



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

# SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Delivered at the Opening of  
The Second Session of the Forty-Eighth  
General Assembly of the Province of  
Newfoundland and Labrador

by His Honour  
The Honourable Frank F. Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA  
Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

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## **The Way Forward to Greater Prosperity**

It is my pleasure to open the second session of the 48th General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I offer a warm welcome to all Members of the House of Assembly, who have been elected to represent the good people of our province. I wish you well in your forthcoming deliberations in this chamber.

This is a time of national commemoration and celebration.

2017 marks the **150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation and the Birth of Canada**.

This year we also celebrate the **35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, which protected our rights and freedoms as Canadians in the Constitution of Canada.

It is not only fitting but imperative that we celebrate those rights. The right to democratic government. The right to freedom of thought and expression. And the right to peaceful assembly. These are values we uphold as Canadians. I encourage you all to take part in the many activities being planned this year to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, including free access to Canada's national parks, national marine conservation areas and national historic sites.

Indeed, as we celebrate Canada 150, we ought to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who fought to protect our rights, freedoms and sovereignty as a nation.

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the battle of Beaumont Hamel, when approximately 800 men left their trenches on July 1st, and only 68 answered the roll call the following morning.

This year, we commemorate such battles as the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge, a pivotal battle for Canada and its Allies, and the 100th anniversary of Monchy-le-Preux, where nine Newfoundland Regiment soldiers and one British soldier held off over 200 German soldiers for over 10 hours after losing 485 men.

In recognition of the bravery of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, in December 1917, His Majesty King George V honoured the Newfoundland Regiment with a new title, the **Royal Newfoundland Regiment**. This was the sole occasion that any regiment was so honoured during the First World War and only the third wartime designation of the title in British history.

Honour 100 commemorated Newfoundland and Labrador's First World War story. More than 60 projects were made possible by Honour 100 funding, including Opera on the Avalon's First World War opera "Ours", as well as a visit by dozens of students to Beaumont Hamel to trek the Trail of the Caribou first hand and learn a story that should never be forgotten.

We also recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by women during the First World War, serving as nurses or with the Voluntary Aid Detachment abroad, and holding the fort at home while almost 36 per cent of our men aged 19 to 35 went to war. The Women's Patriot Association raised money, knitted socks, sweaters and scarves for troops. It is estimated that women's work contributed over \$500,000 to the war effort at that time.

To say the war impacted those who lived through it is an understatement. One notable and positive impact was on the women's movement, as their contributions to the war effort were recognized, helping fuel the suffrage movement, which ultimately led to women winning the right to vote and run for political office in 1925 in our province.

2017 also marks a number of other anniversaries for our province.

Legend has it that John Cabot returned to England from the Grand Banks with stories of how plentiful the cod was in our waters. For centuries, our stocks have attracted international fleets, and indeed, many of our ancestors settled along our rugged coasts to fish. The fishery, and particularly, the cod fishery, was formative in our economy and our identity.

2017 marks the **25th anniversary of the cod moratorium**, a Federal Government response to dangerously depleted cod stocks. The moratorium put 30,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians out of work, kick started youth outmigration en masse, and shone a light on the socio-economic consequences of not managing and maximizing our resources.

On this, the 25th anniversary, we are cautiously optimistic about the return of cod and the ground fishery. It is fitting that we mark this anniversary with reflection on what led to the moratorium that, in turn, depleted our greatest resource: our people.

2017 also marks the **20th anniversary since first oil at Hibernia**. Just five years had passed since the Federal Government imposed the cod moratorium, marking a pivotal shift in our economy. Suddenly, oil replaced cod as the leading industry, attracting multi-national oil and gas companies the world over.

It is valuable to reflect on this. First oil at Hibernia just five years after the end of the cod fishery shows us how quickly things can turn around. Our experiences in both the cod fishery and oil have taught us that natural resources are precious commodities that need to be managed carefully to the maximum benefit of the people, and that requires a long term view.

Our Government is focused on building a sustainable future. A future with a stronger economic foundation. As we reflect on our history as a province and as a nation, we are together building on our narrative of resilience and resourcefulness. This resilience and resourcefulness is exactly what we need to harness to build a stronger tomorrow.

We identify strongly and proudly as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. In an increasingly globalized world, we continue to position ourselves as world class performers and partners, harnessing the perseverance it has taken to survive in the harsh North Atlantic to compete and win no matter the challenge before us. Last year, we celebrated such successes as Katarina Roxon winning Paralympic gold in the 100 meter breaststroke in Rio. In January, with a record score, Kaetlyn Osmond of Marystown won her third national figure skating title.

As well, incredible athletes from our province earned medals at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria. Sandra Smith of Carbonear, Crystal Young of Harbour Grace, Justin Dodge of Grand Bank and Floressa Harris of Gander brought the province together in celebration just a few days ago.

From Rio to Torino to Ramsau, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have set out on their own personal journeys and achieved the unimaginable – bringing home Olympic Gold. Both abroad and at home, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not only competing on national and international stages, they're winning.

Ladies and gentlemen, just two weeks ago, Team Gushue stepped out on home ice under the weight of the province's hope. The Brier showcased to the nation and the world our hospitality and our culture – two fundamental aspects of our identity as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The last shot of the championship curling game rested on the dreams of his teammates, and the hopes of our province. In a sea of red, in the silence of baited breath, in that final sweep, rushed a collective sense of pride and achievement. Team Gushue did not buckle under the pressure of a national championship game on home ice. They rose above it. They won. And in that perfect moment, when something that seemed too good to be true happened, we all won.

On the heels of Team Gushue's 2017 Brier victory came another Newfoundland and Labrador curling milestone. The Memorial University Sea-Hawks team, skipped by Adam Boland, won the USports Men's Curling Canada Championship with a victory over the University of Alberta.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are being recognized not only for sport, but also for their business acumen.

