Manitoba Hydro that are at 85 per cent in cost overruns.

I ask the Premier today: Is it true that the only reason you are using 12 per cent as a cost overrun number is to keep the published cost of this project artificially low?

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

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

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

There were about six questions in that question, so I will try to answer some of them.

Mr. Speaker, at the DG 2 phase, 5 per cent of the engineering had been done, as explained by Mr. Martin. At the DG 3 phase, Mr. Speaker, we now have 50 per cent of the engineering done, and especially in relation to tricky areas that could go into overruns.

Mr. Martin has indicated that there is a plus or minus 10 per cent at this stage, having regard to the stage of engineering that we are at. He said and he indicated the day that we made the announcement and released the MHI report and Decision Gate 3 numbers that he consulted with other people, that they felt right now that the contingency that was included was appropriate, having regard to the extent of the engineering that had been done.

Mr. Speaker, I just wish the other side would not attribute these motives – especially the member opposite, should not really be doing that right now.

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

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

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

You cannot deny the fact that most of these projects have drastic overruns, and Muskrat Falls is only budgeted at 12 per cent.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, to justify the Muskrat Falls Project, the Premier has relied on Manitoba Hydro, but what she has not told us is that Manitoba Hydro's own Wasquatum project just went over by 85 per cent. On top of that, the residents in the Province are being forced to pay higher rates while selling their power to the United States for three cents.

I ask the Premier: How can you justify Muskrat Falls based on Manitoba Hydro's endorsement, when their own projects have already seen such failures?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, you gave a ruling earlier on using accurate information. It is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, to do so, especially when we are talking about a project that is so important to the people of the Province.

MHI did go 80 per cent over its Decision Gate 2 numbers. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, but very little engineering was done. Mr. Speaker, they only went 16 per cent over their Decision Gate 3 numbers. It is still too high, Mr. Speaker, but a big difference from 15 per cent to 80 per cent.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier: Now that we know that Manitoba Hydro could be pushed to insolvency and that they have admitted to vast overruns on the Wasquatum project, how confident are you now that Manitoba Hydro are the best people to trust with this project for Muskrat Falls?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is a situation where as a government you are damned if you do, and you are damned if you do not. Mr. Speaker, we looked to hire a firm that could be acceptable to the people as being independent.

The PUB, Mr. Speaker, had hired Manitoba Hydro through an RFP process. I assume they thought they were qualified at the time, Mr. Speaker. What we did when we looked at someone to review the DG 3 numbers, we hired them.

Navigant was not good enough, they were not objective, Mr. Speaker; other companies were not objective. There are only so many companies in the world can do this. I see nothing to indicate that Manitoba Hydro's report is flawed. If it is, show us.

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

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

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

The people in the Province have asked for public oversight and for a full PUB review of the Muskrat Falls Project; however, the government has refused saying that Manitoba Hydro are world-class experts and they trust their opinion. We know today that this same company is now threatening the financial viability of the Province of Manitoba and their own projects.

I ask the government today: Are they now prepared to send the Muskrat Falls Project to a full review of the Public Utilities Board?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Just wait now, let me try to discern the logic in this. We should go to the PUB because the PUB is the qualified and experienced group to deal with this matter. Yet, the PUB is the group that hired this unqualified, inexperienced, unprofessional group. Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

We have all the numbers before us. Reports have been reviewed and prepared. Show us something in the MHI numbers or show us something in the Decision Gate numbers, Mr. Speaker, that causes concern. This simply going to the PUB is a matter of process because they have no substance to argue.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, in December 2009 this government released its first progress report on poverty reduction and therein committed to releasing such a report every two years. The second report is now one year late.

I ask the minister responsible for poverty reduction: You said this week that poverty reduction was a priority of this government in 2003; how could you miss the very first deadline set on progress reporting?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when government was formed in 2003, we were very concerned about the rates of poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador. We also understood you are not going to change the rates of poverty overnight. It was going to take a concerted effort across various government departments and would also be done in the long-term. We developed the ten-year Poverty Reduction Strategy. We are presently moving through that strategy.

Mr. Speaker, this Province alone spends \$150 million annually on poverty reduction strategies in different programs across departments. We have been able to move from the Province with the highest rate of poverty in Canada to the Province with the third-lowest rate of poverty. Mr. Speaker, that is progress, and we will continue on that path.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, this government has committed to becoming the Province with the lowest poverty rate in Canada by 2014. However, we currently have the highest food bank usage, the third-highest rate of childhood poverty, and the second-lowest income per capita in the country. We are facing a deficit of possibly \$500 million and are looking at taking on the biggest debt in our history.

I ask the minister responsible: You have one year; how do you plan to get us there?

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to move this Province forward. As we move this Province forward, as we develop our resources and we bring on the mega-projects, we will also make sure we concentrate on people who may not be able to take advantage of the opportunities that lie before us. We have people who are in positions in this Province, Mr. Speaker, who are far more vulnerable than others.

We will ensure through our Poverty Reduction Strategy that we will continue with initiatives that are actively reducing or preventing poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we will also



ensure that if there are other programs or policies that need to be developed to help us address the people who need these initiatives, we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, a ten-year strategy is a long-term strategy and it shows the commitment of this government.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, school closures in our Province have dominated the news in recent months with parents passionately pleading to save their community schools. This week, the Education Minister admitted that he had no policy to guide school boards. He does, however, have ministerial power to keep schools open. Isn't that just peachy?

I ask the minister: Will he support his colleague, the Member for Bellevue, who supports the parents, and place a freeze on school closures until government figures out how to deliver education in the twenty-first century?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, we very much understand the situation and the circumstances that occur when there are talks of a school closure. It is a very emotional debate.

Mr. Speaker, there is a legislated body within the Province that administers the school closure, that being our school boards. These are elected officials.

Under the same legislation, Mr. Speaker, from 1996 to 2003, previous governments closed 127 schools. We are operating, Mr. Speaker, under the same policy as previous governments.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, as many as ten community education models are in use in Canada today. British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have adopted the community school program in response to declining enrolment. Even the United States, UK, and Australia have embraced this model.

Will the minister stop closing schools until he has considered the success of community schools worldwide and how this model could work for us?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, let me outline for the member what we do for the smaller schools in our communities. There was a point when all schools received equal allocations. Then we changed the model to needs based.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of our smaller schools – for example, a school of around twenty-five students – that could have five teachers allocated to that school because it is based on a needs allocation.

CDLI, the distance education courses, this government has increased the funding for that program by 60 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That is all about delivery of better programs for the students in our Province.

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

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

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

The Nunatsiavut Government need not be reminded by the Minister of Natural Resources that the proposed Muskrat Falls Project is outside their land claims area. They are also aware, Mr. Speaker, that contaminated water from the dam will flow into the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, polluting the land, water, and traditional food supply.

I ask the minister: Why are you disputing the fact that the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area will not be affected by the Muskrat Falls Project?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Mr. Speaker, I just simply stated the fact that the Muskrat Falls is not within the Labrador Inuit Settlement claims area, that there is a zone in which there is consultation required, and that there has been consultation. Nalcor has indicated there have been over eighty records of engagement with officials or members of the Nunatsiavut Government, Mr. Speaker. They have participated in the public hearings. Mr. Speaker, they have made recommendations, they submitted studies. Essentially, they have been involved. The panel made certain recommendations, some of which have been accepted by Nalcor and the federal government, some of which have not.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of consultation here. It is a question of, we do not agree with all of their recommendations. That is a different issue. You cannot confuse consultation with agreement.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, research by the Nunatsiavut Government monitoring mercury levels in Lake Melville is being done in partnership with the credible firm known as ArcticNet – a Network of Centres of Excellence of Canada. They are being supported by the Harvard School of Public Health, Memorial University, the University of Connecticut, and Trent University.

I ask the minister: If you are as concerned about the environment as you claim to be, why will Nalcor and the government not co-operate fully with the Nunatsiavut Government?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the recommendations were made, we looked at them as a government. The federal government accepted some of the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and we indicated that we accepted the intent of the recommendations.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that there are ongoing studies. Nalcor has indicated that they are doing the human health assessment study. We are looking at this as it goes along, and at this particular time, Mr. Speaker, the decision has been made, we are moving on. However, we will talk to – I understand there have been meetings requested. The Premier met with the president, she responded to the former Premier.

Mr. Speaker, we have consulted with them. We have made our decisions and we will move on, but we are always open to discussion.

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

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

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

The Immigrant Investors Fund is funded by the federal government. The fund currently contains \$256 million, which is supposed to be used for economic development and job creation. BC, for example, has created over 2,000 jobs, built hospitals, schools, and invested \$100 million in thirteen BC private companies.

I ask the minister: How is it BC can create 2,000 jobs and invest hundreds of millions, yet you have the money in your account for over seven years and not invested one penny?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to correct some information the member put out in regard to a \$5 million loss within that fund, which is totally inaccurate. He has been out in the media, and he mentioned it here as well.

That fund, as I mentioned in the House – I think it was yesterday or the day before – we entered into a partnership with the federal government in the first phase from 2005-2010. It has to be paid back after five years. It is a loan, with fees paid to cover those loans. It needs to be paid back. We did investments at commercial rates, as well as with bonds, to make sure we could cover that. Right now, there is a surplus of over \$3 million. We certainly have not lost \$5 million that was indicated by the hon. member.

In regard to economic development, we will take second seat to nobody in the country in terms of economic development in what we did in this Province, Mr. Speaker; \$135 million through IBRD alone, with 70 per cent to 80 per cent of that gone in...

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

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

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, if you do not think it was in the Auditor General's report that you lost \$5 million, go up to Minister Joan Shea's office and ask John Noseworthy, who wrote the report and tabled it in this House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask members to refer to members in the House by their title and not by their names, please.

**MR. JOYCE:** I am sorry, I apologize. I withdraw that. I am sorry.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask the member to very quickly get to his question, no preamble, just the question.

**MR. JOYCE:** I ask the minister: Why are you refusing to do your job and use the \$256 million for the benefit of the people of this Province and stop letting it sit in a bank account...

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

The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, for a quick response.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me the Auditor General's report, I am quite familiar with it. What was estimated in the Auditor General's report was a surplus of over \$3 million. As well, recognizing there is a five-year period to pay back the fund, what the estimated cost would be to pay that back. That is recognized, that is the cost we need to make sure that we have to pay back those funds. That is what is recognized in the report.

The Auditor General says we are on-line; we are doing our right investments. The money is sound. It is an investment that needs to be paid back. We have met all the requirements. The Auditor General has recognized we have met those requirements. The hon. member is incorrect about his statement, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

Next Monday, the Premier will be speaking to the Canadian Club of Toronto about her government's Energy Plan and her cherished Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project. Her release says she will be speaking about investing non-renewable resource money into renewable resources, mainly Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Will she mention that her Muskrat Falls Project has no foreseeable market for 40 per cent of the power, has no loan guarantee, and that two independent reviews disagreed with government's position on the project?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, if all of that was true, the Leader of the Third Party could relax and stop using up Question Period about a project that is not going to progress.

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

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

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

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

Well, I am asking the Premier: Where is the 40 per cent of power going? Where is the loan guarantee? When she answers that question, she can make the comment she just made.

Mr. Speaker, in her press release, the Premier talks about the charting of a path to use the financial benefits of non-renewable resources to lay the foundation for a sustainable economy for this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Is there anything else on her path besides Muskrat Falls, and if so, what is it?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, not only do the people in Newfoundland and Labrador know what is on the path of this government, but the whole country knows. We are the envy of the country, Mr. Speaker, in terms of our economy and what is happening here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**PREMIER DUNDERDALE:** Mr. Speaker, we have explained quite clearly where the power is going from Muskrat Falls: 40 per cent will be used for ratepayers here in the Province, 20 per cent is going to go to Emera in Nova Scotia, and 40 per cent will go to the spot market. We have calculated in our agreements with Emera, given the fact we have control of 65 per cent of the Maritime Link for the next thirty-five years before we own it outright, and we have negotiated a path right into Atlantic Canada and the American markets.

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

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

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

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

Well, I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: If Emera says no to building the Maritime Link or a loan guarantee is not forthcoming, what is she going to do then?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when we need the power in Labrador, as we fully anticipate we will, we will draw that 40 per cent of power back, and even more if necessary into Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, before we go to sanction, we will have the loan guarantee. We have not made a sanction decision yet. When we do go to a sanction decision, everything that is required to give confidence to the people of this Province that all of the proper arrangements are in place will be very clear and will be properly done.

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

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

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

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

MHI reported in October that labour availability remains a major risk to the construction of the Labrador-Island Link transmission line. It reports that Nalcor has recognized this major risk and has identified ways to attract skilled labour back to the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: What exactly are Nalcor's plans for bringing back these workers to the Province?

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

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, we have been working for a number of years to develop the mega-projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, including Muskrat Falls. Part of the planning process includes Nalcor being able to project what their labour demand will be.

Mr. Speaker, in order for us to be able to develop the labour force in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have spent a significant amount of money. Even this year alone, Mr. Speaker, \$50 million of our provincial Budget goes towards supporting pre-apprentices and apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that we are prepared. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador who can benefit from our resource developments will have every opportunity, if they so wish, to take advantage of the opportunities that lay ahead.

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

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

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

Nalcor has taken that into consideration. So has MHI when they say there is still a risk.

I ask the Premier: How is government planning to convince people to leave permanent well-paying jobs in other parts of Canada for short-term contracts in this Province, because the numbers here are not enough?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, finding labour for projects is a challenge in every sector of our economy and in every place in this country. That is not a reason to halt progress.

We have trained Newfoundlanders and Labradorians not only right across this country, but right around the world, Mr. Speaker. They are not coming home for a short-term project. We have Vale Inco, we have the expansions at IOC, we have the Lower Churchill Project, we have the Hebron agreement, and we have potential mining developments in Labrador.

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

**PREMIER DUNDERDALE:** Mr. Speaker, we have been very strategic in our planning, stacking all of these projects, so that when people come home they have long-term employment prospects.

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

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



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

Mr. Speaker, despite the existence of a silica dust code, there are even more cases of silicosis and cancer among the hard-working miners in Labrador West. In November 2010, Service Newfoundland and Labrador issued an RFP for a medical review of the x-rays of mine workers and a company was chosen to do it. It is November 2012, two years later – two years later, Mr. Speaker – and workers are still waiting for this study to start.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why has the medical review of these workers' X-rays not started and when will it start?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

Very recently we finished negotiations with the company that will be carrying out the audit on the dust study. Within a matter of days – we just finished putting the negotiations on the table and we should very quickly see where the audit will start. So, in the very near future we will have an answer on that.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, it is two years later – two years later. The Silica Code of Practice was expected to result in safer air quality for miners and for all the people of Labrador West.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will the department fund a dust study of the communities to ensure that public health of the people of Labrador West is protected?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

We are very aware of the dust problems, especially in all the industrial areas in of our Province, and this is part of the negotiations that we were working on to have this dust study done. The negotiations were just finalized, as I said, just a couple of days ago, and we will move forward in the very near future.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for St. John's East.

