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Subject : Southern Gazette - Premier Marshall reaffirms government's path for energy development

Premier Marshall reaffirms government's path for energy development

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George Macvicar
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Premier Tom Marshall pulled out a tried and true speech from his suit coat pocket for Monday night's Burin Peninsula Chamber of Commerce AGM.

It may have contained a few tweets here and there but it was a speech Mr. Marshall has likely delivered during his tenures as Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Finance.

Former Premier Kathy Dunderdale, a native of Burin, was originally scheduled to be guest speaker but events during the second last week of January reshuffled the deck.

Mr. Marshall, now the 11th Premier in Newfoundland and Labrador, said his speech to the Chamber's annual general meeting was his first public address since being named worn to his new role Jan. 24. It excluded an appearance before the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament at the Legislature the first week of February.

He likened the accomplishment of Marystown's own Kaetlyn Osmond at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics as "one person stepping up to inspire others.

"We all have that capacity to step up and I notice in our youth particularly a new attitude in Newfoundland and Labrador stemming from the province leading economic growth (in Canada)."

He recapped one of the current government's "boldest steps" in the development of the province's energy resources. The establishment of NALCOR to oversee energy programs, recruiting of talented individuals like Ed Martin to run the corporation, NALCOR's leadership in the recapture of Upper Churchill River in Labrador wealth now being lost to Quebec, its development of the Lower Churchill with Muskrat Falls and in the oil play in the Atlantic Ocean offshore Newfoundland.

"We needed a new comprehensive energy plan and it has worked. We're building on former Premiers Danny Williams and Kathy Dunderdale's determination to get more than we were getting (from our energy reserves).

"The proof is where we were then and where we are now."

The premier insisted the province's path to developing Churchill Falls is right, for what he called "a clean, green renewable resource – one of the largest in North America. It is the best way forward and the lowest cost option."

Mr. Marshall indicated the province is following the lead of Norway's energy giant Statoil, which has spread its wings from the North Sea to around the world, and last year had one of the largest oil discoveries in the Jean d'Arc basin off of Newfoundland.

"Energy drives economic growth and we've got it.

"We've taken the future in our hands and changed our direction to be better off in the future."