Recognized as the best of 60 teams in Canada eight times, Enactus Memorial, a student-run organization of creative entrepreneurs supported by Memorial University's Faculty of Business Administration, took home their second World Cup in 2016. Enactus Memorial outperformed teams from 33 countries and 1700 campuses, and 69,000 participants worldwide. Enactus Memorial creates innovative, local and sustainable solutions to global economic challenges. Their winning enterprise, Project SucSeed, partners with Memorial's Faculty of Engineering and employs at-risk youth through Choices for Youth to build hydroponic systems from recycled materials for produce production. Project SucSeed is helping to make healthy food more accessible and affordable, a particular challenge in rural and remote communities, is helping to improve our food security and health outcomes as a province overall and is supporting social enterprise in our province.

Our artistic and creative talents are also receiving accolades world-wide.

Adapted from local writer Wayne Johnston's award winning novel of the same name, *Colony of Unrequited Dreams* just completed a two-week run at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Written by Robert Chafe and directed by Jillian Kielley, themselves local success stories, the play brings the story of Newfoundland's first premier and Canada's last founding father Joey Smallwood and the story of Confederation to the national stage. Upon its debut, the *Globe and Mail* called *Colony of Unrequited Dreams* "the type of meaty yet moving work about this country that audiences should be hungry for this year".

Theatre audiences are also enjoying stories of more contemporary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians this year. Irene Sankoff and David Hein's musical *Come from Away*, tells the story of how the people of Gander and surrounding areas opened their arms to the world on September 11, 2001. There is no better reflection of the compassion and welcoming spirit of the people of our province than how they responded by opening their homes and hearts in the days following those tragic terrorist attacks. During an event that reverberated around the world, our participation has been revered in such a touching way. With performances in Gander, Toronto, California, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and now Broadway, *Come from Away* is leading in nominations for the upcoming Helen Hayes Awards in Washington, D.C. in May 2017.

From stage to screen, our province is making its mark.

Co-created by Rob and Peter Blackie, and produced by Take The Shot Productions, and ASAP Entertainment in association with Discovery, *Frontier* chronicles the ruthless world of the fur trade in 18<sup>th</sup> century North America. Set against our rugged landscape, the majority of the series has been filmed right here, and is garnering considerable attention from viewers. 571,000 people tuned in to watch the series premiere on Discovery, making it the most-watched Canadian scripted series debut on entertainment specialty TV this year. Take the Shot Productions showcased the beauty of our capital city through *Republic of Doyle*. This time around, *Take the Shot* is showing the breathtaking natural heritage and beauty of our province to the world, with Discovery as its exclusive Canadian broadcaster, and Netflix its international broadcaster.

Our province has also become a world class foodie destination. Voted Best New Restaurant in 2011, Raymond's, the restaurant created by Jeremy Charles and Jeremy Bonia, was just honoured as among the next generation of dining destinations in the world in the Diners Club 50 Best Discovery Series. The Merchant Tavern recently partnered with Ontario-based Order of Canada winning Chef Jamie Kennedy for a restaurant takeover. Adelaide Oyster House was named one of the Top 10 Best New Restaurants in 2015 by enRoute magazine. The Fogo Island Inn was recognized with the same award in 2013. Our local chefs have competed and won on the national stage. People are traveling near and far to enjoy the bounty of our land and a true land-to-table experience at the food festival, Roots, Rants and Roars in Elliston.

Indeed, we ought to celebrate the many successes of our province, while reflecting on its challenges. We have rich resources and creative and inventive people. Our Government will harness these resources and the ingenuity of our people to build a stronger economic foundation.

Our Government inherited a deep rooted reliance on oil, and with it, a culture of overspending. Our fiscal problem was not caused by a drop in oil prices, but rather this decline in oil prices exposed the culture of overspending.

We inherited an economy lacking diversity and we inherited responsibility for a massive structural deficit, the true size of which had been hidden from the people.

Our Government inherited Muskrat Falls, a legacy project for some, a tremendous financial burden for us all. When we formed government, almost \$4.5 billion had been spent and a total of \$6.6 billion in contracts had been signed. If we cancelled the project, we would still owe billions of dollars. If we cancelled the project, we would have to somehow provide the power promised to Nova Scotia, or financial compensation in lieu. We are in too deep. Cancelling the project is not feasible and it would put more financial burden on the people of this province.

We have committed to doing our very best to mitigate the impacts of the project on residents, and as such, appointed a world class leader in the energy sector, Stan Marshall, as the CEO of Nalcor Energy. In order to mitigate the potential effects of soaring energy bills when Muskrat Falls comes online, we have instructed Nalcor to pursue all options for rate mitigation. Through the Independent Appointments Commission, a new, stronger Nalcor Board of Directors, led by Chair Brendan Paddock, was appointed to work with Mr. Marshall to get this project on track.

Also, in November 2016 our Government was pleased to announce we secured \$2.9 billion in additional loan guarantee support for the Muskrat Falls project. Through our efforts with the Federal Government, we were able to receive positive benefits for adjustments to escrow account obligations. These actions have improved our fiscal position and will provide much needed support to the ratepayers of the province. Our Government has followed through on discussions with the Government of Canada on the specific terms and conditions of the support and we hope to announce the detailed agreement in the near future.

We also forged a historic partnership with Indigenous governments and organizations ensuring appropriate environmental and human safeguards are in place. Our actions will be guided by evidence-based decision making, and we will work with stakeholders to make this project work for all our benefit.

As a province, we have had to come to terms with the unprecedented fiscal situation before us, and it has not been easy. We faced the very real risk of losing the ability to borrow to pay for the programs and services government provides. Innovative measures have been required to make up for falling oil prices while we get government spending under control and diversify beyond oil. For over a decade, the province was operating without a plan for a sustainable future. That had to change.

Through extensive consultation with the public and with leaders from business, community, labour, and arts, we drafted *The Way Forward: A vision for sustainability and growth in Newfoundland and Labrador*.

The vision of *The Way Forward* is this: Together we will achieve a strong, diversified province with a high standard of living. The determination and drive of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be supported by responsive, innovative and efficient programs and services.

Our government's vision is centered on three guiding principles: "we will do better with less," "we will collaborate," and "we will challenge ourselves."

## **We will do better with less.**

There is a great opportunity to do better with less. While Newfoundland and Labrador's program costs are the highest per capita among provinces, many of our outcomes, including health outcomes, rank among the lowest. Put simply, we are not seeing a sufficient return on investment. Further, poor outcomes drive spending higher. It is incumbent upon us as a government to ensure a healthy return on investment of taxpayers' dollars.