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

The cost to government will go up with Muskrat Falls, costs such as those from higher energy costs for schools, hospitals and government buildings will also be on the rise. What analysis has government done on these added costs, and will the minister table these reports?

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

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

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

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

I am not aware of what the member is talking about. In fact, what we know is that as the cost of oil goes up – which it will, by the way, and will maintain around \$100 per barrel in the next number of years – it is going to cost more for electricity.

With Muskrat Falls, the cost of electricity will go down. So, I fail to see where the question is coming from. There will be cheaper power with Muskrat Falls than without Muskrat Falls.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for St. John's East.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, I thought that was a pretty easy question. If electricity costs are going to go up in the next little while, particularly with Muskrat coming on stream in 2017, that the cost per kilowatt hour was going to go up. Government has to account for the extra costs to the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, costs to operate government programs such as the Low Income Seniors Benefit will also go up due to an aging demographic. People's electricity bills will be going up, which may include a higher payout from a revamped heating rebate program, for example.

Can the minister promise the people of this Province that they will not face higher taxes as a result of also having to deal with the debt that will come from having to pay down on the Muskrat Falls Project?

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

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

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls will not increase our net debt by one cent – not a cent.

The Government of Canada is giving a guarantee to Nalcor subsidiaries to do this project, and the cash flow from the project will pay for that indebtedness. There will be a dividend come to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador so that money is available to spend for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for St. John's East.

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

It is nice to hear the first hinting of a federal loan guarantee coming out from the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the Natural Resources Minister says that the price of electricity is going to go up anyway, with or without Muskrat Falls.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** That is not true.

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Any increase to rates has to go through a hearing of the Public Utilities Board, and any increase is never guaranteed. If oil prices fall under the Harvard study findings, for example, then under the rate stabilization formula, the rates will have to come down. Mr. Speaker, the ratepayer gets protection.

Why will the government not give the taxpayer the same protection and send Muskrat Falls back to the PUB for full review?

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

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was a paper released by the Department of Natural Resources that dealt with electricity rates. As opposed to outlining misleading statements, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should read what is in the report and then come back with some tangible criticisms.

Mr. Speaker, there was a 32 per cent increase between 2001-2011 in residential electricity rates. Between 2011-2016, it will go up another 16 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Without Muskrat Falls, the increase in rates will be twice what it will be with Muskrat Falls – it is that simple.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

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

I would like to this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to table a document around average wages for Early Childhood Educators in Atlantic Canada. I certainly appreciate your ruling from earlier today, and I would like to table the most up-to-date information that I have.

I understand the Member for St. John's North would probably not have the most up-to-date information, and probably may not have heard my media interviews around our concerns with the salaries that were in that report.

I would also like to point out he did say yesterday that he had some concerns that the minister did not read the report. Mr. Speaker, not only did I read the report, but I met with the authors of the report after to outline those concerns, so that he does have the most up-to-date information for any petitions he may file in the House in the future. I will table that information.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is no provision for private members to table documents in the Standing Orders.

Notices of Motion.

**Notices of Motion**

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Regulate The Practice of Pharmacy. (Bill 50)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Pension Benefits Act, 1997. (Bill 51)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pension Act. (Bill 52)

**MR. KIRBY:** A point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North rising on a point of order.

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to rise on a point of order to respond to the minister's comment about the salaries of Early Childhood Educators in Atlantic Canada. In response I would like to table page 90 of the Early Years Study 3, which very clearly shows that the most recent statistics show that –

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

I reminded the member yesterday as he rose to speak with respect to some clear –

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

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

I reminded the member yesterday as he was speaking with respect to some documentation he wanted to clarify that I was ruling on the issue at hand. The Speaker has made a ruling today with respect to the issue raised by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. The Speaker believes that the issue has been dealt with in his ruling and will not entertain further comments with respect to the issue.

Answers to Questions for Which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

**Petitions**

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

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS in the 2011 Blue Book, the Progressive Conservative Party committed to fully replacing the provincial student loan program with a full system of upfront, needs-based grants; and

WHEREAS the average student debt in Newfoundland and Labrador remains at approximately \$25,000, the highest average student debt in the country; and

WHEREAS student debt prohibits many graduates from contributing to the economy through purchasing homes, automobiles, et cetera; and

WHEREAS student debt is disproportionately borne by students from low-income backgrounds and students from rural areas; and

WHEREAS student debt is the primary cause of out-migration, as many students must move out of the Province in order to pay off their education-related debt.

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to follow through on its 2011 general election commitment to replace the provincial student loan program with a system of upfront, needs-based grants.

In duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, after the election last year, both the Premier and the Minister of Advanced Education Skills, I believe, on February 21, 2012, attended an event that marked the national day of action for post-secondary students across the country. Here it was organized by the local component of the Canadian Federation of Students. Both the Premier and the minister offered comments at that event and the Premier, in fact, said that education is a right, not a privilege.

The elimination of the student loan program and replacing it with grants was a promise that was made to the people of the Province in October of last year.

There is a Gaelic proverb, Mr. Speaker, that says: There is no greater fraud than a promise not kept.

I encourage the Premier to keep her promise to the people of the Province, because failing to do so certainly encourages only greater cynicism amongst the public and, at worse, it fails to assist students who the Premier promised to assist just over a year ago.

I hope the members, especially the Premier, will hear these petitioners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their homes; home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it very difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

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WHEREAS the PC Blue Book, 2011, as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne committed that government would develop a new model of home care and give people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers; and

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers.

In duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition of numerous people from various communities in my district and some people from communities outside of the district. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that affects everybody and it is incomprehensible that the government will not move on this promise because the cost to have non-family caregivers provide the care is no different than the cost to have family caregivers provide the care.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a cost issue. Clearly, there are adequate funds for non-family members to provide this home care service, so the same amount of funds would be adequate for family caregivers. Mr. Speaker, it is incomprehensible that government simply would not say it does not matter who your family is. In fact, it may very well be discriminatory that family members are unable to provide this service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. KING:** Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Government House Leader has called Orders of the Day.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Motion carried.

### Orders of the Day

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

**MR. KING:** I call from the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, Address in Reply.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am going to take this opportunity here today to talk about Muskrat Falls, and I am going to zoom in on a specific issue. I think it got lost somewhat in the rhetoric over the last number of weeks and months.



The reality with Muskrat Falls is that we need power now. I am going to phrase it this way, Mr. Speaker. I am going to deal with the issue of the need for power or demand. Do we need the power? Because if we need the power, Mr. Speaker, the second question is, when do we need the power? If we need the power and we need it in the near future, then we have to do something.

Now, that is the way I am going to phrase that, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest it is very logical and it is a very sensible approach to this matter. Do we need the power? Mr. Speaker, we released in the Department of Natural Resources a paper on demand. Do we need the power? The numbers are outlined in there, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to make a couple of very, I would suggest, common sense statements.

Electricity demand is linked to strong economic growth. Our GDP, Mr. Speaker, has doubled. Our personal disposable income has increased by 56 per cent since 2002. Housing starts are 50 per cent higher than they were in the previous decade, Mr. Speaker. To put that in perspective, we have had 28,800 new homes built from 2002 to 2011. That is at page 4 of the report, Mr. Speaker.

Since 2006, we have averaged over 3,000 new homes a year, with 3,600 in 2010. Eighty-five of these new homes have electric heat. They are bigger homes, Mr. Speaker. There are less people in there. They require electric heat.

One of the arguments against the need for power, Mr. Speaker, was that our population has declined. Therefore, with a population decline and mills closing, we do not need power. Well, let me deal with the issue of population decline first, Mr. Speaker. Even though the population has declined, there are 18,600 additional residential customers on the Island than there were in 2006.

For the Member for St. John's East who does not read reports, that is at page 5 of the report, Mr. Speaker.

Since 2002, Mr. Speaker, the residential demand on the Island is up 16 per cent and the commercial demand is up 10 per cent. GDP, households, and commercial and industrial developments are expected to continue to increase over the next two decades. Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's latest electricity demand forecast, which is attached to the paper as Appendix 1, outlines the load forecast for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro for 2012. It indicates an increase of 3.1 per cent until 2016.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second argument against the need for power is the closure of the mills in Stephenville and Grand Falls. There were 182 megawatts of power that became available as a result of the closure of these mills and the shutdown of the other machine in Corner Brook. Forty per cent of that power, or seventy-six megawatts had been used by 2011. When Vale Inco comes on-line, Mr. Speaker, it will require eighty-five megawatts of power. By 2013-2014, the 182 megawatts of power will be entirely utilized. That is at page 6 of the demand paper, Mr. Speaker.

One, we have more residential customers; two, with the closure of the mills, the power that was available will have been utilized by then. Those two arguments, I would suggest, are gone. Mr. Speaker, we have a robust economy right now. Let's look at what we are going to need.

There are arguments: Well, you can do small hydro by itself with wind, or conservation demand management. Appendix 1 of the load forecast, Mr. Speaker, to the demand paper, if you look down you will see that in 2012 the peak demand is 1,581 megawatts. The peak demand in 2017, Mr. Speaker, will be 1,755 megawatts, almost 200 megawatts more, but by 2020 it will be 1,766 megawatts. Again, that is almost 200 megawatts more of power. Peak demand, Mr. Speaker, is the power that you need to meet the coldest day in the winter to ensure you have enough power.

So, Mr. Speaker, the PUB approves reliability standards; that is, again, outlined on page 7 of the report. By 2030 we will require, at peak, a projected 1942 megawatts of power – 400 more megawatts. Now, Mr. Speaker, the math is simple there; it is outlined by Nalcor that by 2015 we will be challenged to meet peak demand in the winter months and post-2019 there will not be a sufficient energy supply, stated on page 7 of the report.

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Mr. Speaker, I have not heard anyone question the validity or the accuracy of these statements. Newfoundland and Labrador's load forecasting technique was reviewed by Manitoba Hydro International, at pages 16-23 of the MHI report. They concluded that, at page 19 – and just to put it in perspective, Mr. Speaker, ten megawatts of annual peak growth can be achieved by adding only 1,560 electric-space-heating homes per year; so, ten megawatts of energy required per year for 1,500 homes. That is a good way to put it in the context of how many megawatts per home.

Mr. Speaker, in their summary, Manitoba Hydro International concludes that the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro forecast is well-founded and appropriate, that 2012 shows an increased domestic load, and that their lower forecast for commercial and business investment is conservative and they do not allow anything for industrial forecasting.

So, Mr. Speaker, question one: do we need the power? Obvious – it is obvious that we need the power, unless someone can show that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's load-forecasting technique is wrong, and that Manitoba Hydro International has reached a wrong conclusion commenting on the load forecast. So, Mr. Speaker, we need power.

When do we need it? That is the next question: when do we need the power? Nalcor, Mr. Speaker – Mr. Martin and Mr. Bennett – have been clear from day one that by 2015 we will start to not have enough power to meet peak demand in the winter months, and post-2019 there will not be sufficient energy supplied.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we need power and we need it by 2019, then where are we going to get it? That is the whole issue, and you move into the options. We do not have the option to wait, Mr. Speaker. Based on all of the information we have before us, something has to be done and has to be done quickly.

So, it is not that we are rushing Muskrat Falls. We have been two years discussing this matter. It has been debated ad nauseam, I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that what has not been challenged is the need for power.

We will get some critics who will argue: well, you can get small bits; you can save some through conservation and management, develop small hydro. There are seventy-seven megawatts of hydro available, Mr. Speaker, at Portland Creek, Island Pond, and Round Pond. I think that is correct, Mr. Speaker. We know that we can integrate a certain amount of wind.

The first question is: we need power; do we keep Holyrood or not, because we have to do something. Mr. Speaker, are we going to keep Holyrood or are we going to look for another source of power? Forget Muskrat Falls for a second. We need power. We either, Mr. Speaker, have to refurbish Holyrood in combination with small hydro and wind at a substantial cost. Nalcor at the Decision Gate 2 screening phase, Mr. Speaker, looked at these two options as being the main options that were feasible or viable.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro International concluded that Muskrat Falls is \$2.4 billion cheaper than the Isolated Island. At page 72, as I referred to yesterday, they engaged in a sensitivity analysis and looked at various scenarios that could result in either the widening or the lowering of that gap. Mr. Speaker, the closest they could come is that if PIRA's low fuel price for the next ever-how-many years was at \$60 a barrel, that would still bring it within \$500 million.

Mr. Speaker, I quoted yesterday – and PIRA has filed a report. These are experts we go to. We are not making this up. We go to them; they represent, I think – what did it say – 500 companies in over sixty countries. They represent "...over 80% of both the oil producers and oil refiners in North America. Outside of the oil business, we also provide services to over 80% of the U.S. gas and electric companies and over 90% of the gas and power marketers."

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is not a situation where we have an individual opinion; we have an internationally recognized company. They are not by themselves saying that oil will stay in the \$100 to \$105

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range in the next decade, Mr. Speaker, up to 2025. Other forecasting companies have indicated the same; GLJ and Sproule have indicated the same. I discussed that the other day in the House.

None of these forecasting companies see oil going below \$100 a barrel. Can it happen? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the Harvard Kennedy School report. If China were to collapse, if there were total peace in the Middle East, then certainly we could see oil go down.

We do know, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of producing shale oil is in the \$50 to \$65 range. The cost of producing oil in the oil sands in Alberta is in the \$80 to \$85 range. Wood Mackenzie has indicated, Mr. Speaker, a price of around \$100 or \$110. The closest we can come is that 584. If you use the PIRA expected of 112, then there is a \$3 billion difference.

Mr. Speaker, on a purely economical analysis, forgetting the environmental benefits that will benefit my colleague here, the Minister of Environment, and all of the other people who live in the Conception Bay area there is the economic analysis which clearly speaks in support of Muskrat Falls.

Then we said: Well, there are other options. Let us look at the other options. The NDP especially had argued: Well, you have a look at large-scale wind. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have looked at large-scale wind now and we have brought back a report from MHI again which showed that large-scale wind would cost, with thermal, close to \$12 billion and with battery it would be \$17 billion.

I have not heard, Mr. Speaker, criticism of that report. I have not heard someone say that report is wrong. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what MHI concluded is that you cannot even do that. You can only integrate 10 per cent into the system and I think Nalcor did that by increasing the amount that can go into the system, Mr. Speaker, over the next number of years.

Then natural gas was raised. It was raised by a number of critics, Mr. Speaker. There was a doctor at the university who made a presentation. We felt compelled to have that report reviewed. Ziff Energy out of Calgary prepared a report both on the importation option and the pipeline option, Mr. Speaker. Because of the significance of the pipeline option, we had that reviewed again.

Mr. Speaker, what did we get back? The LNG option is the closest one after Holyrood that could go from \$10.7 billion to \$11.2 billion, Mr. Speaker. Then we would have to look at the FPSO or the floating pipeline, which would be around \$12.8 billion, and the stand-alone pipeline would be \$15 billion.

Mr. Speaker, Wood Mackenzie comes back and says: We agree, Ziff's numbers are reasonable, but they are probably low. Again, when you look at an economic analysis, Mr. Speaker, natural gas, forgetting everything else, is not in the picture. There is no one disputing – I have never disputed the impact of shale gas in the United States, nor am I disputing the impact of shale oil on the United States' ability to become self-sufficient.

