



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Delivered at the Opening of
The Fourth Session of the Forty-Eighth
General Assembly of the Province of
Newfoundland and Labrador
by Her Honour
The Honourable Judy M. Foote, PC, ONL
Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

April 4, 2019

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Government has a strong partnership with the Federal Government, and working together, we will position this province to achieve its potential. It is fitting that, on the seventieth anniversary of Confederation, celebrating our great union with the Government of Canada, My First Minister stood side by side with the Federal Government and announced a new approach that was built on partnership and dialogue to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador is the principal beneficiary of the rich resources in our offshore.

The new revenue stream guaranteed by our agreement with the Government of Canada will deliver \$2.5 billion to our province, with the majority of the revenues to come before 2030, when this province most needs it. With no restrictions on its use, this revenue will be used wisely. It will

reduce our provincial net debt, reduce our interest payments, and help us stay the course for fiscal stability and return to surplus.

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

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

Empowering Women

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Working with Indigenous Communities

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

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

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created as a part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to inform Canadians about Indian Residential Schools, and to guide a process of reconciliation. Of the 94 Calls to Action outlined by the Commission in

2015, approximately one-third are directed at provincial and territorial governments. Although reconciliation will occur over generations, with systemic changes necessary across all aspects of Canadian society, we all can and must take concrete steps to achieve reconciliation. We have engaged with provincial Indigenous Governments and Organizations about the recommendations involving Our Government, and are responding in ways that will build a better future while recognizing and addressing the challenges.

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

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

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

Celebrating Excellence

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

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

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

Kaetlyn Osmond of Marystown added World Champion to her lengthy list of accomplishments when she won gold at the ladies singles event at the 2018 Figure Skating World Championships. Peter Hynes from Placentia won bronze² in mini javelin at the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Big Land

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

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

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

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

In addition to work on the existing transportation network in Labrador, Our Government is considering what the future of transportation could look like in that region with the exploration of a fixed link between Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland. An updated pre-feasibility report was released in April 2018, reviewing both road and rail linkages. A fixed link could bring great benefits to both the province and the country, socially and economically. While we continue to consider this possibility and now know that it is technically feasible, we recognize that such a project would be a long-term endeavour requiring many partners.

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

A Solid Foundation for New Growth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 2018 we launched a pilot project to produce vegetable transplants for commercial farmers to give them a head start on the growing season and an opportunity to try out different vegetable varieties. Commercial farmers received 255,000 vegetable transplants. Due to the overwhelming

popularity of this program, in 2019 we will disperse seven times more vegetable transplants – over 1.5 million – including turnip, onion, kohlrabi, brussels sprout, kale, leek, broccoli and cabbage to commercial farmers to help jump-start the 2019 growing season.

Our achievements to date mark major progress towards our goals to increase food self-sufficiency, create new business opportunities, and support the many entrepreneurs working in agriculture. Working with our province’s dedicated and hard-working farmers, we look forward to growing our success.

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

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

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

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

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

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

This past November, the province received record bids for offshore exploration totaling \$1.38 billion, with a record single bid of \$621 million from BHP Billiton, a new entrant for Newfoundland and Labrador. This is proof that the Advance 2030 plan developed between Our Government and industry is attracting investment and growing activity in our oil and gas industry.

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

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

With Mining the Future 2030, our plan for growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador mining industry, our province is positioned to be a top tier global jurisdiction for safe, environmentally

responsible exploration and mining growth and to maximize benefits and opportunities by competitively producing quality products for global markets.

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

To chart this renewable future, we are committed to working with industry and stakeholders to develop a renewable energy strategy that is focused on creating employment opportunities and further positioning the province as an energy hub.

Looking beyond traditional economic sectors, we recognize that our artists play a critical role in presenting Newfoundland and Labrador on the world stage and we continue to provide support for this vital sector through the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, the Arts Council, and the Heritage Foundation, and the Cultural Economic Development Program. Our own Mary Walsh was recently honoured with the Canadian Screen Awards' Earle Grey Award, recognizing her outstanding lifetime achievement for television acting. Filmmaker Kenneth J. Harvey's documentary on Christopher Pratt received the award for Best Canadian Work at the 37th Festival International du Film sur L'Art. Congratulations to you both for these well-deserved honours!

The World is at Our Doorstep

Newfoundland and Labrador is a destination of choice for people around the world. Travelers are drawn to our people, our culture, and our way of life. Our Government continues to grow and

support the provincial tourism industry and its over 20,000 jobs by enhancing market readiness, destination development and marketing support in partnership with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Board, regional Destination Management Organizations and tourism operators. We will go further and renew our tourism strategy - Beyond 2020 to position our tourism industry for even greater success.

Opportunities Beyond

This past year has been a tumultuous period for international trade around the world with a shift in United States trade policy. Newfoundland and Labrador was not immune to the far-reaching US policies but has weathered the storm. Our Government fought the imposition of tariffs on newsprint produced by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, protecting 500 well-paying jobs at the mill and securing the means to develop an innovative forestry sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our Government also achieved an exemption from softwood lumber duties, and supported the signing of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Growing Employment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uptake of an operating grant program and a Child Care Capacity initiative for regulated Family Child Care over the coming year is anticipated to increase affordable family child care spaces across the province – particularly in rural, remote and other underserved areas. These initiatives will help ensure that parents can access child care in order to go to work to provide for their families.