As such, our Government introduced a new Public Procurement Act, which will govern the acquisition of goods, services, public works and leasing of space by all public bodies, including municipalities, health boards, school boards, academic institutions, crown corporations and government. We are focused on the concept of best value and enhancing oversight, transparency, accountability, consistency and fairness. The new procurement framework will include the Act, as well as regulations, policies and procedures that are actively under development. Thresholds governing buying activity are to be increased through regulation, which will enhance the opportunity for local suppliers while maintaining consistency with our trade agreements.

For the first time in our history, the Provincial Government is employing a zero-based budgeting approach. No longer can departments assume their base budget will be automatically approved; under zero-based budgeting, departments have had to build their budgets up from scratch – justifying any continued investment in all areas of operations. Government agencies, boards and commissions have also been required to follow the zero-based approach for discretionary spending areas.

We have reorganized departments based on identified synergies to reduce silos, streamline operations and reduce costs. We are also implementing a leaner, flatter management structure to address what is the largest provincial public sector per capita among provinces. Our government will also work with agencies, boards and commissions to implement a flatter, leaner management structure.

**We will collaborate.**

We are stronger together. This past year has been a challenging one as we are finally facing the dire consequences of years of spending without a sustainable plan for the future.

It is time for us to come together, to work together on addressing a deficit and a debt that will overwhelm our children and grandchildren in the absence of action. We formed government at a fiscal breaking point. We are determined to embrace what some may deem a crisis as an opportunity to do better with less. We are working with our partners at all levels of government to achieve better outcomes. We continue to engage stakeholders so their perspectives inform and enrich our overall approach. We will work together to improve our province's economic foundation. Last year, we hosted the first annual Premier's Forum on Local Government. We have also committed to establish a Leaders Roundtable with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, who will meet for the first time this spring. Together we will shape an agenda, and develop even stronger relationships as we build for our future.

**We will challenge ourselves.**

The roadmap of The Way Forward spans three phases of action comprising tangible initiatives.

These first six months have focused on Securing our Footing – rapidly implementing initiatives to reduce spending and support economic growth. Yesterday, we released our report card on progress. We are well on our way to addressing the challenges facing our province.

We are now entering the second phase of The Way Forward, Realizing our Potential, which spans the next 18 months and focuses on actions to reverse negative socio-economic indicators that prevent economic growth and drive up public expenditures. This update to our vision outlines the work we will prioritize in 2017-18. Yesterday, the Premier released this plan.

The third phase, Building for our Future, looks beyond 18 months and focuses on creating long-term conditions for growth in the province by investing in the future, including redesigning government services to fit demographics of the future and investing in children and youth.

As we achieve the goals outlined in our plan, our Government will challenge ourselves to achieve even more. At the beginning of each fiscal year, we will release the next phase of tangible actions to ensure our vision becomes reality. And as we did yesterday for Phase One, we will issue a report card on our progress at the end of each additional phase. Through concrete actions, timelines and reporting, we will challenge ourselves to remain ambitious, responsive and accountable.

The Way Forward: Realizing Our Potential, which outlines our priorities for 2017-18, is an economic development plan for the province. The actions we have committed to undertake this coming fiscal year focus on constructing a stronger economic foundation for our province.

### **A Stronger Economic Foundation**

Establishing a stronger economic foundation means improving the conditions necessary for private sector job growth and economic growth. We will adopt a whole-of-government approach to creating the conditions necessary for new private sector job creation and economic growth. Building a sustainable economy is our top priority.

The Way Forward: Realizing our Potential has outlined a new approach to economic development and private sector job growth.

### **Jobs will be our top priority.**

Our Government is immediately mandating a new Cabinet Committee on jobs to foster stronger employment conditions and opportunities. This Committee of Ministers will serve as a forum to identify new whole-of-government opportunities for private sector job growth.

The Cabinet Committee on Jobs will seek the advice of provincial leaders, including private sector labour representatives and members of the province's business community.

As part of this approach, each minister and government department will be expected to report on how their actions create stronger conditions for economic and private sector job growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will encourage decision-making that places our economic future at the center of all decisions.

### **We have set targets for sector growth.**

Last fall, we outlined a number of targets for our economy related to agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, tourism and immigration. These targets show Newfoundlanders and Labradorians where our economy is headed. This provides certainty and shows clearly how we plan to diversify our economy.

Our Government is focused on supporting well-established industries like the fishery, oil and gas and mining, while growing industries with tremendous potential, such as aquaculture, agriculture and technology. Beyond our tremendous and diverse wealth in non-renewable resources, our greatest resource is our people, and their resilience and ingenuity in the face of adversity. The Way Forward outlines a tangible plan for diversification.

### **A return to groundfish is a centerpiece of our economic development approach.**

The Way Forward includes a commitment to support a successful transition to greater activity in the groundfish sector. Work in this area includes establishing a Fisheries Advisory Council to help our Government work with industry stakeholders to achieve a successful transition. We will develop an action plan for cod revitalization, which will support all stages of the value chain – harvesting, processing and marketing – to maximize the value of available resources to the province.

We are also funding new technology, research, and marketing activity by industry players through the Seafood Innovation and Transition Program. The program funds projects that focus on innovations in harvesting, processing, aquaculture and marketing which will strategically place Newfoundland and Labrador in a position to avail of opportunities in the international marketplace.

Soon, we will build upon this work on a scale the provincial seafood industry has never seen before. Working with our federal partners, we have secured a commitment of \$100 million in federal funding through the new Atlantic Fisheries Fund. This funding will be leveraged by our Government and industry to support innovation, new infrastructure, a successful transition into greater groundfish activity, and increased aquaculture.

Our Government will work closely with industry over this year to ensure the unprecedented funding we gained for our province will position our harvesters, processors, and aquaculture operators for long-term success in markets around the world. We will protect jobs and grow new economic opportunity within our iconic seafood sector by helping industry players pursue best practice across their operations. That means we will not only support innovation, but also science, sustainability and safety.