I have not disputed that, Mr. Speaker, but what the numbers clearly indicate is that there will continue to be a growth in the need for oil and that the 90 million barrels a day that is currently burnt could go up to 110 million barrels in the near future. The United States currently burns 20 millions a day and China, 10 million barrels a day. If they continue, Mr. Speaker, to grow at 7 per cent GDP, then China will equal and surpass the United States in the not-too-distant future.

When we look at, Mr. Speaker, there are 80 million people a year entering the middle class in places like China and India, there is going to be a need for oil. When we look at the fact, the stat I quoted the other day, in the United States, and I think this was in a Scotia Bank presentation, there was 800 cars per 1,000 people in the United States; there are 70 cars per 1,000 people in China; 20 cars per 1,000 people in India. Again, as the people enter the middle class, Mr. Speaker, they look for cars and they look for homes, which require steel, which requires oil, Mr. Speaker.

There is no reason to think, other than a comment somewhere by someone, that the oil will dip below the prices that are currently being discussed, Mr. Speaker. So, gas is out.

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Then, Mr. Speaker, why can't we wait until 2041? If we need the power and we need it now, we do not have that option, Mr. Speaker. We released a paper on the Upper Churchill, can we wait until 2041, outlined some of the corporate issues involved, Mr. Speaker, and clearly it indicates that we do not have the luxury of waiting that long, because you have to do Holyrood.

Why don't we develop Gull Island first, Mr. Speaker? We have outlined in detail why we cannot develop Gull Island. We have looked at legal options, Mr. Speaker, including section 92(a) of whom the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, his father, the former minister, would be well aware of; there was work done while he was there as Minister of Justice on the 92(a).

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is 92(a), the ability to recall power. I would love nothing better than to be able to bring in a piece of legislation in this House and allow us to recall 1,000 megawatts of energy from Quebec. It is not that simple.

The law of the contract is governed by the law of Quebec, as the Supreme Court of Canada indicated on a number of occasions. My colleagues across the way who are lawyers, who I am sure will have read these decisions, will see that a contract is a contract in common law; however, we are now proceeding on the good faith action on the civil code of Quebec, Mr. Speaker, or the duty to bargain fairly as circumstances change. That will not result in the return of power and we have taken the regulatory steps, Mr. Speaker. What we have right now is we have explored the options that are out there.

Mr. Speaker, then we get to the other issues that are left. Well, do you have to do Muskrat Falls? What I suggest to the people of this Province is that we either have to do Muskrat Falls or we have to refurbish Holyrood. We do not have the luxury of waiting, Mr. Speaker. Then, the argument will be: Well, what about the cost of power to Soldiers Pond? Look at how much you are paying for power to Soldiers Pond.

Let's talk about that for a second. It cost today, Mr. Speaker, 18.5 cents a kilowatt hour to produce energy at Holyrood. That is approximate; it can vary, based on the price of oil. When it is blended with the cheaper power from Bay D'Espoir, Mr. Speaker, that is how we get to our 12.6 per cent which puts us at the fourth lowest in the country in terms of the cost of power.

You blend the power, Mr. Speaker. When power comes from Muskrat Falls to Soldiers Pond, the cost of that power, Mr. Speaker, is 20.8 cents. It has gone down from the twenty-three as a result of the loan guarantee, the increased demand, and a number of other factors outlined by Mr. Martin.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017 the cost of reducing power at Holyrood will be 22.3 cents a kilowatt hour. What we have is a situation where Muskrat Falls to Soldiers Pond power is cheaper than Holyrood power at any time. Mr. Speaker, you have to look at the blended cost. The cost in kilowatt hours to the people of this Province will be 15.2 cents, and we will see rates go up without Muskrat Falls. They lower with Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker.

Then we get issues raised, such as water rights management. Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday there is a law school student who can figure this out, a young man, I think his name is John Samms, who has written an excellent blog on water rights. He is a first year law student. He has outlined, again, the arguments and looked at it all, and concluded, quite carefully, that water rights are looked after.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I always like about these arguments is that you get the Liberals on the other side saying: Well, our people looked at this and we have determined that there is an issue with water rights. In the next forty-nine seconds – because I know I will not get leave – if I can find my file on water rights, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to refer the Liberals to an interesting letter that was written by a former vice-president of their Party to Premier Danny Williams on February 15, 2007, a lawyer by the name of Jim Thistle. Jim outlined what he thought was the way to go about water rights management. Lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Thistle suggested was the way that we proceeded in this House with legislation and went to the PUB.

Before they start putting forward opinions from other lawyers within the Liberal Party, they should look at things like this, Mr. Speaker, a letter dated February 15, 2007. Even within the Liberal Party there is dispute.

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

I remind the member his time has expired.

**MR. KENNEDY:** Do I get time? Any leave? One minute.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave to clue up, yes.

**MR. KENNEDY:** Did you make a ruling on this...

**MR. SPEAKER:** The member has one minute leave, as granted by members of the House.

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

Mr. Speaker, what I have tried to do here today is just simply show the people of this Province that there is a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing about this file. What we are putting forward are the facts. One, we need the power; two, we need it in the next number of years; and three, Muskrat Falls is the lowest cost option that has significant economic benefits, Mr. Speaker. It has environmental benefits and it allows for a future for our children. It is a visionary piece of work, Mr. Speaker, and one that is in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that we adjourn debate on Order 1, Address in Reply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that we now adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2, first reading of Bill 47.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting Appointments To Boards, Councils And Tribunals, Bill 47, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting Appointments To Boards, Councils And Tribunals, Bill 47, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 47 and that the bill now be read a first time?



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All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting Appointments To Boards, Councils And Tribunals", carried. (Bill 47)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting Appointments To Boards, Councils And Tribunals. (Bill 47)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 47 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Trust And Loan Corporation Act, Bill 48, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Trust And Loan Corporations Act, Bill 48, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 48 and that the bill now be read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Trust And Loan Corporations Act", carried. (Bill 48)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend Trust And Loan Corporations Act. (Bill 48)

On motion, Bill 48 read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a first time, when shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.



The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Young Persons Offences Act, Bill 49, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Justice shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Young Persons Offences Act, Bill 49, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 49, and that the bill will now be read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Young Persons Offences Act", carried. (Bill 49)

**CHAIR:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Young Persons Offences Act. (Bill 49)

On motion, Bill 49 read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a first time. When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, order 2, third reading of Bill 44.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the bill, An Act To Revise And Amend The Law Respecting Pensions For The Members Of The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Correctional Officers, And Certain Firefighters Of The St. John's Regional Fire Department, Bill 44, be now read a third time.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 44 be read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Revise And Amend The Law Respecting Pensions For The Members Of The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Correctional Officers, And Certain Firefighters Of The St. John's Regional Fire

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Department. (Bill 44)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Revise And Amend The Law Respecting Pensions For The Members Of The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Correctional Officers, And Certain Firefighters Of The St. John's Regional Fire Department", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 44)

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

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

I call, off the Order Paper, Order 1, Address in Reply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

It gives me great pleasure to stand up and speak in the House today on Labrador. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, the most important thing happening right now in Labrador is Muskrat Falls. I am going to speak on Muskrat Falls and some of the benefits that I see as an MHA and the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, as to the benefits that Muskrat Falls will have for the people of Labrador and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard Labrador referred to as the Big Land before. Right now, the boom that we are seeing in the energy field and resource sectors in the parts of Labrador is certainly very big. The opportunities that will offer are even bigger, Mr. Speaker.

It is exciting times in Labrador and I am proud to be a member of a government that recognizes the important role that Labrador plays in the overall success of our Province.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** I think that Muskrat Falls is the beginning of a project that looms right now as one of the largest projects that we have ever taken on in our Province, and certainly this government realizes this is just the beginning of a much bigger project to come.

As the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs I am anxious to see the economic roll-out of what is going to happen with the employment benefits that Muskrat Falls will give us as a Province. I think that Labradorians first, as is stated, have a very good opportunity here at some very good skilled trade jobs that are going to be available through the development and then the generation and transmission that will come from Muskrat Falls.

Over the next ten years – I have spoken about it before – you are going to see approximately \$15 billion of investment in Labrador mining. The mining projects that are going to happen in Labrador, almost every day you are hearing of a new project that has been either discovered or explored in Labrador. We are looking at iron ore, we are looking at nickel, we are looking at copper, and we are looking at cobalt, uranium, and rare earth minerals. Everywhere in Labrador, things are happening when it comes to mining, whether it is on the North Coast of Labrador in the Torngat Mountains or whether it is on the South Coast in The Straits, with the rare earth minerals; certainly in the Lake Melville area we have new mines opening in the iron sands. In my district in Western Labrador we have many projects already existing: the Rio Tinto project, the Iron Ore Company of Canada, with a huge expansion. Bloom Lake opened a few years ago; they have another expansion. Wabush Mines we have over there, and soon to come we have Alderon Mines. I will talk about those a little bit later.

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Those are just some of the developments that are happening right now in Labrador. All of these developments that are happening now depend on one thing – and I have heard it many, many times and I have heard members on the opposite side of the House say that is it always a second thought and it is always an afterthought. There is nothing further from the truth about Labrador being an afterthought with this government. This government realizes and recognizes the importance of Labrador as part of this Province.

All too often you hear of the Province of Newfoundland – I saw it yesterday, as the Province referred to as Newfoundland. It is the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and this government realizes that and they realize the benefits that we will get from the Muskrat Falls Project – for all of the Province, Newfoundland and Labrador.

If we do not develop Muskrat Falls, then a lot of the mining developments that are happening now, especially in the Labrador portion of the Province, will not happen. I have been guaranteed – I talked to the Minister of Natural Resources, I have talked to the Premier, and I have heard the Premier say it just today, I heard the Minister of Natural Resources say it today, that 40 per cent of the power from the Muskrat Falls Project will be available for industry in Labrador.

When you hear an argument against that – when those projects are ready and need the power, the power is there. The access to that power will be there if we develop Muskrat Falls, but you cannot develop Muskrat Falls and let that 40 per cent of the power just run down the river while you are waiting for these developments to happen. That is why that 40 per cent of power will go to spot market now.

This government is intelligent enough that they know you just do not let it run down the river, you put it in the spot market and you get a return on it while you are waiting for the developments to happen in Labrador. It is not an afterthought. It is certainly not an afterthought. It is just good fiscal management of a project that I think is very good.

Based on projects already in construction or near sanction, existing generating capacity in Labrador may be exhausted. You heard the Minister of Natural Resources say it: In 2015, according to Nalcor, we are probably going to see brown spots. We are going to start running out of electricity. We are not going to have enough energy to meet the supply – definitely by 2019, if we do not develop Muskrat Falls.

Muskrat Falls is going to be an important source of power for mining developments post-2017; 2017 is when we are hoping to see a lot of these projects happening.

I just want to talk a little bit about some of the projects that are happening now and just in the Labrador portion of our Province. There are a number of these mining projects that are happening right now. In Voisey's Bay, we have a project that is up and running. We already see the benefits from the Voisey's Bay Project. We are already seeing benefits here on the Island portion of the Province.

Long Harbour is a great example of what Voisey's Bay is doing. Voisey's Bay, by the way, is just beginning because Voisey's Bay is going to expand. When Voisey's Bay expands, you are going to see energy transmitted up to the North Coast of Labrador. That is what Muskrat Falls will allow.

Cleveland-Cliffs, Rio Tinto, the Carol Lake Project, and Labrador Iron Mines Limited – they are all mines already in operation and already happening within the Labrador portion of the Province. That is four big projects that are already existing and already adding to the economy.

Two others are there right now that are currently in construction. You have IOC's expansion program. This past weekend I had the privilege of being in my district and doing a tour of the crusher, the new crusher at the Iron Ore Company of Canada's mine. You have a seven-and-a-half-kilometre conveyor belt. The crusher before worked on an ATO system, which is an automated train operation. It had to come from the mine seven-and-a-half kilometres, go to the crusher, which was seven-and-a-half kilometres away, then go from the crusher, and then go to the concentrator. It could not work fast enough for the demand.

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Now they have added in this second crusher, but what they did was put the crusher out next to the mine, out in the mine, not seven-and-a-half kilometres away. The new crusher is now in the mine, which speeds up the development. Their productivity now is much faster. It is crushed there, carried seven-and-a-half kilometres on a crusher belt, and directly into the concentrator. There is no stop now. It is steady go. That is part of the expansion at the Iron Ore Company of Canada's program.

Then you have Tata Steel up in the Schefferville area. They are under construction. The feasibility for the study of Labrador Iron Mines expansion is complete. You are going to see that expand now. I was up there this summer. I went up and did a tour of Labrador Iron Mines, another great project that is moving forward in Labrador.

Alderon Iron Ore Corporation's Kami project is another project that is moving forward; Tata Steel Canada, Labmag project; the Vale Inco Voisey's Bay underground mine that I just spoke about; and Labec Century Iron Ore's Joyce Lake, all undergoing feasibility studies right now. The feasibility studies are all moving. That is four more projects.

Iron Ore Labrador West Strategic Development, North Atlantic Iron Ore Corporation, Aurora's Paladin Michelin project, and Julianne Lake are all undergoing pre-feasibility studies. That is four more projects that are happening right now in Labrador. Just there alone, I have mentioned fifteen projects that are either existing or in pre-feasibility, feasibility study, or the study complete. All projects that are going to need more energy, without the energy they cannot happen.

Where are we going to find the energy? The answer to that question would be Muskrat Falls. Sanctioning Muskrat Falls may assist mining companies in making positive investment decisions for Newfoundland and Labrador which would bring significant benefits to the Province – to all of the Province. The whole Province will benefit from the Muskrat Falls investment.

I did not mean to point at the member across the way there, actually I was pointing at the picture above his head.

Availability of power will encourage investment in mining developments in the Province rather than competing jurisdictions. That is very important, because if there is one thing I have heard from a lot of the Opposition is that we are not doing enough investments in Labrador. There are not enough investments in Labrador.

The Muskrat Falls Project is one of the projects that will entice large investments and large investors to come to Labrador to make those investments. We know that the mineral is there and now we need to get those large companies to come in and invest. They are not going to do it unless they know when they make that investment they are going to get a return on their dollar. In order to get a return on their dollar, they have to get the product out. In order to get the product out, they have to have energy and electricity. The availability of power will encourage that investment in mining developments in the Province, and then we are not going to have to worry about, for example, our neighbours next door in Quebec.

I remember being in Ottawa last spring. I was at a convention and the big hoopla was Plan Nord. All you heard was about Quebec's Plan Nord. I honestly believe as a member of this government that one of the strong rationales of Quebec's Plan Nord is because they realize in 2041 they have to make a decision.

In 2041, when we get back the rights to the Upper Churchill, Quebec has to find some solutions. I think when the Muskrat Falls Project is up and running, that is when you are going to see Plan Nord change. That is when you are going to see Quebec want to come to Newfoundland and Labrador and start negotiating with us – and not in 2041, you are going to see it happen now.