Welcoming Newcomers

Our Government knows that immigration is critical to growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2017, over 5,200 residents were laid to rest in the province while just over 4,000 newborn babies were welcomed into the world. In *The Way Forward*, Our Government committed to greeting approximately 1,700 immigrants annually to the province by 2022 and we are well on our way to achieving that goal. In 2018, over 1,500 newcomers to the province became permanent residents. Some of these new residents have come here by way of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.

This program demonstrates how collaboration with the federal and other Atlantic governments, along with employers, is allowing us to welcome immigrants to share in, and contribute to, our economic growth.

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

In the coming year, Our Government will emphasize our focus on supporting newcomer retention, beginning with assisting migrant workers and international graduates to become permanent residents, engaging employers in facilitating workplace-based language training, introducing empowerment-focused employment initiatives for former refugee women, and promoting international entrepreneurship. We will help newcomers in getting to know their new communities, including learning about the cultures of and building connections with Indigenous people, and exploring opportunities to live and work in Newfoundland and Labrador. Welcoming communities promote the integration and retention of newcomers to the province. Welcoming communities encourage individuals and organizations to work together to provide services and supports to help foster a sense of belonging among residents of diverse cultural and other backgrounds. Such communities are also a means of creating a culture of inclusion and respect for the diversity of all residents of the province.

Partnering for Success

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

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

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

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

Leaving No Stone Unturned

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

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

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

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

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

Better Public Safety and Consumer Protection

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Our Government continues to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of residents and consumers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Building Critical Infrastructure

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

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

A new mental health and addictions facility will be constructed to replace the Waterford Hospital. This new facility will be located in an extension to the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's, bringing together mental health and physical health services in one location. This new facility will have 102 beds and will help us advance a key commitment in Towards Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to health infrastructure, Our Government has been investing in education infrastructure, opening six new schools in our province since 2016. These new schools represent a combined investment of more than \$139 million and will provide state-of-the-art facilities in which our students can learn and grow.

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

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

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

Better Outcomes

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

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

Our approach is based on the work of the World Health Organization and we are learning from leading jurisdictions around the world that are employing this same approach. As we forge ahead together with this approach we will embrace our cultural strengths and shared experiences. Like others, our ultimate goal is to achieve a healthy population living in healthy communities throughout our province.

To catalyze our collective vision, Our Government will invest in the social and economic determinants of health that contribute to a healthy society: creating more jobs and achieving higher incomes, increasing access to early childhood education to improve early childhood experiences, ensuring our children and youth thrive in our classrooms and achieve higher educational outcomes, supporting university education and training programs, promoting industry development that is value-added and inclusive, investing in better housing for all, continuing

the path to reconciliation with our Indigenous people, supporting seniors to stay in their own homes, strengthening strong social connections in all our communities, and improving access to preventive and supportive health and community services across our province.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As we continue to implement Towards Recovery, we are committed to ensuring that the voice of lived experience is heard in all our work through the support of our Recovery Council. The Recovery Council, which is composed solely of individuals with lived experience and affected family members, advises the Minister of Health and Community Services on mental health and addictions matters from a lived experience perspective.

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

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

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

Our Government introduced a streamlined financial assessment process and eliminated liquid asset consideration for those requiring long-term care and community support services. We will continue to support improvements in home and community care through continued implementation of recommendations from the 2016 Provincial Home Support Program Review, including the introduction of service level agreements with home care agencies to improve service quality and accountability.

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

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

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

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

Our Government continues to support six regional wellness coalitions across the province. These coalitions bring together individuals, community partners, regional health authorities and schools to work on common health and wellness areas in their regions. Coalitions provide networking and capacity building opportunities, community workshops and events and education and training.

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

In 2018, Our Government supported an expansion and enhancement of a vegetable and fruit campaign in Regional Health Authorities, designed to raise awareness around the importance of consuming vegetables and fruit and taking action to increase access to fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit across the province. We will continue to work with partners on ways to promote and support healthy eating.

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

Investing in Our Future

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

Highlights include the hiring of 21 new reading specialists this year, which will increase to 104 over the next two years. A new position, teaching and learning assistant, supports teachers in primary and elementary schools. Fifty-four teaching and learning assistants have already been hired with a plan to hire another 146 over the next two years.

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

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

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

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

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

In a 2018 Research Infosource report ranking the top 50 research universities of Canada, Memorial University ranked 20th with over \$100 million in research income. Memorial's research income experienced 23 per cent growth between 2016 and 2017, which was the second fastest growth of the top 50 universities. Memorial University also leads the country in corporate research income growth, increasing 160 per cent since 2013.

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

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

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

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

Giving Our Children a Good Start

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

Onward

Against a mountain of fiscal, economic, and social challenges, Our Government has been resilient, and has made progress that can be measured. With The Way Forward, we have set out a plan focused on taking control of our fiscal situation all the while building a better economy and a healthy, prosperous society. We will continue onward and guide our province toward a bright future.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

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

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

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.