In keeping with that goal, we will be working with our federal partners to leverage the \$1.5 billion allocated to the Ocean Protection Plan to protect our waters, the resources within them, and the people who rely on them. Specifically, this funding will play a key role in studying and managing fish stocks at a time when our provincial fishery resources are changing, and support innovation in aquaculture. As well, under the Ocean Protection Plan, new Canadian Coast Guard lifeboat stations will be constructed in our province and the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's will be reopened.

### **We will seize opportunities in aquaculture.**

Our Government made aquaculture a focus of our research and development support program because we see great potential in the industry. We are working to see the industry grow from the 22,815 metric tonnes of salmon it produced in 2015 to 50,000 metric tonnes annually. The mussel industry is estimated to have the capacity to grow to 10,750 metric tonnes of production annually. These are the targets we have set and our Government will take measures to remove stale applications from the licensing system to free up water area for aquaculture development. In addition, our Government will establish rigorous criteria that companies must meet in order to maintain site applications and licenses in the Newfoundland and Labrador aquaculture licensing system (i.e., use it or lose it).

**We will position Newfoundland and Labrador as the preferred destination for oil and gas development.**

The oil and gas industry has generated considerable wealth, opportunity and expertise here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and holds much promise for our future. Considerable research has been undertaken through our public institutions into exploration and development in arctic and harsh environments. We know our industry and the research that drives it is world class. The Way Forward commits to positioning the province as a preferred global location for oil and gas development. And we are on our way.

As part of capitalizing on the potential of new developments, we made it a focus under our vision to:

- decrease the time between identifying prospects and production;
- ensure that our regulatory environment is consistent with recognized global standards; and
- promote innovation.

In December, our Government announced an Oil and Gas Industry Development Council. Chaired by the Minister of Natural Resources, the council's membership was selected via the merit-based appointments process and comprises the breadth of experience and skill sets needed to determine a long-term vision for the industry. Our Government is also assigning officials to be facilitators for early stage proponents within not only the oil and gas sector, but in mining and renewable energy as well.

The Labrador offshore will also attract new interest and investment in the coming years as the next licensing round for exploration rights is scheduled to take place in the Labrador South Region. We are confident this activity will build on the region's reputation as a natural resource powerhouse, and generate even more economic activity and employment.

Our Government is very engaged in significant modern seismic acquisition activity to reveal more of the province's oil and gas prospects.

As a result, we now have an inventory of high quality data on our offshore prospects, which forms the basis of the recent publically released resource estimates which is attracting global attention.

Through new seismic work, we have delineated significant new basin areas, and over 350 leads and prospects to add to our 20 basins, all of which are of great interest to global players.

Last November, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board announced a successful call for bids in our province's offshore, with a total work commitment of close to \$758 million. This call was one of the most successful in the world in 2016. In just over one year, we have welcomed seven new entrants to the province's offshore oil and gas industry. We aspire for our province to be the energy capital of the Atlantic and recognized globally as an important energy hub.

Our Government also recently celebrated the one billionth barrel of oil produced from the Hibernia platform, and with advances in technology and continued exploration work in the slope and deep waters of our offshore including the Flemish Pass, Orphan Basin, and Hopedale and Holton basins, there are significant exciting opportunities for the oil and gas industry here at home.

### **We will promote opportunities in the mining sector.**

Mining has been a key economic driver throughout our province for decades, and like our fishery, has driven settlement to particular areas of the province, and has helped shape our identity.

Despite lower commodity prices, mineral shipments are forecast to be \$2.9 billion in 2017. At Voisey's Bay, the underground mine expansion project has started. Tata Steel Minerals Canada restarted production in spring of 2016 after a winter shutdown. IOC has sanctioned its Wabush 3 project. Rambler Metals and Mining announced financing to support their mining of the Lower Footwall Zone, extending the life of the Baie Verte area mine to 21 years. Anaconda Mining has begun exporting waste rock from its Pine Cove gold mine and continues to explore its Viking

project in hopes of mining following the exhaustion of the Pine Cove mine. Canada Fluorspar has begun constructing the mine in St. Lawrence and there are many advanced exploration projects for potential investment for gold, base metals, rare earths and other commodities.

Throughout the province, new activity in mining is happening. Approximately 21,000 claims were staked in 2016 - almost four times the amount staked in 2015, and the most staked in the last five years. Our Government is taking advantage of this upswing by increasing efforts to support growth in the industry.

Our vision includes a commitment to increase mining activity through targeted promotional efforts as well as through innovations like core digitization. Just as seismic data is shared with oil and gas companies to spur interest in petroleum exploration and development, core digitization makes core sample imagery readily available in electronic format to companies worldwide to compliment the data currently available. Our Government is also encouraging further exploration through a variety of other initiatives, including public geoscience, efficient and transparent regulation, the core storage program, prospector training and mentoring, and the mineral incentive program.

We are confident our additional efforts to promote the industry and share information will build on the recent growth in exploration activity. By creating an attractive environment for exploration, we will strengthen the industry, and grow private sector jobs and the economy throughout our province.

**We will provide a new focus on agriculture to promote food security and explore untapped economic potential.**

Our Government is also aggressively pursuing new agricultural development by making more Crown lands available for agriculture purposes, which will contribute to increased agricultural food production and improve food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Farmers and agricultural producers will now have almost double the amount of land available to them with additional Crown lands now available for agricultural production.

Our Government is creating new ways for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become farmers. We will transform the Wooddale Tree Nursery to a Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Development. The facility will not only produce tree seedlings for silviculture, but will also undertake fruit and vegetable crop propagation and research activities that advance and diversify the agriculture sector.

Our Government will also complete a pilot project to undertake large-scale land development on priority areas of interest, with the objective of offering agriculture leases that are more advanced in their productive capacity and readiness. This will enable new entrants to the agricultural sector to become profitable earlier.

These actions will not only foster economic development and create jobs, they will also help improve health outcomes. Doubling the amount of Crown land available for agriculture will also help deliver on The Way Forward commitment to double our food security to at least 20 per cent by 2022. Our efforts in supporting the fishery, aquaculture, and agriculture sectors will be key in achieving this goal.