The Isolated Island Option, we have all talked about that. One thing I have not heard, and I think we need to realize, is that the Isolated Island Option, if we decide we are going to refurbish Holyrood, how are we going to get the supply of power to Labrador? Again, we are at the mercy of Quebec. If we decide let's refurbish Holyrood, let's work with some of the smaller hydro projects we have on the Island portion of the Province, how

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are we going to develop Labrador? We still have nothing, unless we surrender to the mercy of Quebec and then all the dollars are going back out again.

Basically, such mining developments would bring major economic benefit to the Province which would benefit the people of our Province today and not just for this generation, not just for this generation. I want to see my son and my daughter have healthy lives. I want to see my grandson have a healthy, prosperous life, and I want to see him have it here in this Province.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** Muskrat Falls will bring a lot of benefits to Labradorians, as well as the rest of the Province. The availability of power will benefit the business community. I have a business background. I know the benefits that projects such as Muskrat Falls will bring, just in the secondary industry.

For example, in my district in Labrador, and I spoke about it yesterday during a news conference, we have over 4,000 extra people in my district who are working because of the expansions that are happening now in the mining industry in my district.

In the Lake Melville district, when the Muskrat Falls Project begins, they are going to see approximately 5,000 extra people in their community.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** Those 5,000 people are spending money. That is all secondary income.

We talk about the skilled jobs that you need for the Muskrat Falls Project. We did not even mention any of the spinoff jobs that are going to be needed for the secondary industry, such as your restaurants, such as your hotels and motels, such as your dry cleaners, your laundromats, your grocery stores, and your gas stations. So you are going to need employees for all that, plus all those supplies that go into the secondary industry. All of that benefits Labrador.

Seventy-five per cent of the jobs available are going to go to Labradorians. Seventy-five per cent of the project in building Muskrat Falls will be built in Labrador. It is not going to be pre-fab and brought in; it is going to be built right there in Labrador. All Aboriginals – I think it is very important, because a large population of the Labrador population are of Aboriginal descent. We are going to see – I realize the Member for the Bay of Islands would like to be from Labrador, but –

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

**MR. MCGRATH:** Well that is – but you are not a Labradorian. All Aboriginal Labradorians will benefit from this. All Aboriginal Labradorians will benefit from this. The government, our government, has already started that. We have already got the LATP in place – the Labrador Aboriginal Training Program – with the provincial government and the federal government; we are in partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government, the Innu Community Council, and with the NunatuKavut Community Council. They all benefit from that.

I have a list; it is some of the jobs and people that have gone through that partnership and that program already. This is from April, 2010 to March 31, 2012, so over a two-year period of funded skills development: the NunatuKavut had 110 people go through it; the Nunatsiavut had 106; Innu, 169, for a total of 385 that have already received benefits from that program.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** Client assessments that have been done to get into the LATP program: 216 with the NunatuKavut; Nunatsiavut, 419; the Innu, 337, for a total of 972. You heard earlier today during Question Period, when the Minister of Natural Resources talked about the consultation with the Nunatsiavut and with the NunatuKavut; this is a result of those consultations. That is a result of the partnerships that this government is



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building with the federal government, with the Nunatsiavut Government, with the NunatuKavut Community Council, and with the Innu.

Core training and essential skills: NunatuKavut, seventeen; Nunatsiavut, seventy-eight; Innu, 311, for a total of 406 employed already from going through the program. These are people who went through the program, took advantage of the Labrador Aboriginal Training program, and are full-time permanent employees now in Labrador. With the NunatuKavut Community Council band, 124 employed; Nunatsiavut group, 161 employed; Innu, 114 employed. That to me is a very good example of what this government is doing from the benefits from Labrador.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** Those numbers are nothing for what is going to come with Muskrat Falls, because then we have the energy to make all those other developments happen. To me that is a very good start; positive, good numbers there.

I am running out of time, Mr. Speaker, and I know I am not going to get leave. I will not need leave. Hopefully I will get an opportunity to stand up and speak again. I will not need leave.

I think it is very important, and I just talked about LAMP, the Labrador Aboriginal Training Program, and I will end on this note. We are working right now with Minister Penashue, with the federal government, with the Nunatsiavut Government, with the Innu, and with the NunatuKavut Community Council to get another funding for the next three years. We have already spent \$30 million on that program alone – \$30 million.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that I had the opportunity to stand up and talk about some of the great things that are happening in Labrador. I think there is a lot more to come when we see Muskrat Falls developed.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn):** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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

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

It is indeed a pleasure again to get an opportunity to stand in this House and have some comment on obviously what has been a very important topic for the Province in the past couple of years, for sure, and that is the development of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project. Mr. Speaker, it is an important time for us, and I echo the Premier's comment that we are truly at a turning point in our history.

We had that opportunity, we know that, back when the Upper Churchill was developed; we lost an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, where Quebec gets \$20 billion and we get \$1 billion. That was a turning point for us, Mr. Speaker. We missed that opportunity. I say to the people of the Province and our colleagues: We best not miss this opportunity.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if we look at this debate and discussion about Muskrat Falls, I think there is no question that the fundamental questions have been answered. Do we need power? The answer has been yes. Do we have options? Sure we do: wind, gas, hydro, and oil. Mr. Speaker, we know, proven, the least-cost option is Muskrat Falls.

Multiple experts, Mr. Speaker, Nalcor, Navigant, Ziff, PIRA, MHI, the list goes on, have validated the work that has been done and have answered these fundamental questions for us. While there is still some opposition, particularly in this House, I just pose the question: Are they all wrong? Is that possible? They are all wrong, they have all missed this? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker.



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Mr. Speaker, when we look at how the critics have viewed and how they have looked at government's approach to Muskrat Falls, recently we have come under some criticism because we are not sure what it is all about. We are jumping all around and all over the place. One day it is about Quebec, another day it is about something else. Well, Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls is about an overarching principle for us.

We realize that we need energy. It is about meeting the energy needs now and into the future, Mr. Speaker. When we move all over the place to talk about Muskrat Falls, we are talking about meeting our Island's needs. We are talking about Labrador development, Mr. Speaker, and as my colleague referenced, \$15 billion. We are talking about 3,100 jobs, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity for the young people of this Province, the skilled tradespeople, the young apprentices to have a realistic opportunity and a future to work right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** We talk about the environment, Mr. Speaker, and shutting down Holyrood. We talk about moving away from Quebec's grip on our economic development and getting away from our haunted past with Quebec. We talk about stabilizing rates, Mr. Speaker. The reason we move around and talk about all those things, Mr. Speaker, is they are all a part of this package. They are all a part of Muskrat Falls and the true benefits for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, nobody is hiding that. All of the experts, the Premier, our Minister of Natural Resources, the leadership at Nalcor, everybody has been available to answer questions. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, from what I have heard from my own perspective, every single question that has been asked has been answered. They may not like the answers all the time, but, Mr. Speaker, the answers have been provided.

We get accused of jumping around but, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has done the same thing in trying to attack Muskrat Falls, trying to pin it on one thing. Mr. Speaker, maybe they are trying to pin it but they are moving around. They started with the rates are going to double. When the Minister of Natural Resources stood in this House and challenged those naysayers to prove it, I do not think we have heard it mentioned since.

Mr. Speaker, they talked about the environment. They realized our respect for the environment and the environmental assessment process, they have moved on to somewhere else. They are saying: Well, we are not getting enough information. We heard that for weeks. Mr. Speaker, they have it all, whatever they wanted. There were boxes tabled here in this House and all of the reports have been out and made available, Mr. Speaker. We do not hear much coming back, criticism about these reports.

Mr. Speaker, they talked about the PUB. The PUB had an opportunity. We spent \$2 million working with them and ensuring that they had an opportunity to deliver a message to us. They did not do that, Mr. Speaker. They talked about democracy, so they jumped all over the place. Now they want to attack democracy; not Muskrat Falls and the project, the details and the benefits. They want to attack democracy, Mr. Speaker, and give it to a board to decide.

Mr. Speaker, we are giving it to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to decide. We went to two elections on our Energy Plan. We went to Election 2011 on Muskrat Falls and received a ringing endorsement, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, through all of this there is opportunity to stand here day after day after day and drill government, drill the Minister of Natural Resources, drill the Premier on questions about Muskrat Falls, but we do not see it. We do not see that, Mr. Speaker. We get two or three, four or five, maybe six, but day after day they are missing that opportunity, and there is a good reason for it, Mr. Speaker.

They are talking about a filibuster. I saw them on CBC all excited about this filibuster they are going to have. Sure, they do not even know what the legislation is about, and already they are going to block it. Talking about an opportunity to finally debate, the opportunity has been given, it is here. They are all over the place on this,

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Mr. Speaker. The problem is the research, the information, the facts, everything that is out there, Mr. Speaker, is supportive of us moving forward with Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, even one of the members of the Liberal Opposition – and I will give her full credit – stood in this House time and time, and day after day, and very articulately asked questions, and a lot of good questions and pulled out a lot of good information. I am delighted she has been able to come forward and support this project. Now, there are conditions. I understand that, I respect that. That is a choice the hon. member has to make, but, Mr. Speaker, when she announced that she is supporting this project with conditions, there was no reference of: We do not need the power. There was no reference of: This is not the least-cost option. There was no reference about doubling electricity rates, Mr. Speaker, and, by way of agreement, that we need this project. It was not about that. It was about some other conditions for her district in Labrador. I understand, but the fundamentals about this project, the technicalities, the investments, the time to do it, why we need to do it, Mr. Speaker, it was not questioned, and I certainly commend the member opposite for that.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that with her influence and knowledge of this that she will certainly encourage her colleagues when the time comes to stand and support this project, along with here; I am looking forward to it.

Mr. Speaker, a turning point in our history, we have a decision to make. The fundamental question has been answered and now we have to look at sanctioning Muskrat Falls and moving forward. Are we going to, Mr. Speaker, stand and develop and take this opportunity to develop our renewable resources? It is an important part of our future, Mr. Speaker. We have some decisions to make.

It is about our children, no question; we hear it all the time. It is about our grandchildren, Mr. Speaker. There are lots of grandparents who do not want their kids to move away. We want them to be able to stay in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has never been better in recent years, Mr. Speaker, and these kinds of developments will give them that chance to see their children work and live right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about resources and our resource development, we only look to our history of where we are right now. We have been challenged in our past to develop resources. We have a long history. We have been recognized in having an abundance of resources. Mr. Speaker, we were slow to get them developed. It is all about jobs, but we have crossed that bridge. We have moved on. We have major developments in mining and oil and gas, and tremendous benefits for the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my colleagues and the members of this House: Now is not the time to be selfish. We cannot reap the benefits from our resource development without preparing for our children's future in the process.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we have heard the complaints: What are you going to do when the oil is gone? It is going to dry up. You are spending too much money. What are you going to do when the oil is gone? Mr. Speaker, what are we going to do?

One of the answers to this has been outlined in our Energy Plan for some time. One of the answers of what we are going to do, Mr. Speaker, is develop our energy resources, develop renewable energy resources and develop Muskrat Falls. That is an answer when the oil dries up, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we recognized some time ago that we had an abundance of resources – as a matter of fact, the envy of North America. All kinds of energy resources: oil, gas, wind, hydro. Mr. Speaker, we realized as a government some time ago that we need to harness this energy. We need to bring this together to meet our needs, not only for today but well beyond into our future. We have that opportunity to move from a

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non-renewable-based economy to a renewable-based economy, one that lays down a strong future for us in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the words energy warehouse. For good reason, that is exactly what we have. We have such an abundance, Mr. Speaker. We have what everyone else wants. Other provinces and other areas in this continent that we live, Mr. Speaker, would only wish to have what we have. We need to get it right.

So what do we do? What are we going to do with this, Mr. Speaker? We developed a plan. We developed an Energy Plan focusing on our energy. We hear comments and criticisms: Do not rush this through. What is the rush? Why are you pushing it through? What is this all about, Mr. Speaker? Muskrat Falls and the development of the Lower Churchill has been worked on by previous governments. Our government in particular, in recognizing the opportunities we have and how we were going to harness this energy, started work on a comprehensive, detailed, thorough Energy Plan back in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2005 there was a vision. There was a hope for our future. We needed to put that together. Mr. Speaker, we did not sit around a Cabinet table or a caucus table to do that. We engaged the Province, some eighty-six submissions, and research experts. Everything was brought together, Mr. Speaker, where we developed a comprehensive Energy Plan that we rolled out in 2007. It recognized our potential and recognized through vision what opportunities we have. It looked at what our needs are going to be. Three years in the making and we rolled that out, Mr. Speaker, focusing on our energy.

It is what has guided us since 2007. We have been to two elections on our Energy Plan, Mr. Speaker. The key part of that Energy Plan – the key part of it – is the development of the Lower Churchill and the development of Muskrat Falls. It makes no sense for anybody to stand and say we are rushing this through. This has been a public document for years.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Energy Plan, I know we are not the only ones who have energy ideas and energy plans, but just to be sure I went and checked back in 2011 when we rolled out our election. I wanted to be sure to give the Opposition credit where credit was due with respect to their energy plans.

Mr. Speaker, I checked the Third Party's energy plan in the 2011 election platform. Now, whether I did find it or not, what I found, Mr. Speaker, was one sentence – one sentence on an energy plan.

Mr. Speaker, when I checked on the Liberal Opposition energy plan, I scanned through it quickly; I have to say what I found was a list of what we are not going to do. We are not going to do this and we are not going to do that, we are not going to do this. Mr. Speaker, the one thing that stood out to me, what they were going to do was negotiate more with Quebec. I could not believe it when I read it.

To be fair, I did go back and check, but I want to talk about our Energy Plan, for the public to realize that what we are doing is not new; it has been ongoing for years. The time, investment, research, and experts have had their go at this, Mr. Speaker. We have it laid out in an Energy Plan.

Our Energy Plan, Mr. Speaker; embedded in that plan is the opportunity for us to strategically map out a course in which we will promise, through this development, opportunities for economically – to be responsible and to look at environmentally sustainable resource development in the best interests of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what we are doing here, Mr. Speaker. If Muskrat Falls was not in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, we would not be standing here talking about it today, no question.

Mr. Speaker, as an energy warehouse we have become one of the leaders, a significant player on the international stage. People look to Newfoundland and Labrador for investment and opportunity. Central to our Energy Plan is to invest from our non-renewable resources into renewable resources. Central to our plan is how

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Muskrat Falls will contribute to a renewable energy future for the Province, how it will promise energy stability for Newfoundland and Labrador for years to come.

In our Energy Plan, Mr. Speaker, it is clear: we are going to move away from an economy that is dependent on non-renewable revenues to an economy built around renewable, sustainable energy resources. That gives us a bright future.

Mr. Speaker, when we look back in our history, no question: there have been mistakes made. This is not about our history. This is about today. This is about our future. The Upper Churchill contract – no question, Mr. Speaker – was an opportunity to truly benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. For all of us, it is forever entrenched in our hearts and minds of what we missed out on.