Our Government is increasing awareness of opportunities in agriculture by providing support to Agriculture in the Classroom to develop an agri-career initiative for junior and high school students. We also helped fund the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture's Young Farmer's Leadership Summit. We are confident that these kinds of investments will encourage and support new farmers, expand existing farmland, and promote commercialization and growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture and agrifoods industry.

Research and development will also play a vital role in supporting the development of the provincial agriculture industry. In 2016, the Agrifoods Development Branch conducted its first canola research trial. In May, 30 acres were planted in Pasadena which proved to be a success with yield beyond our expectations. Canola meal is currently being fed as an ingredient in livestock rations and the oil is being assessed for quality and suitability for human consumption. In 2017, canola research will be expanded with additional producer participation.

## **Our world-class tourism experience and rich culture will greet you at the door.**

Newfoundland and Labrador is increasingly becoming a destination of choice for tourists, and it is no wonder given the rugged beauty of our landscape and the distinct culture of the people who live here.

We have a superior tourism product, and our awareness as a tourism destination is growing. Newfoundland and Labrador now welcomes a half million visitors annually, our tourism industry generates approximately \$1 billion in spending per year, and it also employs more than 18,000 people. Just last year, our stunning 'Find Yourself' Campaign was awarded Best in Show by Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International.

We are proud of what the industry has already achieved, and our focus now is to build on that strength. Our vision includes a commitment to achieve \$1.6 billion annually in resident and non-resident visitor spending by 2020, which will double 2009 levels.

A sense of arrival is the welcome and warmth that visitors feel once they have reached their destination. Ideally, this sense of arrival is in keeping with the perceptions generated through the promotional activities and in meeting expectations of the vacation experience in the mind of the visitor prior to the trip. Having advanced a new tourism plan, this is the next aspect of our tourism sector that our Government will focus on. We will collaborate with tourism operators, municipalities, and transportation organizations at major entry points, gateways, hubs and attractions to establish common sense of arrival goals and priorities and initiate partnership activities.

We recognize our growing tourism industry is due not only to the diverse beauty of our province, but to the creativity of our people. From Frontier to Come from Away, our artists are proving themselves as key economic drivers for our province. The caliber of their work can be seen in the multitude of award winning and attention grabbing television and film productions taking place here, or the globally renowned musicals featuring stories and performers that originate from our great province. We see it in the award winning music from bands and performers who hail from every part of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we see it in the visual art, crafts, and dance productions on display here, and around the world. We are committed to supporting such great work, which not only attracts people to our province and enriches our daily lives, but also preserves the sense of place and the history that is at the center of who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

To enhance recognition and support of artists in our province, The Way Forward includes a commitment to introduce Status of the Artist legislation. The legislation and other policy measures will be based on feedback from an Arts Advisory Committee, and will be part of broader work we will do to develop a new cultural plan for the province. Consultations on this plan have occurred, including an online survey that was completed by 256 artists across the province.

**We will adopt a new approach to innovation and will support social enterprises.**

As we work to grow the provincial economy, our Government will support new innovation initiatives. We are working on a Business Innovation Agenda for Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as federal-provincial innovation initiatives from the Atlantic Growth Strategy and other federal Research and Development funding opportunities specific to clean technology.

Through the province's long-standing collaboration with the Maritimes our Government is focused on harmonizing the regulatory burden on Newfoundland and Labrador companies that do business elsewhere in the region to avoid unnecessary impediments to growth, helping them succeed and expand across Atlantic Canada.

By collaborating with Maritime provinces and the Federal Government through the Atlantic Growth Strategy, our Government is extending further still the effort to drive growth in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have contributed to the modernization of government procurement in the Province by bringing together the purchasing power of our Government with that of the Government of Canada and other public institutions to achieve savings and make it easier for Newfoundland and Labrador companies to sell their products to more public organizations.

Through the Atlantic Growth Strategy, our Government is also supporting innovative Newfoundland and Labrador firms with high growth potential in an effort to create more well-paying and skilled jobs right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are working to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are getting maximum benefit from Federal Government investments in infrastructure in the province, including investments in clean growth; and we continue to work together to drive growth in priority areas such as health innovation, which will enhance the sustainability of health care in our province.

Our Government has committed up to \$4.5 million over seven years to support Memorial University's involvement in the Ocean Frontier Institute, a partnership between Dalhousie University, Memorial University and the University of Prince Edward Island. Our Government's overall investments played an instrumental role in leveraging investment through the Canada First Research Excellence Fund competition. This Institute will play a key role in developing the technical expertise required for world-class research and innovation.

To increase the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador and enhance services for existing social enterprises, our Government will develop a Social Enterprise Action Plan. Social enterprise development is another innovation tool for advancing regional growth opportunities to benefit the economy, support rural sustainability and encourage entrepreneurial governance models and service delivery.

### **A strong labour market will underpin our stronger economy.**

Businesses in our province often cite a shortage of skilled labour as one of their major impediments to success. Better aligning labour supply and demand is essential to our economic development plan.

Our Government is developing a comprehensive human resource plan, informed by forecasted labour market opportunities and enhanced labour market information products to assist in workforce planning for individuals and businesses. In developing this plan, we will seek input from sector associations and industry groups to better respond to their labour market needs and support industry diversification. This work will include working with priority sectors, including the agriculture, aquaculture and oil and gas industries.

The College of the North Atlantic is essential in developing an educated labour market for our province. To strengthen the role of College of the North Atlantic, our Government is working with them to review their operations and activities. This ambitious review involves implementing forward-thinking strategic initiatives to modernize all aspects of the college and maximize its potential as a provincial leader in labour market relevant training, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, innovation, research and development, community access and capacity building. Our Government will enhance and revitalize the College's ability to have its campuses serve as local and regional economic generators and community hubs. A report will be issued in the coming weeks, providing details on College of the North Atlantic's vision moving forward.

Our Government is also enhancing collaboration between Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic to increase the amount of research and program initiatives undertaken at both institutions. As such, our Government has formed a council that is comprised of representatives from Government, Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic, including students, to deliver a report on recommendations for more opportunities for post-secondary collaboration. The council will also explore further options for articulation agreements between both institutions. The council had its first meeting on March 23, and we look forward to receiving their recommendations.