Mr. Speaker, the planning that we have done in our Energy Plan and the unbelievable planning that has been done for Muskrat Falls gives me confidence, gives us all confidence that we will not make that same mistake. Our Energy Plan is laid out; the plan for Muskrat Falls is laid out and we will not make the mistakes we made with the Upper Churchill.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Now, Mr. Speaker, a couple of things I do want to mention, and that is Nalcor, because they are a key part of our Energy Plan. We created Nalcor in June 2007 when we passed legislation here in this House. We wanted Nalcor to take the lead role in the Province's participation of the development of our resources – in particular, our energy resources.

Mr. Speaker, from what I have seen, what I have read, what I have listened to from the people I have met, conversations I have had, I can tell you we did not make a mistake. There is no question that Nalcor is absolutely critical to our Province. The leadership that they provide – and I want to stand today, certainly on behalf of the people in my constituency, and if not, for the people of this House, to thank Nalcor, to thank the people like Ed Martin and Gilbert Bennett.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the hundreds of men and women who make up Nalcor, through their hard work on behalf of the people of the Province, ensure that we are looking at our options, that what we are doing is well thought out and planned and executed in the best possible way. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank Nalcor; anybody who has listened to people like Ed Martin knows that every single question on Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, got an answer. You did not get a different answer. There was no twisting of the answers; it was solid facts spoken with solid confidence and unbelievable expertise.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to the people of this House, all people of this House, it is time for us to believe in Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and believe in Nalcor and what they are doing. We need to stand up and believe in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are running Nalcor and doing the best thing that they can do for the people of this Province.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at some of these things about Muskrat Falls and I talk to people in my district, the common message is: get on with it – but there are questions and concerns about rates. The rates have been talked about over and over, our ability to control those rates.

Mr. Speaker, the facts and the benefits of this project are clear. The fundamental questions have been answered. Muskrat Falls is well planned with vision and confidence. Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to develop these resources and, I say, particularly to the members opposite, we have no right to reap the benefits of these resources without preparing a future for our children. That is critical to what we are doing and a decision we need to make today.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to read a quote from our Energy Plan. "We have the resources. We have ingenuity. We have the skills and the experience. And, most importantly, we have the determination to move forward boldly and proudly, with the strength of our resources and the conviction of our principles."

Mr. Speaker, we have a compelling responsibility to seize this opportunity. We have a responsibility to seize the opportunity to embrace the prospects of self-reliance, to embrace the prospects of a sustainable and prosperous future. Mr. Speaker, we have a culture of success in this Province today. It is time, as economic leaders in this country we need to recognize the opportunity for new jobs. We need to recognize that young people are staying in Newfoundland and Labrador. Now is the time to take a step for the future.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the hon. member his time is up.

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a turning point in our history, and I say let's get on with Muskrat Falls.

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

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

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

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

It is my pleasure to be able to participate in the debate on Muskrat Falls today, and be able to speak as the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East, as well as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

Mr. Speaker, there are many policies within the Department of Advanced Education and Skills and what we have been doing as a department to prepare people for the labour market. I am going to try to get into some of that, Mr. Speaker, because as you will see, what we have been doing through various policy decisions within government, we have been preparing people and providing the opportunity so people can participate in the labour market in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is also fitting, Mr. Speaker, that at this time we have just reached the first anniversary of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. It was under the direction, the guidance and the leadership of Premier Dunderdale that this new department was developed. This new department was developed because Premier Dunderdale understood the challenges that we are going to face in our labour market; but, not only the challenges. She also recognized the opportunities that are there, the opportunities for people in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, never have employment levels been higher in Newfoundland and Labrador, and never has wage growth been at any better rate than what it is in Newfoundland and Labrador today.

In the summer of 2011, the previous Minister of the Department then of Human Resources, Labour and Employment released a report called Outlook 2020. In Outlook 2020, it indicated – and it captured that period of time, and there could have been significant changes since then which would have provided even more jobs.

When we looked at the report in the summer of 2011, Outlook 2020 indicated in the next ten years there would be 70,000 job openings in Newfoundland and Labrador. Those job openings go across all sectors, Mr. Speaker, anything from the service industry to professional, to skilled trades. Right across all sectors we are going to see job growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of these jobs will become available thorough natural attrition, which means we have people who will retire, who will move on from positions, but also a number of these jobs will come because of the resource developments that will happen in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We also need to realize at this time, based on the projections of employment in this Province, a lot of the growth will depend on projects like Hebron, on Vale, the plant being built down in Long Harbour and on Muskrat Falls. When we look at the opportunities, we also have to weigh that against some of the realities that we are facing in Newfoundland and Labrador. One is that we have a declining birth rate. Families no longer have children of



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eight and nine and ten children in a family. We have much smaller families today, probably just one or two children. Therefore, we do not have as many people growing and coming into the labour force as we would have had probably forty years ago, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, we have experienced as a Province years and years of out-migration because we did have large families. We had people who were having children, they were growing up and realizing there was no opportunity to stay in this Province and they left. Other provinces have reaped the benefits of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. You can go to Alberta, people have settled in there. There are probably second and third generation families now, the same as in Ontario and British Columbia.

We are at a different time right now in our Province. We are at a time where jobs are here and more are projected on the horizon. We have smaller families. We have an aging population with people retiring; therefore, the opportunities that we have in this Province today are absolutely unprecedented. Never have we been in a period of time in our history where the people of this Province have the opportunities that they have available to them today.

We have made significant investments to ensure that we develop the labour force that we need in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have developed diversity plans and Premier Dunderdale, as the Minister of Natural Resources in the development of some of our agreements, was a very strong advocate for our diversity plans. We want to make sure, as we develop the resources in Newfoundland and Labrador, that underrepresented groups – whether that is women, Aboriginals, or persons with disabilities – have every opportunity to share in that wealth and that development. That is extremely important as we move forward, that all individuals in this Province have the ability to also benefit from the opportunities.

We have invested heavily in apprenticeship, in post-secondary education. We have career centres that we have opened across Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe I may have been the minister to open the first one back in 2005 when we rolled out the new model of our Income Support program, and how we are going to support people to enter into the labour market.

Mr. Speaker, we bring resources together, especially under the umbrella of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills – whether that is our labour market initiatives, our apprenticeship program, our post-secondary education – because there is a common theme under this umbrella. It is all about attachment to the labour market and what we can do as a Province to assist the people in Newfoundland and Labrador so that they are able to find jobs and stay in those jobs in this Province. By bringing together the programs that we have under the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, it gives us a more cohesive approach to how we look at these issues and how we develop policies and roll them out so that the people can benefit.

A lot of the programs that we have in the department and were in the process of change, we inherited. They were developed years ago; we went through the devolution of the LMDA, where we administer the federal funding for labour market. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the programs that we have were rooted in a time when there was not much hope or opportunities or jobs. Programs were developed probably around that to a great extent to try to encourage people and try to help them as best they can.

Things are different today and we need to make sure that our programs are current and they reflect the demographics of the day and the opportunities as well. This new department gives us the opportunity to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be able to tie together the initiatives of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills and Muskrat Falls to see how the two fit together. One thing that is important to remember is that the development of Muskrat Falls will be successful if it meets the electricity demands of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. There are also a lot of side benefits and other successes that will come from that, not just the fact that we will have the electricity. The demand for labour and the jobs that will be created is certainly one of the benefits that we should not lose sight of. It is one of the many successes that Muskrat Falls will deliver.



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From the job prospects of Muskrat Falls – and Muskrat Falls, as I said, will be successful if it meets the demands for electricity, but there are other benefits. For example, Mr. Speaker, there will be 3,100 direct jobs as a result of the development of Muskrat Falls. That is 3,100 jobs available to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That translates into 9,100 person years of direct employment, including 5,800 person years of employment in Labrador alone, Mr. Speaker. We all stand to benefit from the employment that will be created from the development of Muskrat Falls.

Nalcor has developed a list of the skills and the positions they will need as they move forward in the development of Muskrat Falls. That list is something that drives the policies and the decisions of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, because as we invest in education we need to make sure we take every piece of this puzzle and fit it together. If there is a need for power line technicians, electricians, carpenters, or welders, we need to make sure those programs are available in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, we need to take it one step further and also understand that people who train in those occupations and those skilled trades also have the opportunity to move in through the apprenticeship program to become a journeyman to benefit from the jobs that are going to be available.

It is not just the direct employment. There will be a lot of indirect employment as well, as businesses will also be able to contract with Nalcor or get the benefits of the people who are working and be able to assist in the indirect jobs that will come as a result of Muskrat Falls.

Not only will we have jobs as we are developing Muskrat Falls, once we have Muskrat Falls developed, we will also have the opportunity that could lead to large-scale mining in Labrador and industrial development as well, Mr. Speaker; therefore it is a legacy of long-term jobs that the people of this Province can certainly benefit from. It is not only the electricity and it is not only the jobs and the development. It is the potential for long-term stable employment for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard in this House people say: What have you done? What have you done to prepare for the labour demands we are going to have in this Province? I want to outline some of the initiatives we have undertaken to help us prepare the people in Newfoundland and Labrador for these opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls did not happen by chance, nor did the employment planning we have undertaken in the last few years. We have certainly been working on this plan to make sure people are well trained and prepared.

As I said earlier today in Question Period, Mr. Speaker, we looked at all the initiatives that we have for people to become journeymen in Newfoundland and Labrador. That includes what it costs to train as a pre-apprentice, and that means people who enter into the nine-month programs at the private institutions or the College of the North Atlantic, then move through the apprenticeship program to become a journeyman.

Mr. Speaker, when we add up all the supports, all the services and all the investments from the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, we determined that we spend \$50 million a year to train people to become journeymen in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, \$50 million is a significant investment in the people of this Province. Since 2005, we have increased the number of seats available to the skilled trades at the College of the North Atlantic. We used to have 939 seats in 2005 and today, Mr. Speaker, we have 1,326 seats available in the College of the North Atlantic for the skilled trades. That is an increase of 41 per cent at the College of the North Atlantic for seats in the skilled trades.

We have also instituted a tuition freeze since we formed government in 2003. That means that the tuition at the College of the North Atlantic has not increased since then and has remained at \$1,200 a year, which certainly makes it very affordable.

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We have also introduced a skilled trades program in our K-12 system so young people can be exposed to the skilled trades and what that means before they finish high school and start making career choices. It is an introduction much earlier than what it had been for the young people of this Province.

We have also partnered with the Office to Advance Women Apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador. They work to ensure that female apprentices are able to find work placements to help them move through the apprenticeship program and become journeypersons as well.

We have also invested in a Wage Subsidy Program for apprentices. There are two sides to the Wage Subsidy Program. We have invested \$11 million to ensure that the private industry of this Province can apply and hire apprentices where otherwise they would not hire apprentices, to ensure that people are able to move through the apprenticeship program to become a journeyperson. Not only have we partnered with private industry, we have also invested within government to ensure that government boards and agencies hire apprentices. That has happened with the university, with our health boards, with the school boards.

Mr. Speaker, what that has allowed us to do was to be able, through an investment of just over \$15 million in the last two years, ensure that over 700 apprentices were able to find work placements in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is significant, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS SHEA:** Only last week or the week before we announced the Journeyperson Mentorship Program where we will provide funding for companies to hire a journeyperson to go in and their only role is to mentor and train apprentices. We heard, through forums that we had with our stakeholders we held last spring, that people felt they had apprentices hired, they just did not have the journeypersons on site to sign their books and assist them in skilled development.

Now this fund will allow companies to apply for funding so they can hire a journeyperson who can specifically go in and train the apprentices there and be able to ensure that they can move from step to step in their apprenticeship to become a journeyperson.

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

**MS SHEA:** Today, Mr. Speaker, we have 800 more students at the College of the North Atlantic than we had back in 2005. Again, we attribute that to the increase in the seats that we have in the skilled trades.

Another significant level of progress that we have reached is the number of journeyperson certificates that we issue in any one year, Mr. Speaker. In 2005, this Province was able to award 314 journeyperson certificates. Last year, we were able to ensure that 645 people became journeypersons in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the last five to six years, we have more than doubled the number of people who became journeypersons in one year.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, that shows that our investments are working.

The employment and the labour that will benefit from the Muskrat Falls development is not all rooted in the skilled trades, although that is a significant piece of it. There will be people who will benefit in various sectors. We also will see people who go through the university system, as well as the College of the North Atlantic, who will benefit from the opportunities at Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that we have an educated population in this Province. We know there is going to be 70,000 job openings across various sectors. We know we have people who will be retiring and we also know we have a lower birth rate, so we must ensure that the people in Newfoundland and Labrador have every opportunity to participate in the labour market.

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In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we have instituted a tuition freeze both at Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic since we took government in 2003. To date, we have paid out \$183 million to ensure that we have a tuition freeze in this Province.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, we are also the first Province in Canada to eliminate the interest on the provincial portion of the student loan. We also reintroduced – because they had been eliminated back in the 1990s – up-front, needs-based grants. What that means is that when a person from Newfoundland and Labrador receives a student loan, 60 per cent of the provincial portion that they receive is a grant that they do not have to pay back.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, we have taken very aggressive steps to ensure that our young people have access to affordable education.

We have also built infrastructure to make sure the people of this Province not only have high-quality degree and diploma programs but have the infrastructure that enables them to be able to participate fully, enjoy their surroundings, and feel safe.

Mr. Speaker, one thing we have done is we have spent \$45 million to renovate and update Paton College. I would think many of us here in the House of Assembly have probably spent a number of years living at Paton College. I know I have, and I think you have too, Mr. Speaker. We can attest that \$45 million was probably very well spent to bring those rooms (inaudible) up to where they need to be.

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

**MS SHEA:** On top of that, Mr. Speaker, we have created 200 new beds in residences at the Grenfell campus in Corner Brook and 500 new beds in St. John's, for a cost of \$88 million.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, day after day we hear the Third Party talk about a housing crisis. One of the initiatives we have brought in, in this Province was to ensure that the students who come in from rural Newfoundland and Labrador have a place to stay on campus. These 500 new beds will be well used here in St. John's.

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

**MS SHEA:** Therefore, Mr. Speaker, that means there are going to be 500 students who are not drawing down on the apartments in St. John's. It loosens up the housing market, but it also makes sure the students are in safe, secure, modern, new accommodations and they are right on campus here in St. John's.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin to conclude my comments. I could talk all day, because there are so many things going on in the Department of Advanced Education, whether it is with apprenticeship, skills training, or what we are doing in post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, here are some of the facts: Muskrat Falls will benefit the people of this Province. It will meet our electricity demands, but more importantly, from my perspective in this department, it will provide opportunities for the people of this Province. It will provide jobs, Mr. Speaker, and that is very important.

We are not doing this just for the jobs. The jobs are very welcome, but there are all kinds of benefits from this project in this Province, Mr. Speaker. We must be able, as government, to plan, be able to foresee what we are going to need, and be able to institute the programs and the policies and put the funding to it to make sure that people can benefit.

Mr. Speaker, we have been doing that. I have reviewed some of our investments, the number of apprentices who benefit from our wage subsidies, and how many people become journeypersons in any given year.