Our province leads the country in offering the most generous student financial assistance program available anywhere in Canada. Memorial University tuition is the lowest in Canada and students pay only a fraction of how much it costs for their education. In 2016-17, we committed \$62.9 million to Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic to enable a continuation of the tuition freeze. In 2017-18 our Government will continue to ensure supports are in place so our students can avail of a high-quality, affordable education.

**Both culturally and economically, there is strength in diversity.**

John Cabot's reports of waters teeming with fish brought people from Ireland and England to settle here and our identity as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians continues to evolve. Our Government is committed to opening our doors to people from other countries.

Immigration is a focus of The Way Forward given its tremendous potential for economic and labour market growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Moreover, immigration contributes to our social and cultural vibrancy. Our Government will support immigration to the province by focusing on increased recruitment and retention of newcomers. As committed in our Vision, our Government has recently released “The Way Forward on Immigration.” It outlines concrete actions we will take in collaboration with our partners to welcome 1,700 immigrants annually by 2022, an increase of 50 per cent over 2015. We will do more to welcome newcomers, and immigrant entrepreneurs to our province. Our government’s approach will include working with the Government of Canada to explore the creation of new pathways for international students to establish businesses in our province, creating their own employment opportunities and opportunities for others at the same time.

## **Better Services**

As part of The Way Forward, we are delivering better services to residents. Service improvement must underpin all our decisions.

From this commitment, our Government will improve the integration of business financing programs, which are currently provided by multiple departments and agencies. We will complete an analysis of existing non-commercial economic development funding to improve government-wide collaboration and maximize resources. Our Government will also publish service standards for major programs, including average timelines for decisions, to provide more transparency and clarity for the public on how decisions are made. We have recently released timelines for our major business programs, and we will release timelines for other program areas in the future.

Our Government has adopted multi-year planning and early tendering of road work and a full list of roads projects for 2017 was released earlier this year. This initiative will enhance planning and decision making for road projects, will contribute to cost-savings, and more effective use of taxpayers’ dollars while improving information sharing, transparency and accountability to the public and other stakeholders.

Building on that initiative, our Government released its multi-year infrastructure plan prior to the budget. This key vision initiative prioritizes infrastructure projects, will be updated as new priorities are identified, and provides the public and the construction industry with an outline of commitments to education, health, buildings and roads infrastructure over the next five years.

In addition, a five-year plan for marine-related infrastructure was released yesterday. The plan includes upgrades to terminal facilities, access roads, wharves and washroom facilities, with a goal of improving services at ferry terminals for the traveling public.

While these initiatives will improve the overall approach to developing transportation infrastructure in our province, we realize community infrastructure is also vital, and have taken steps to help communities in this regard. We appreciate the challenges that municipalities face providing services and maintaining infrastructure. Local service districts and unincorporated areas also face high expectations from residents, but have even fewer resources. There are many cases in our province where communities exist close to each other, and in those cases, sharing infrastructure and service costs is a viable option to bearing them separately.

As per our government's commitment in The Way Forward, we have introduced new infrastructure program guidelines and criteria that strategically enable communities to pursue regional infrastructure improvements and allow for the expansion of shared services. By supporting collaboration among communities, we expect to reduce costs for both the Provincial Government, and municipal taxpayers.

Making transportation and community infrastructure development a focus of our activities positions our Government to strengthen communities, and support a higher quality of life for residents. Having the right infrastructure in place will allow our Government to pursue better outcomes for residents in key areas such as health and education, and advance important province-wide initiatives that promote wellness in our society, including combating climate change and improving inclusion and accessibility. Our Government is committed to delivering on both, while maintaining a higher level of efficiency that will allow us to achieve fiscal balance.

Labrador is a distinct and integral part of the province's culture, history and identity. Our Government will continue, through the Office of Labrador Affairs, to coordinate and implement a focused and innovative approach to improve service delivery as well as continue to prioritize strategic infrastructure needs in the region.

## **Better Outcomes**

Our Government is committed to improving the health, education and social outcomes of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Even though our province spends more per person on health care than any other province, our residents still have some of the poorest health outcomes in Canada. But we know that in order to change this we must do more than simply invest more money into our hospitals and health care services.

Evidence from across Canada and around the world shows us that our health is primarily determined by factors like income, education and the way we build our homes and communities. Better medical services are critical to treating our illnesses but will not make us a healthier population. If we truly want to make a difference in the health of our population we know that we must invest in and focus on the root causes of health.

As such, our Government will build health impact considerations into all policy decisions, from infrastructure planning to labour market supports. This Health-in-All Policies approach will enable our Government to make all decisions in a manner that strengthens focus on measurable improvements in our health status. It will help prevent illness and create the environments needed to support and promote healthy people, with better quality of life and capacity for learning; stronger families and sustainable communities; and a healthier, more productive and socially inclusive economy.

Our Government is committed to improving the health and well-being of the people of this province. We have established targets through our Way Forward initiative to increase breastfeeding rates, reduce obesity and smoking rates, and increase physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption. All of these are designed to achieve significant progress by 2025.

## **Supporting a Healthier Province**

To do this, we will implement healthy living initiatives to achieve a healthier tomorrow. A healthier province will result in lower health costs per capita, which will enable our health system to be more sustainable. We will work with schools and communities to develop healthy environments, and will encourage Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to live healthier, more active lives through initiatives such as the Carrot Rewards app.

On December 23, our Government reached an agreement with the Federal Government on health funding. This agreement includes targeted funding of \$160.7 million over 10 years for home and palliative care and mental health. A further example of our Government's productive working relationship with our federal colleagues, this agreement provides stability to health funding as well as focusing on targeted areas that are of key interest to our province.

Our Government also recognizes the need to better address mental health and addictions concerns in our province. We have made great strides in the past year with a community treatment order quality assurance review, the Secure Withdrawal Management Act, and with the Department of Health and Community Services partnering to pilot a new social and emotional learning curriculum for primary and elementary grades. The All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions has completed its work, with its report recently tabled. Our Government will develop an Implementation Plan that responds to the recommendations of the All-Party Committee.