Mr. Speaker, this government has provided the opportunity to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have provided the investment. Now we ask the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to come forward: to be able to get the education that they need, whether it is through the College of the North Atlantic or through Memorial University; and to be able to go to our career centres, get the information they need, make the informed decisions, and contribute to this project that is going to benefit all of us in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to stand and do what some of the members opposite are not prepared to do, which is debate the Muskrat Falls Project in this House of Assembly. I rise today to speak on Muskrat Falls because I want to give my perspective and some of my personal feelings on this great project. We are certainly committed as a government to advancing this project, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is important that members of this House stand and be counted, as many members on this side of the House are doing today. Mr. Speaker, there has been plenty of discussion throughout the Province and indeed in this very House about Muskrat Falls. Let us be clear: this is not just another debate. This is not just another project. This is all about the economic self-reliance of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is about developing renewable energy that is going to give us an unprecedented open pathway for exporting surplus power for profit until we can use that power for industrial expansion here at home – which we will do, Mr. Speaker. This is about attracting new industry. This is about developing new growth opportunities for communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

No other jurisdiction in this country or beyond would let an opportunity so great and so important slip through its grasp. I stand before you today, Mr. Speaker, to say to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that our Premier and our government will not let this opportunity pass us by.

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

**MR. KENT:** I am a father of two young children and I am well aware that the quality of my children's future is going to be determined by the choices that we make right here, right now, today. This is critical.

When my kids someday look back at this pivotal moment in our Province's history, it is not going to be with bitter regret, Mr. Speaker, because we are doing what is right. We are doing the right thing for the right reasons. They will look back at us with pride and they will commend us for having had the courage to do what is right by choosing to give Newfoundland and Labrador the extraordinary future that it deserves, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that Muskrat Falls is the right project at the right time. I believe in the power of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are ready, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, we are ready. We are ready to take our place in the world as a global player in clean energy.

I believe that Muskrat Falls is the strategic move that we as a Province need to make. The development of this resource can change our Province's future forever, and for the better. Muskrat Falls can give us the power we need. It will grow our economy. It will make us more self-sufficient. Muskrat Falls will change how the world sees us; it will also change how we see the world.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a single member of this House, on any side of this House, who does not want good things for our Province. I personally want to secure a future here for my two children, and I believe this

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government has the courage to harness the opportunity that is before us and to make this project happen. Muskrat Falls is a great benefit to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is wonderfully progressive. It is well thought out and well planned. It is well researched, and it is going to change the way we do business in this Province and beyond.

It is a fundamental shift, Mr. Speaker. It is a shift from non-renewable to a renewable resource wealth, and that means our economy will no longer need to be project based. We will have the power to diversify. We will have the power to grow. Our businesses will have the power to prosper and compete – not only locally, but globally as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project works on so many levels. It provides the lowest possible power rates to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is environmentally responsible. It will drive our economy. It will make us energy self-sufficient, and it breaks Quebec's hold – but, Mr. Speaker, it is more than that to me.

Muskrat Falls for me is the right choice for our future, for my children's future, and their children's future. I am passionate about this project, not only because of the benefits that I will see, that we will all see in our lifetimes, but for the benefits that will be seen by generations to come. Renewable energy, let's think about that for a moment – renewable energy. The definition: Natural energy which does not have a limited supply. Renewable energy can be used again and again. It will never run out. Never run out.

Now, I know the members opposite do not like to hear that, Mr. Speaker, but it sounds pretty good to me. In fact, it sounds fantastic.

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

**MR. KENT:** Aside from the fact that Muskrat Falls will offer the Province this renewable energy source, it also offers so much more: virtual independence from oil energy; economic growth opportunities; at peak operation, 3,100 jobs on site; countless other jobs for related support industries; and the opportunity to be a leader in Canada, a leader in the world in the renewable resource market.

I think in the time I have today, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to talk a little bit about the Holyrood power plant, which has been the subject of much discussion throughout the debate that has ensued on this issue. It is no secret that the generation plant at Holyrood is old, it is dirty, and it is essentially a relic in terms of meeting the energy needs of our people. It needs to be taken off-line, and Muskrat Falls is the first step to achieving this.

Currently, Holyrood has capacity of producing 490 megawatts maximum generation. To put it simply, we are tapped out. Holyrood is giving as much power as it can and it is barely meeting the needs of the Province when we are in need of maximum power. Let's put it in simple terms. On the coldest day of the year, a sunny, windy, winter's day when a family of four or five have come home from work and school, they are cooking supper or watching TV, and playing video games with all the lights on in their house, Holyrood is operating at full capacity. It is giving as much as it can give because we need it to give. Holyrood is at breaking point.

Aside from this clearly valid reason for developing a more stable, renewable energy source, Holyrood at capacity is also spewing toxins into the air at a rapid rate. To put it bluntly, Mr. Speaker, oil energy is dirty. It is no secret. Even with new technology of installing scrubbers to help detoxify emissions from the Holyrood generation plant, we are still faced with transporting this waste elsewhere to a waste management facility. We are talking about dirty, expensive energy. It is not a great choice.

At the time when Holyrood was built, regulations obviously were not as strict as they are today. Government was in compliance with the standard of the day and it was the most effective choice at the time. By today's standards, Mr. Speaker, I am doubtful that Holyrood would even be approved as an acceptable means to provide energy to our residents.

Something else to consider as well, is even after the scrubbers do their work, we can never scrub out the greenhouse gas emissions completely. We are still polluting more than we need to be.



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Why Muskrat Falls instead of Holyrood? I see three big, obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker. Number one is clean renewable energy. Water is pretty clean. The toxins and pollutants that result in the production of hydro power are absolutely minimal, Mr. Speaker. Ninety-eight per cent of the Province's energy will come from carbon-free renewable resources. When Muskrat Falls comes on-line we will effectively be reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 1 million tons annually. In addition to this, we will also be eliminating future costs associated with greenhouse gas carbon taxes.

Another reason why Muskrat Falls versus Holyrood is the right option: stability, Mr. Speaker, stability. Right now, we are dependent on the volatile oil rates of the current world market. As we see on a weekly basis, there is nothing stable about oil. We are held hostage by these volatile rates. We are never in a position to predict what those rates will be more than several days in advance. I do not even think the hon. Member for St. John's East is in a position to make such predictions. For this reason, we need to find alternate energy sources.

It is expected with Muskrat Falls, power rates will stabilize by 2017 and they will increase 1 per cent per year after that time. Now, if Holyrood stays on-line, we are facing a current increase of 2 per cent a year. So, we should all take a look at our energy bills. This will likely increase as much as 3 per cent per year indefinitely, Mr. Speaker. Again, without stable energy, using oil as our energy source, we cannot – nor can anyone – predict how high these rates may go.

The third reason: Muskrat Falls is the lowest and least-cost option. Nalcor has done an exhaustive review, a comprehensive review, of all the alternative energy sources. Contrary to what members opposite would have you believe, Mr. Speaker, other alternatives including wind offshore, liquefied natural gas, will result in higher electricity rates for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Not only does Nalcor endorse Muskrat Falls, they have the documentation to back it up. It appears that there are certain members opposite who have not yet read that documentation. We have a responsibility to the people of the Province to ensure that we have their best interests in mind and that we find the lowest cost option available. I support Nalcor's work. I support the experts that have helped us arrive at this decision point. I support the Lower Churchill Project. I support Muskrat Falls.

We have sought expertise from others in the field, such as Manitoba Hydro International. I think that we cannot take the professional analysis that has been done and the educated opinions of these organizations lightly at all.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few reasons why we should all be supporting Muskrat Falls. Let me share a few more facts and figures to put this in perspective. Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to have among the lowest electricity rates in Canada, with Muskrat Falls. First is British Columbia; number two is Quebec – go figure, since they are using our energy. Number three is Manitoba. We are number four.

Currently, we, through Nalcor, are spending \$250 million per year on oil, roughly. With Muskrat Falls, our cost on oil will be reduced to about \$50 million annually. Although the cost appears to be significant in terms of construction for Muskrat Falls, the overall savings by switching from oil to hydro, Mr. Speaker, is about \$20 billion over twenty years – \$20 billion in savings.

Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition, and the Third Party as well, would have the public believe that there has not been enough research on this project. That there has not been enough third party reviews. They want to have their experts – who they cannot identify – here to answer questions. I say to them: The questions have been asked and they have been answered. You only need to review the reports, the public documents, to find the information that you seek.

If we, as members of government, on this side of the House have the ability to read the reports, prepare to debate this issue, based on the numbers, based on the facts, based on the figures as released by Nalcor, Manitoba Hydro, the PUB and others, why can't they, Mr. Speaker? These are public documents; they are available for everyone to review. I would encourage members of the Opposition to do that. By highlighting some of the findings and some of these studies that have been done, I am hoping that through this debate we will be able to enlighten some of the colleagues across the way.



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Mr. Speaker, Nalcor did not set out to prove that Muskrat Falls was the best option. They were asked to look at all feasible options available to meet the demand, to meet our increasing energy needs, and to determine which option would provide the most effective and cost-efficient way to get power to the people of the Province. Muskrat Falls is just that: the lowest cost option.

Other energy sources were reviewed as well, extensively, and I would like to comment on a few of those. Wind energy is another renewable, clean resource, Mr. Speaker. We have several wind farms in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I hope in the future we will have more. Unfortunately, while it is a good supplementary source to provide power to the people of the Province, it does not have the ability to be the main source of energy for Newfoundland and Labrador. It is particularly unreliable in winter when energy demands are obviously the highest.

We also heard the Opposition and other critics talk about energy conservation. Well, that cannot be relied on as the sole solution for meeting our energy needs in this Province. Gas, solar, and other means of energy generation were explored and they were evaluated. There were five factors that Nalcor used in investigating and exploring these various options: security of supply and reliability; cost to consumers; environmental considerations; risk and uncertainty; and financial viability. It is based on these factors that gas and solar power were screened out as possible options, for either being technically or economically unfeasible.

Mr. Speaker, there has been lots of buzz, particularly in the twitterverse about natural gas. Recently, Ziff Energy Group released a report titled: Natural Gas as an Island Power Generation Option. They have outlined some pretty compelling reasons why natural gas is not an option. The report examined the availability of offshore domestic gas, LNG, and the viability to produce electricity at Holyrood.

I will just highlight a couple of the findings for you, Mr. Speaker. Grand Banks natural gas is stranded and not available to flow. While the gas offshore in Newfoundland and Labrador is there, there is no viable market for offshore Newfoundland gas. There is no pipeline to commercial markets. There are no commercial contracts in place to sell the gas to market. This gas could be referred to, and is referred to in the Ziff report, as stranded.

I will just give you a couple of other quick examples of why natural gas is not viable, Mr. Speaker: the "Capital cost to develop Grand Banks gas is high and the return is not sufficient to justify the expense."

Mr. Speaker, I trust the experts and there have been plenty of experts who have taken part in the public discussion on this important issue. I certainly do not claim to know everything there is to know about this development, but I have done my homework, Mr. Speaker. I have read the reports.

I am not an engineer. I do not have years of experience in the natural resources field, but I am paying attention and I value the opinions of those who do. I have read the reports. I believe that due diligence has been exercised. We looked at all the other possibilities, Mr. Speaker, in terms of energy production, and I have faith in Nalcor. I also believe that they are supporting the best option for our Province, for our people, for our future.

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask: do the members opposite actually believe that this government would support a deal that is anything but beneficial to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador? Do they truly believe that we would support something as significant as Muskrat Falls as part of the Lower Churchill Project without doing our homework, Mr. Speaker?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** We have learned from their mistakes.

**MR. KENT:** We have learned from their mistakes. They cannot possibly think that we would spend millions of dollars on commissioning reports, on calling on expert opinions, thousands of hours on something that was not worth it for the overall benefit of our Province and our people, Mr. Speaker.

I am thrilled to be part of this debate for a variety of reasons. I am pleased that we, this government, are able to prove to the people of the Province that the members opposite, the Opposition and the Third Party, have concerns that are unfounded, Mr. Speaker. They are unnecessary concerns. If they took the time to do their own

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research and if they would identify who their apparent experts are, they too might see what we already know: that Muskrat Falls is the best option for Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, it is the only option that really makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to review some key points surrounding the Muskrat Falls deal in terms of Emera. Power from Muskrat Falls will meet the Island's future energy requirements, as I have said, while also providing sufficient capacity for future industrial developments here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Let me be a little more specific: 40 per cent of this energy is going to be used to displace the Holyrood thermal generating station on the Island. Twenty per cent will go to Nova Scotia in return for Emera building the \$1.2 billion Maritime Link. Nalcor will have access to the majority of the capacity on that link at no cost. Forty per cent of the power will be used as needed, either domestically or for export.

It is expected that this power will be needed in the next number of decades right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, for a variety of reasons, this is a win-win deal, contrary to what members opposite believe.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Most of them.

**MR. KENT:** Most of them; that is fair. I hope in the days ahead those members opposite will stand and be counted as well.

Mr. Speaker, like other members of this House, I am a politician. I am a business owner. I am a concerned citizen who has grown up in this Province and wants to stay here in Newfoundland and Labrador. First and foremost, though, I am a father and I am a husband.

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

**MR. KENT:** My colleague in front of me is reminding me that I am a Scout as well. That is true, I say to the hon. minister. Once a Scout, always a Scout. He may have turned out better had he been a Scout as well.

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

**MR. KENT:** On a more serious note, I believe in Muskrat Falls because it is the right choice. It is the right choice for this generation. It is the right choice for future generations. It is the right choice for my children. That is why I support this project above all else. The future of my family is the most important thing to me, and for this reason, among others, I fully support the development of Muskrat Falls as part of the Lower Churchill Project.

As the Premier has often said, this is the chance of a generation for Newfoundland and Labrador, and we cannot let this opportunity pass us by. We cannot and we will not let it slip through our fingers, Mr. Speaker. Those of us on this side of the House will not be blindsided by those who lack the foresight to see the big picture, Mr. Speaker, who are more interested in managing decline than investing in the future of our Province.

Those of us on this side of the House are not interested in managing decline. We are interested in building a sound, secure future for Newfoundland and Labrador. The Opposition parties may very well be willing to stand still in the middle of the road, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you the folks on this side of the House are not prepared to do that.

It is not always easy to make courageous decisions. It is not always easy to make big decisions, but they must be made. This is a decision that has to be made now. We have to seize this opportunity. We have to make the right decision to secure our energy needs and to leave future generations in Newfoundland and Labrador the legacy they truly deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I hope more members in this hon. House in the days and weeks ahead will take part in this important discussion. I also hope members of the public will continue to ask questions, will continue to take part

in the debate, and will continue to read the vast amount of research that is indeed available.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in the potential of Muskrat Falls. I believe in the power of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am very pleased to rise in this House as part of Address in Reply to speak in support of this important project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, prior to the last discussion by the member for Mount Pearl, there were various Tweets sent out on social media while in this House. There were two Tweets. One said, "I'm looking forward to taking part in the #MuskratFalls debate in about 15 minutes in the House of Assembly." The second one said –

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** This is a point of privilege. The second one said: this is the second day of debate underway on the Muskrat Falls debate.

What I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, is that this is not a Muskrat Falls debate, right now we are in Address in Reply. There are people out there who have access to social media who are sitting here thinking that we are having a Muskrat Falls debate.