The abuse of prescription medications has become an increasingly serious issue at both the national and provincial level in recent years, with the inappropriate prescribing of medications with high abuse potential, and patient practices such as double doctoring of such medications identified as particular issues. Our Government will build on the work done in 2016, including the introduction of Suboxone as an alternate for methadone and the funding of 1,200 Naloxone kits to treat opioid overdoses. The core initiative of the provincial Prescription Monitoring Program will be the full implementation of the Pharmacy Network by the end of March. Our Government will supplement full implementation of the Pharmacy Network with legislative and policy changes to: allow physicians to view a patient's drug history before writing a prescription; allow checks to be made for potential inappropriate prescribing or double doctoring when a prescription is filled; and permit the analysis of prescription databases to detect possible areas of abuse or trends in inappropriate prescribing.

Through the Departments of Justice and Public Safety and Health and Community Services, our Government is conducting a feasibility study for a drug treatment court in our province as part of The Way Forward. Drug treatment courts provide specialized court-monitored treatment and community service support for offenders with drug addictions, combining judicial supervision with substance abuse treatment with the goal of addressing the linkage between drugs and crime. The Court will be targeted towards offenders with drug dependencies, in particular those

with serious addictions to illicit use of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin or other opiates, and is intended to address the criminal behaviour of individuals who have engaged in non-violent offences that were motivated by their addictions.

While addressing drug addiction is a foremost priority, so is addressing the medical needs of our aging population. It's a known fact that by 2025, one in four Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be seniors. Our Government is committed to a strong health and community care system that meets the needs of our aging population. Care should be provided in the home where possible, in the community including long-term care facilities where available, and in hospitals when there is an acute health care issue. Our Government is working to provide more and better care in the home through the Home First Program philosophy and systematically working to increase long-term care beds throughout the province to provide the most appropriate care for our seniors.

Our Government recently introduced a new care option, enhanced care in personal care homes, which allows for the placement of individuals with enhanced care needs. We have also expanded access to the Paid Family Caregiver Option through the Home Support Program. Alongside improving our Home Support Program, these initiatives support individuals to live in their communities thereby reducing admissions to long term care or acute care.

In January, our Government announced that it is proceeding with the development of a new long-term care home in Corner Brook. Planning is currently underway to address the long term care needs of people in the Central Region. Creating more space in long-term care will ease pressure on the health care system, moving people more quickly from acute care beds to more appropriate care in the community.

Earlier this year, our Government also announced its commitment to proceed with the development of a new regional hospital in Corner Brook. Construction of the facility is expected to begin in 2019 with completion anticipated in 2023.

It is important for our Government to explore innovative ways to advance needed infrastructure and deliver services in a cost-effective manner. In announcing construction of both the hospital and the long term care facility, our Government has signaled its intention to partner with the private sector. Both facilities will be designed, built, financed and maintained by the private sector but, in keeping with a previous commitment, resident and patient care will continue to be

administered and provided by public sector employees, as is currently the case. By partnering with private industry, we can help ensure that the new facilities are designed, built, financed and maintained in a way that provides greater value for money for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Both the hospital and the new long term care facility are examples of how we are finding more innovative and effective ways to deliver services.

In line with the commitments made in The Way Forward, our Government is committed to expanding the number of interdisciplinary primary health care teams. New interdisciplinary teams, available in local communities such as Bonavista, are helping individuals and families to maintain and improve their health. These teams are better positioned to meet the changing health care needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians particularly as we continue to age and with the management of chronic diseases like diabetes.

Our Government is supporting front-line providers, such as nurse practitioners where Newfoundland and Labrador is a leader in Canada, to ensure they are able to work at full scope of practice and fully utilize their expertise to improve health outcomes. We are also investing in new electronic record keeping systems and a provincial electronic medical record that will help to connect health care providers and ensure secure patient information is available to these teams and health professionals across the health care system.

Through overall better management of our health care resources and targeted investments to support critical program areas, our Government will achieve better health outcomes, better care and better value in our health care system to benefit all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

## **Supporting Education**

Following a successful year that saw the implementation of full-day kindergarten province-wide, we will continue to invest in the improvement of educational facilities. This includes funding repairs and maintenance of K-12 school facilities to ensure that students and teachers have the best possible learning environments. We will also see ongoing major capital projects, including new schools and extensions, needed to address student capacity.

Our Government will also work with the Conseil Scolaire Francophone de Terre-Neuve et Labrador to address francophone junior and senior high school programming issues in the greater St. John's area.

As outlined in The Way Forward, our Government will continue work with the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes in the coming year. Recommendations are anticipated this spring, which will guide changes to the education system starting in the 2018 school year.

We will provide increased educational support to disengaged and at-risk students and youth by expanding options for acquiring high school equivalency testing and supporting and increasing opportunities for career education and accessibility for distance education supports.

Indicative of our Government's commitment to early learning and child care, we will increase child care subsidies available to low income families throughout the province by increasing the income threshold eligibility requirement.

Our Government will also look to increase the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement for qualifying early childhood educators.

### **Supporting Our Communities**

Public safety is a top priority for our Government. Recently the House of Assembly passed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to strengthen impaired driving laws. These changes included the introduction of a mandatory ignition interlock program; mandatory roadside impoundment; and requiring drivers under 22 years of age to maintain zero per cent blood alcohol content. The amendments were developed through extensive consultation with Mothers Against Drunk Driving and with the support of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We believe these improvements to the Highway Traffic Act will help reduce impaired driving and make our roads, highways and communities safer. Our Government will continue to identify opportunities to improve highway safety, with input from community stakeholders and law enforcement.

This past December our Government announced amendments to the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act to include presumptive cancer coverage for career and volunteer firefighters. As a result of these changes, firefighters who serve for a specified period of time and develop a specific form of cancer will be presumed to have developed that cancer as a result of their work. Qualifying firefighters will receive wage-loss benefits, medical aids and certain other benefits through WorkplaceNL, while health care costs associated with their cancer treatment will be paid through the Medical Care Plan. Our Government made a commitment to firefighters in the province, and we have followed through.