It is my opinion that is misleading to people. This is Address in Reply right now; this is not a Muskrat Falls debate. I would put that out there. I believe there may have been Tweets from other members over there, but I would just address those specifically right now, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Justice, and Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** You offered a response to the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I do not see a point of privilege there. There is nothing restricting members on either side of the House, as many on the other side would know, about using Twitter when the House is in session. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker –

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

**MR. KING:** If the Member for Bay of Islands would let me finish. We listened to their point of privilege, I have a right to speak and be heard in this House. I would ask for that co-operation, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

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

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

I am speaking directly to the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I am not debating the issues; I am debating the rule of the House here.

Twitter has been used by members on both sides of the House. I suspect if you go and check today you will find it on both sides of the House, first of all.

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Secondly, I would refer you to Standing Orders. There is nothing in our Standing Orders that prevents a member from using Twitter while sitting in this House.

Thirdly, there has been no discussion or any agreement between House Leaders at this point in time, this session, on the use of Twitter. There were some discussions last time but not this time.

Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, it will be the government's position that when a member stands in this House they are participating in a debating process, whether it is in Question Period, whether it is in Address in Reply, or whether it is in speaking to a bill.

If a member is speaking today on Muskrat Falls, then I would suggest that it does not contravene the rules of this House for a member to say to anyone that I am debating today Muskrat Falls and my position on that issue.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, in response.

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

I appreciate the comments from the Government House Leader. We understand full well, as was done in the last session, that Twitter or any social media is used from both sides of the House while the House is in session and outside. However, what I am talking about specifically is Tweets made while in the House of Assembly. These Tweets need to be, I guess you would say, factual or correct.

The fact is, the Tweets that were made, two of them, said there was a Muskrat Falls debate. Right now, we are in Address in Reply. It is not a Muskrat Falls debate. We all know there was no debate accord reached.

What I am saying is that the Tweets put right now – and we dealt with this during the last session as well. I do not know if it is in the Standing Orders, but that is another reason our Standing Orders may need to be revised, to take into account the use of social media.

I would put that out there, Mr. Speaker, that the two Tweets I saw there, and there may be more, are putting out to the public, while in the House of Assembly, from a member of this House, that there is a Muskrat Falls debate occurring. This is the second day, and that is not occurring right now, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Government House Leader, in response.

**MR. KING:** To the point of privilege –

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

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

**MR. KING:** To the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

I think, first of all, a previous ruling has been brought before the House, and I stand to be corrected. I would ask you to check it, but I think there was a ruling by the Speaker around the use of Twitter in the House at a session prior to this one. I will leave that for you to check out.

Mr. Speaker, the word debate is used in this House synonymously with standing to speak, everybody uses it. With due respect, I understand the point the hon. member is making around the phrase: the debate – so to speak – of Muskrat Falls. I appreciate and respect where he is coming from on that but to raise it as a point of privilege in the House takes it to a different level.

I think if you check any documents, the word debate is used on every second page in Standing Orders, and in the rules from the House of Commons that also support our Standing Orders, that when any member stands in this

House it is interpreted by the public that they are standing to debate an issue, whether it is to debate the topic of the day. I think, for the record, if you check Hansard you will find that all members who have used that term here today and made that the focus of their speech – and government has never said anything otherwise.

When you check Hansard, when I spoke last, I called from the Order Paper Address in Reply, and many people have indicated that the focus of their speech was to take the time to talk about Muskrat Falls. We have in no way at all indicated that this is the debate, as people in the Province thought. So I am asking you to consider that in the context that we are talking about a point of privilege here, and a point of privilege speaks to the right of a member in this House to identify their topic or what they are doing in here, and they have used debate in that context.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's North, in response.

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

I would like to address the point of privilege that was raised. Of course, we are in Address in Reply and, in fact, a number of us on this side and a number of members on the other side have already spoken in Address in Reply, and are not permitted under our rules to speak again.

The Member for Terra Nova –

**MR. KING:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Government House Leader, on a point of order.

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, the speaker opposite is not speaking to the point of privilege here. He is talking about members who have spoken in this House. The question –

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

**MR. KING:** Would you please let me finish? Have the courtesy to let me speak my point.

The point, Mr. Speaker, is a point of privilege. The hon. Opposition Deputy House Leader raised a point of privilege about whether a member can use the word debate to describe what they are speaking about here today. It has absolutely nothing to do with members who have or have not spoken in this House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

There is no point of order.

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to continue.

Leading up to this sitting of the Legislature, there was an understanding in the public that we might have a Muskrat Falls debate. The Muskrat Falls debate is what was described. So, when the Member for Terra Nova and the Member for Mount Pearl North send – while they are sitting in their seats in the House of Assembly – text on social media and say: we are participating in the Muskrat Falls debate, or we are having the Muskrat Falls debate, it creates a perception that is disingenuous, Mr. Speaker. That is not what is happening here. Members are choosing to use their time in address in reply to speak to Muskrat Falls – and that is their right, but this is not the Muskrat Falls debate. Everything that people say in here –

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** – has to be accurate. It has to be accurate, it has to be factual, and that is not factual, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We will take a little recess to consider the point of privilege.

So this House is in recess. Thank you.

### Recess

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

After consideration, there is no point of privilege. It is a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

The hon. the Member for Humber West.

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

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

With all due respect to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, it gives me a great opportunity to stand in this House to speak this afternoon to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne delivered in this House a few months ago by the hon. Lieutenant-Governor.

A good portion of that speech, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, focused on what was entitled in the last section of the speech: The Shift to Renewable Energy. This afternoon for the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to all members of this hon. House and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I am going to discuss and talk about Muskrat Falls.

We all know this week, this month, and these times are historical times for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. This is a time for Newfoundland and Labrador and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to come of age, Mr. Speaker. Every nation down through history, Mr. Speaker, has come of age. All great civilizations down through history come of age. It is our time to take our rightful place in history.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** It is our time, Mr. Speaker, in my words, to shine. It is our time to showcase the rich resources, Mr. Speaker, and potential that lies within Newfoundland and Labrador, this great Province, and the resources of our people.

For me, Mr. Speaker, it is even more special. The chance this afternoon to speak and debate in this House is even more special. As a boy of twelve years old, I recall my father returning to our home in Bonavista Bay after spending a good many years on the Churchill Falls Development, working on that great development. It was 1976. I recall how proud he was to have been a part of that great engineering development, Mr. Speaker, and construction of one of the world's largest hydroelectric dams. How many times as a boy did I hear him say and talk about the mighty Churchill?

He sat my siblings and myself at the kitchen table to tell us we would be moving to Labrador, Mr. Speaker. When questioned by an inquisitive twelve-year-old at the time as to why this had to happen, his response to me was: They will be developing Muskrat Falls and the Lower Churchill in a couple of years. That was his response, Mr. Speaker. The next phase of Churchill Falls, Gull Island, and Muskrat Falls would be starting in a couple of years.



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He went on to explain that the resource is mighty and powerful. The key, my son, he said, it is never ending, powerful, and holds the key to our future as a people in this place.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, those words were spoken nearly thirty-six years ago, but they are ever and forever carved in the psyche of a twelve-year-old boy. They ring as true and mighty and powerful today as they did back then. That promise and that dream entrenched in me as a boy and carried with me for the past thirty years does me proud as I stand on the floor of this historical place to speak for him through me.

His words, Mr. Speaker, although simple and rough in scope, came off his tongue with a belief then as it is now, that this project was the right thing to do and is the right thing to do.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** My father, Mr. Speaker, knew and understood that. Although the Upper Churchill was a great spectacle of engineering, the other developments held the score card for a better place for generations to come. Our place, our time, is now.

Mr. Speaker, Alice, Jessie, Lena, Lester, Francis, Aunt Bessie and my mother Barbara from my hometown among many others are all senior citizens who have given everything that they have to this place that we call home and others wish they could call home. They all lived in or close to the homes they raised their families in.

The motivation I speak from today, Mr. Speaker, as I speak on Muskrat Falls, is for all those and thousands like them throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who have seen their share of struggle, who have seen their share of courage, who have seen their share of danger, who have seen their share of loss and experienced their share of loss, but, despite all of that, who believed and held on to this place because they knew – yes, Mr. Speaker, they knew – what a place she really is. That is my motivation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as well, I spent the better part of the last twenty-three or twenty-four years as an educator in this great Province. I speak from experience when I say that young people from Newfoundland and Labrador are among some of the best in the world in many professions. Wherever they go and whatever they do, they have always left an indelible mark on any profession wherever they call home, Mr. Speaker.

However, Mr. Speaker, in their hearts and deep in their soul there is always a longing for this place, Newfoundland and Labrador, for a time when they can say: look at her. Look at my Newfoundland and my Labrador. Look at what she has to offer to all people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that is my motivation. I am motivated by the hundreds of former students, young men and women who long for home, and for the current youth who will have a destiny, a bright and prosperous future, Mr. Speaker, here at home, because of Muskrat Falls and the potential she holds.

These are my motivations, Mr. Speaker. I believe in this place and I believe in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, there has not been a project ever developed in Newfoundland and Labrador that has had the guts torn right out of it, that has been assessed, evaluated, re-evaluated, and reassessed like the Muskrat Falls Project. From the time my father mentioned it to me thirty-six years ago, as a boy, Muskrat Falls has been in the works for decades. Today, Mr. Speaker, I say to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: the stars all line up for its development.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard over the past twenty months or so critics of the project attempt to strip away the validity of the project and its value to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I listened to many on the Open Line shows, on the television programs, the editorials in the local papers, and the letters to the editors. I have listened

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to the Opposition parties and individuals throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, including my own district, Mr. Speaker. I have followed people on Twitter and I respect all their views, although we differ on opinion.

The one common thread that rings through: they question the reports and professional integrity of same. Yet, Mr. Speaker, not once have they offered not one, not a single, not a bit of counter-professional evaluation that can offer an alternative that is proven better than the option before us today and that option is Muskrat Falls.

I have waited and I continue to wait, but nothing has ever come, Mr. Speaker, that can discredit the professional work of groups like Nalcor, that can discredit the professional work of Navigant, that can discredit the professional work of Manitoba Hydro International, and Ziff, to name a few, as it relates to the best option for this Province today; and not only today, Mr. Speaker, but for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, these are reputable companies and reputable individuals – yes, Mr. Speaker, reputable companies and reputable individuals with a long list of professional and business backgrounds, with reputations that are important.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, these companies do not make recommendations just to please their clients. To say and think otherwise is elementary. I want to repeat that: These companies do not make recommendations just to please their clients, Mr. Speaker. They are world renown all over the world, with clients all over the world.

I listened to Mr. Martin of Nalcor on a number of occasions over the past few months, as did members of the public, as did members of the Opposition and the Third Party. They have had their chance and they have listened to Mr. Martin as well. I heard him speak in Corner Brook at the Corner Brook Board of Trade luncheon a few weeks ago.

As a former educator, I learned a great deal by looking into the eyes of students to see what they were really thinking and how they would react in certain situations. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I look at Mr. Martin I see a person who wants to make this place a better place, a prosperous place for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** He is a passionate Newfoundlander, Mr. Speaker, one of our own, like you and me and Lester, and Lena, and Barbara. That is why this government engaged some of the very best minds in the field from all around the world, home-grown experts – and yes, experts from all over the world: Manitoba Hydro, Ziff Energy, Navigant, and our very own Nalcor. The very people who have roots, the people at Nalcor, and it was mentioned in this House a number of times today, they have a love and a bond for this place that we call home.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few months I have knocked on doors in my district, attended functions in my district, as well as functions throughout the Province over the summer, and the overwhelming sentiment, as has been said by a number of people already today, is to move on with the project. If you keep it out there, they say, in public, it is like hanging a dead carcass in the woods. The vultures will eat and tear and fight at the meat until there is nothing left but the bone.

Mr. Speaker, they say that the best time to plant tree was thirty years ago. The next best time to plant a tree is today. As my wise father told me – and he had it right; he had it right thirty-odd years ago – the best time to develop Muskrat Falls was thirty-five years ago, but I say the next best time to develop Muskrat Falls is today, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Muskrat Falls is the right thing to do and now is the right time to do it. Muskrat Falls will meet the growing energy needs of our people. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the growing energy needs of our people.

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Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the development in Newfoundland and Labrador has been unprecedented over the past few years. This is a different place today than it ever was in the past. The increase in households using electric heat and increase in electricity for many and varied electronic equipment that has become the household norm is incredible. The numbers are there to prove this, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Natural Resources so eloquently gave the numbers this afternoon and are available in all of the reports that have been released over the last number of weeks: 18,600 new ratepayers since 2006; 28,000 new homes, Mr. Speaker, from 2002 to 2011.

Yet some, Mr. Speaker, will argue that the shutdown of the Abitibi mills in Stephenville and

Grand Falls – Windsor is enough to supply the needs of energy for the Province; however, alone, the coming on stream of Long Harbour and the increase of households and their electronic equipment, Mr. Speaker, nullifies that loss. As the Minister of Natural Resources, again I say, eloquently described that when he spoke first here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, in the early stages all I heard about was that if we go ahead with Muskrat Falls, the power bill for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will double. That is what was propagated here on this floor: Power bills would double. It was propagated here on the floor of this House, in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, in this gathering, and regurgitated throughout the airwaves for weeks and weeks and weeks.

I say to everyone in this House and everyone listening on television at home that contrary to that statement, if we do not do Muskrat Falls, the increases in power bills will double, Mr. Speaker.

As my father told me years ago, the Churchill River is powerful and mighty and will flow forever. Once we tap into the energy resource, we will have a consistent, stable source of power forever and ever to the end of time. Listen to how that sounds: forever and ever to the end of time. It has a beat to it, I would say to the hon. members. It has a neat beat to it, doesn't it?

It is a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker, that water that is used to spin turbines to create energy has a long life. Churchill Falls, Upper Salmon, Cat Arm, Bay d'Espoir, and so on, Mr. Speaker – we have them in our own backyard, as I just listed, here on the Island and in Labrador to prove just that. They are a source of consistent and reliable energy that is not at the mercy of oil and world markets. In addition, Mr. Speaker, this development is our development and will provide significant economic benefits for the people of this Province and my region in Western Newfoundland as well.

On two recent occasions I spoke to individuals who work out West. They say: Let's move on with the project, Mr. Speaker. Most recently I had a conversation with a young man, a former student of mine, at the airport here in St. John's, who is excited. He told me he is excited about the construction opportunities and business opportunities for his new small company, Mr. Speaker. That is important. They want to be a part of the 3,100 direct jobs and the 9,100 person years of direct employment as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills spoke eloquently about this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, this government has consistently shown over the last ten years that we believe in this place and we want to stimulate growth, not manage decline. We are not going to give away our resources anymore. In fact, I say to all hon. members we are raising the bar, creating a better standard than ever before, and we will control the developments because we control our own energy. We are building the economy for our people not only for today, Mr. Speaker, but for our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

If we do not do Muskrat Falls at this window of opportunity, we are telling my former students to continue to travel back and forth to jobs elsewhere or find a living somewhere else, Mr. Speaker. We are telling potential business opportunities that we are not able to secure your needed source of power and electricity. We will be forever tied to the oil reserves from foreign countries as we line their pockets, Mr. Speaker. The electricity rates for seniors and everyone in this Province will be determined by markets of the world.

If we do not do Muskrat Falls we are, as it seems, as some want us to do, managing decline. I did not sign on two years ago when I stood with the people of Humber West to manage decline, Mr. Speaker. No, we have a

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better vision for Newfoundland and Labrador than to manage decline. If we do Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, we open the door for long-term stable energy rates.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Not for five years, I would say to the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, not for ten years, I would say again, not for fifteen years, but for generation, and generation, and generation to come. We will take control of our energy and thus solidify developments in our economy, Mr. Speaker.

It is widely known that those countries and regions around the world which control their energy, control their growth, and control their economy. The research in that cannot be disputed. Mr. Speaker, it blows my mind that some do not or will not accept the fact that Muskrat Falls will transform our economy dependent on non-renewable resources to an economy built to prosper on renewable, sustainable energy resources. My father knew and understood that forty years ago and it is true today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive reviews released by the Minister of Natural Resources over the past few weeks show that Muskrat Falls is the least-cost option to meet the growing energy needs of this Province. If you believe we need the power, then Muskrat Falls is the option, Mr. Speaker.

There has not been one shred of evidence put forth over the past eighteen months or so, Mr. Speaker, that can legitimately discredit or source down those facts. If they exist, if they are real, if someone is holding onto them I would say, if someone has hidden them away, I ask that those experts produce them, show them, and put them on the floor of this House, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba Hydro stated that Nalcor, your company, which has the best interests of all Newfoundlanders at heart, has used an exhaustive process for reviewing generation options.

I see that my time is drawing to a close. I want to conclude by this quote, and I paraphrase; it is a quote from Basil Walsh. He said that an intelligent plan is the first step to success. The person who plans knows where he or she is going, knows what progress he or she is making, and has a pretty good idea of when they will arrive. Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan –

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Thirty seconds, Mr. Speaker. Leave for thirty seconds?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the member have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The member has leave to clue up.

**MR. GRANTER:** Thank you to the hon. members.

This government has a plan, Mr. Speaker, one for success for this and future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The road to that success, I would say to all hon. Members, is Muskrat Falls.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

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

I count it a tremendous privilege to talk in this House of Assembly this afternoon, thanks to the wonderful people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale, and again I want to talk about the Muskrat Falls issue.

No doubt, this is a defining moment in our Province's history, one for which I am grateful to be a participant, but also take with grave responsibility. I strongly feel that this is a watershed moment for our Province. Nothing said or done has the potential to impact the destiny of Newfoundland and Labrador as the development of the Lower Churchill.

For the past several months, I have researching and reading about the historical development of the Upper Churchill Project, trying to get a better understanding and put into context the importance of developing the Lower Churchill, of course beginning with Muskrat Falls.

At this time I would like to thank our government and Nalcor for supplying an abundance of excellent detailed information concerning the development of Muskrat Falls so that we could all be informed based on facts. I applaud Nalcor for conducting numerous public sessions all over the Province for input, encouraging people to come forward and ask for questions and input. They have done a super and a stellar job indeed, Mr. Speaker.

Why is this such a pivotal time in our history? We are embarking on the path of economic independence. It is believed that if you are energy independent, you control your own destiny.

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

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

**MR. POLLARD:** If that is not the case, why would billionaire T. Boone Pickens, Chair of BP Capital Management, encourage the United States to develop its own resources and get off Mid East oil? If that is not the case, why would jurisdictions all over the world pursue opportunities that potentially will enable them to become more energy independent?

To have full control over electricity generation, instead of relying on another jurisdiction or utility, would afford us more flexibility in meeting the economic challenges of the day and potentially attract more development. By building Muskrat Falls, we will be one step closer to becoming energy independent, thus achieving economic independence, which means, ultimately, we have more say over our future.

Mr. Speaker, we have been tied to Hydro-Quebec long enough. Why place our destiny, our future, in the hands of someone else? As Jack Welch said: Control your own destiny, or somebody else will. We can do it ourselves. We have the expertise. We have become of age. We are more than a potato floating aimlessly in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

I can remember standing the gymnasium in my school as a younger man on many occasions, reflecting upon the tremendous potential we have as a Province and yearned for the day when we as a people and as a Province stood on our own two feet and make the world come to us. This Province, I believe, is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. I could not understand why we were pegged as a have-not province, a concept which I never did buy into. We were too rich in culture, too rich in innovation, and too rich in resources. We are a tough and hearty people.

Over and over in my mind was the question: Why are we not financially better off? Was it because of timid, passive leadership? Was it because of no vision? Well, since this government assumed office in 2003, Mr. Speaker, things began to change. The mantra became maximizing the benefits from our natural resources. No more giveaways. Finally there was pride, self-confidence, and thoughts of self-reliance. Bold and courageous



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decisions were made and strategies developed and implemented to create jobs to diversify the economy and to wrestle with a stubborn, crippling, paralyzing debt.

Mr. Speaker, this government, led by our present Premier, championed these principles and presented them to the people who gave us an overwhelming mandate last October to govern and lead our Province to the next level. Our Premier has repeatedly stated that no development will occur unless it is in the best interests of the people. Muskrat Falls is no exception to that principle, Mr. Speaker.

When planning for the future, it is incumbent on all of us to have our homework done. Rest assured our government did that in spades. In 2007, this government laid out an Energy Plan that will make this Province an energy warehouse. Incremental steps were taken to fulfill that vision, of which Muskrat Falls was and is an integral part.

Every year, the Auditor General would warn us of the volatility of oil prices. He advised us to get a long-term plan so that we will not become so dependent on oil and so, when it is gone, we will have sustainable services and programs. Mr. Speaker, we listened. Being visionary and prudent, we not only used the oil money to build infrastructure, reduce taxes, and reduce debt but we also planned to diversify the economy so when the oil is indeed gone our programs will be sustainable.

How would we achieve this, Mr. Speaker? To accomplish that vision, we plan to transition the economy from a non-renewable resource to an economy that is based on renewable resources. As President Barack Obama once said, we recover from this recession, the transition to clean energy has the potential to grow the economy and create jobs, only if we seize the moment.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this golden moment has arrived, it must be seized now. It must not be squandered. Muskrat Falls is that golden moment. Ultimately, it will be our decisiveness or our reluctance to act which will decide if the current opportunities are capitalized upon or squandered. These were the words of Jason Churchill, penned in a 2003 document, outlining the development of the Labrador Churchill River Basin.

Why not develop Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker? Not doing it will be like going to Saudi Arabia and not drilling for oil. The world is addicted to oil which drives growth; however, oil is not going to last forever.

We have a massive renewable energy source in our own backyard, namely the Upper and the Lower Churchill. We all know the Upper Churchill story, producing up to 34 million megawatts of energy per year of which 32 million is sold to Hydro-Québec; 75 per cent of Hydro-Québec profits are due to this cheap power. A severely flawed, lopsided, irritating contract indeed, Mr. Speaker, but, we cannot be scared to death to make another solid investment for the betterment of the people of this Province when another glorious opportunity arises and stares us in the face, tantalizing us to boldly make that next move. Alternatives like wind, solar are limited, intermitted and unreliable; besides being too costly, Mr. Speaker.

How about natural gas, LNG or other alternatives, one might ask? That is a fair question, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, MHI, Navigant, Nalcor and other professionals and independent experts with impeccable reputations concluded that Muskrat Falls – this is the first time you have heard this by the way – is the least cost option, a whopping \$2.4 billion cheaper than the next option.

Listen to this, to ignore the advice of independent experts and listen to self-proclaimed experts, to my mind, would be foolhardy and irresponsible as an elected official, Mr. Speaker. Don't you think that other jurisdictions would have had the Lower Churchill developed by now if it was in their own backyard? I think so, Mr. Speaker.

This Province is sitting on a massive source of cheap, stable, clean hydroelectricity that is the envy of the whole wide world. Isn't it time that we took advantage of this and develop it for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and stop playing games?

Every Premier since Confederation tried to develop the Lower Churchill: Moores, Peckford, Wells, Tobin, Grimes, but absolutely to no avail. Thanks to a passive and timid federal government, by the way, that did not



want to alienate Quebec or Hydro-Québec. They put up barrier after barrier after barrier to impede development. Previous Administrations talked and talked and talked, with no action at the end of the day. Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely sick of talk and no action.

Mr. Speaker, I want action, bold action. How ironic, Mr. Speaker; just listen to this. We are hearing the same talk, the same arguments that were espoused when the Bay D'Espoir hydroelectric plant was developed back in 1967 when it opened around August 1. Mr. Speaker, too costly, it is going to bankrupt the Province. We do not need it, Mr. Speaker. If you listen to the naysayers, much of the Province would be still in the dark today.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, that particular plant led to the creation of an Island-wide transmission grid system bringing electricity to most of the Island's small outports, in addition to enhancing economic development. Building that plant was indeed a smart move, ask the people. That is exactly what Muskrat Falls represents today.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** An opportunity to grow and be linked to more markets as opposed to being isolated forever and ever, and ever, and paying foreign rich oil companies forever for our energy needs.

Mr. Speaker, this government is about to act upon sound, solid advice, sound, solid economics, a sound, solid business model and a sound, solid hydroelectricity plant for a sound, solid sustainable future for ourselves, our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren and beyond.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** In 1924, Mr. Speaker, a Canadian businessman, Harry Crowe, stated that water power is the greatest asset to any country. If hydropower is that good, you might ask, well, why did it take over forty years to get to this point? Well, that is a fair question; that is a good question, Mr. Speaker. Was it because of a timid federal government who failed to confront Quebec and Hydro-Québec – who, to this very day, want to dictate every term of an agreement and continue to keep us dependent on them, who are satisfied for us to reap \$1 billion, and they have reaped \$20 billion? They receive –

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

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

I did not want to interrupt the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale, but I would like for members to have some co-operation, please, as he delivers the rest of his debate.

**MR. POLLARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your protection.

Mr. Speaker, Hydro-Québec receives 96 per cent of the benefits of Upper Churchill contract, and Newfoundland and Labrador, who is the owner of the resource, gets a meagre, paltry, crumbs, 4 per cent – what a horrendous inequity. That is the result of the Upper Churchill contract. It is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Now, things have changed since 1969. Never in their wildest dreams, Mr. Speaker, did Hydro-Québec think that Newfoundland and Labrador would find a way to develop Lower Churchill without them. Never in their wildest dreams, Mr. Speaker, did Hydro-Québec think that Newfoundland and Labrador would achieve the capacity to go it alone, or to strike a deal with somebody else, with Emera and Nova Scotia, to get away from their predatory clutches, thus breaking their geographic stronghold on us, get rid of that revenge on geography that they espouse about. That is the game-changer, Mr. Speaker. That is what the other side is missing.

So again, why so long to arrive at this point? Well, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, the biggest reason is because Hydro-Québec put up so many roadblocks. Yes, Hydro-Québec are experts in their field, no question. They know their business, they are very powerful, and they are influential. I recognize that, and we all do. They, however, have been very unfair to Newfoundland and Labrador. This is very unfortunate, because due

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to this unfriendly relationship, one of North America's greatest assets, the hydro potential, is left undone up to this point. This relationship even goes as far back as 1927, Mr. Speaker, when the British Privy Council decided in Newfoundland's favour that Labrador belongs to Newfoundland and Labrador. Quebec has been sour ever since because of this decision.

To develop Gull and to get to Ontario and Northeastern United States markets, it is more economical for us to have access to Quebec transmission lines. We all know that. However, to this day, Hydro-Québec is not providing fair, unfettered access. According to the 1867 BNA Act, interprovincial trade should not be impeded by another province, yet Quebec is opposed to any attempt to transmit power over their authority. We should have unfettered access, Mr. Speaker. The list can go on.

If it is in the best interests of the people, Mr. Speaker, which I believe it is, let us get on with Muskrat Falls. When 2041 comes around, we will bargain from a position of strength, not from a position of weakness like we did in the Upper Churchill. In the words of Bill Marshall, who served under Peckford's Administration – just listen to what he said: "if parties [could] not negotiate on equal footing, inequities [were] bound to result."

We will not be approaching the table in 2041 with our hands tied behind our back, Mr. Speaker. We will command respect and we will have something to offer. We will not be in a do-or-die condition; according to Hydro-Québec, CF(L)Co's profitability stripped down to its underwear just before signing the Upper Churchill contract.

Why Muskrat Falls now, Mr. Speaker? Interest rates are low. A federal loan guarantee is coming. We have mature and proven technology. We are in good financial shape. We have a world-class Nalcor. We have to move on, Mr. Speaker. With Muskrat Falls we will have lower, stable electricity rates. We will control our destiny. We will be no longer dependent on oil. We will be interconnected to the North American grid. We will have clean power. We will have renewable energy. It is the least-cost option. We will be the owner of our power-producing asset. We will bypass Quebec.

I am running out of time, Mr. Speaker. I am racing.

To make a decision not to build Muskrat Falls, one would have to trample on expert analyses and recommendations, such as MHI, such as the Navigant report, such as Nalcor, and we can go on and on, Mr. Speaker. This project has been gutted and paunched just like a moose, and stood the test. No other project has received such scrutiny. Public debate and discussion is good for democracy; however, this project has been studied to death. Our Premier, our government, and Nalcor did due diligence on this file. It is too important not to, Mr. Speaker, unless we remain dependent on dirty oil for the rest of our lives, and we do not want to do that.

I will be eighty-three years young at 2041. I want my grandchildren, Caylee Jessica Osmond, two years old, and Hayden Samuel Carter to look upon their poppy Pollard and say he was a wise person; he was a visionary person. I hope they say that about their poppy Pollard. They will say hopefully that poppy Pollard cared about them. We are not playing games here. It is too important. The future is at stake.

Governments govern. This decision is far more important than any Premier or political party; it transcends all political parties and leaders. It takes courage and boldness to lead. It took boldness for former Premier Peckford to fight tooth and nail to get the Atlantic Accord, a template that enabled us to make other decisions like Hebron and White Rose. It took boldness for Premier Williams to stare down big oil companies. That was yesterday.

It took boldness for our present Premier to stand her ground and carve out a path that will lead us to economic independence. Like the saying goes, anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm. In times of controversy and challenge, this Premier stood tall and firm having faith in the course that she is charting.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Today marks a brand new day. It is a new time in our history. It is a pivotal time. It is a time to act, a time to lead, a time to look ahead. It takes no energy to criticize, it takes no energy to tear it down, it

takes no energy to be inactive, but it takes new energy to be bold, it takes new energy to have vision, it takes new energy to chart a new course, it takes new energy to act.

On October 11, 2011, we were given that new energy. New energy 2012 is poised to cut the umbilical cord from Hydro-Quebec, enable us to stand on our own two feet and feed us a lot of energy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, given the hour of the day I move, seconded by the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, that we do adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the 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'.

Carried.

The House stands adjourned until Monday, December 3, at 1:30 o'clock.

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