In September 2016, our Government established a commission of inquiry into the death of Mr. Donald Dunphy, naming the Honourable Justice Leo Barry of the Court of Appeal as commissioner. The inquiry has been examining the facts and circumstances of Mr. Dunphy's death and will provide its report to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety before July 1, 2017. The Department of Justice and Public Safety will respond to and address the recommendations of the inquiry upon their receipt.

This year, our Government will introduce a bill to create a Serious Incident Response Team. This team will investigate all matters that involve death, serious injury, sexual assault and domestic violence or other matters of significant public interest that may have arisen from the actions of any police officer in the province. This is a vital step towards ensuring public confidence in policing and the need for independence in all aspects of the investigative process. It reflects Our Government's commitment to upholding the administration of justice and to making our communities and regions safer.

## **Supporting our Environment**

Climate change is one of the most challenging long-term issues facing the world today. All jurisdictions must be part of the solution and Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to do its part. To this end, our Government, in partnership with our provincial and federal colleagues, adopted a pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change in December 2016. This framework seeks to advance collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, grow the clean economy and create jobs, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The framework also gives provinces flexibility to develop their own approaches and

Newfoundland and Labrador will tailor its approach to fit our unique circumstances and balance economic and environmental interests. Our Government has committed to develop a Climate Change Action Plan that sets out next steps. We completed public consultations in the fall and will use this input to inform future direction.

### **Supporting Community Organizations**

As our Government focuses on better outcomes, we will continue to work towards the implementation of a strategic one-window, multi-year approach to community grant funding. This will ensure an efficient and consistent approach to administration, accountability and evaluation. Issues related to equity, value-for-money, overlaps/duplication and service gaps will be addressed and application processes, assessment tools, and outcome tracking will be standardized. Legislative frameworks have been modified and financial systems will be modified as required to support the implementation of multi-year funding arrangements for community-based organizations through one access point. The overall outcome will be supporting community-based organizations by enabling them to plan more efficiently.

### **Supporting Indigenous People**

Our Government is proud of our strong working relationship with Indigenous governments and organizations. We have worked with them to establish the Independent Experts Advisory Committee on the Lower Churchill and have made this relationship a top priority.

Last November, our Government issued an Order-in-Council, establishing the Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in this province under the Public Inquiries Act, 2006. Through this action, our Government's commitment to participate and support the national inquiry has been confirmed. We have engaged Indigenous governments and organizations in our province on this issue and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the National Inquiry incorporates the perspectives and concerns of all Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Supporting Women**

Our Government will strengthen the capacity of departments and agencies to understand and apply gender inclusive analysis to policies, programs, services, legislation and budgets in order to ensure equitable outcomes for women.

In order to improve the social and economic status of women we will lead the development of a women's leadership strategy and work with women's organizations to overcome barriers to women's participation in leadership positions.

We will work in collaboration with departments and agencies, community organizations, post-secondary institutions, employers' groups, unions and the private sector to prevent violence against women and other at-risk populations.

We will also continue to collaborate with Indigenous governments and organizations to prevent violence and advance the social and economic status of Indigenous women.

Our Government will also establish a Sexual Assault Response pilot program. This pilot program will provide victims of sexual assault with free and independent legal advice. It is intended to improve access to justice for victims, allowing better preparation for victims and a greater understanding of court processes. It will offer early legal intervention to victims to assist them with decisions around how they may wish to proceed given their own circumstances.

## **Supporting Seniors**

Our Government recognizes the challenges and opportunities resulting from our aging population must be considered as we evolve our policies, programs and services. Recently, legislation was passed to establish the Office of the Seniors' Advocate. The Seniors' Advocate will report to the House of Assembly, focus on systemic issues affecting seniors and make recommendations to government accordingly. Regulations will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders over the next several months. The Independent Appointments Commission will actively recruit for the Seniors' Advocate position this year.

We must always, as a society, ensure those that need help the most receive it, and we have an obligation to protect our low-income seniors. Our Government will continue its investment in the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit that is paid directly to eligible low-income seniors in quarterly installments.

### **Supporting Children**

The protection and care of children and youth is a core value of our Government and we are committed to working closely with all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to ensure our children and youth benefit from the sense of well-being they deserve. Last year, our Government embarked on a statutory review of the Children and Youth Care and Protection Act and a review of the Youth Services Program with a goal to further strengthen services to children, youth and their families. During this review, we met with numerous stakeholders and were pleased with the strength of the responses we received. The shared commitment to the safety and well-being of vulnerable children and youth is evident. We are committed to building on what we heard to make improvements to this legislation and we will also identify strategies to address the issue of continued program growth in children's protection and in care services. This analysis will be informed by a jurisdictional and literature review of promising and best practices in child welfare that address factors that impact program growth.

Our Government will continue to work cooperatively with the Child and Youth Advocate to develop legislation on mandatory reporting of critical incidents and deaths to the advocate for consideration in the House of Assembly.

### **Supporting Inclusion**

Our Government continues to work with the community of persons with disabilities and all residents to move forward on our commitment to become an inclusive province by removing barriers and ensuring residents have equitable access to opportunities and services. We will lead by example as we introduce new policies and guidelines that will make government communications more accessible and engagements more inclusive.

## **Supporting Affordable Housing**

Our Government understands that safe, stable and affordable housing is fundamental to the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and our communities. We are committed to the development of a comprehensive provincial housing plan that addresses the diverse needs of our residents, paying particular attention to housing needs and support for the most vulnerable and those with distinct needs.

Our Government is currently working with our federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to finalize the development of a National Housing Strategy. This strategy will include a common vision and priority areas to achieve better housing outcomes for all Canadians and will complement and support our provincial housing plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our Government has begun the difficult work of getting our province back on track. We have laid forth our plan to achieve a strong, diversified province with a high standard of living.

As we continue our work, we are reminded that we are stronger together. We look back so we can look forward. We celebrate our country's history and diversity. We celebrate the people who were here first, and the people who came after, choosing to settle in our wonderful province.

We reflect on Beaumont Hamel, on Monchy-le-Preux, on Vimy as moments when Newfoundlanders and Labradorians rose to the occasion, setting aside their fears in the face of great uncertainty. Our ancestors fought alongside their allies. We are proud of our history, and motivated for our great future.

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.

Thank you.





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