

It is very clear to the people of the Province, it is very clear to the Members of the House of Assembly that we face a very, very difficult challenge, short-term challenge that is facing us as a Province, Mr. Speaker. It is not unique to us. It is the same type of challenge that is facing other provinces, other jurisdictions that are reliant on oil. We will announce our way of dealing with that, our plan for the future, when the Budget is brought down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I say to the Premier, that it is really not mocking, it is a reality. When just a few months ago the numbers that were being predicted are quite different than what we have seen.

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is currently investigating the shooting of Don Dunphy by an RNC officer. However, the RCMP were involved in the risk assessment before the RNC officer showed up at Mr. Dunphy's door on Easter Sunday.

I ask the Premier: Given that the RCMP were involved in this situation, do you think it is appropriate for them, the RCMP, to be completing this investigation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the events that have transpired are clearly tragic in so many ways and will have permanent impact on a very large number of people and a community. The circumstances that have taken place, they are no less than tragic. There is no other way to describe it, Mr. Speaker, than a significant tragedy that has taken place.

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP are the police with jurisdiction for the particular area where this matter transpired. As they took over the investigation, they had a number of options that were available to them. One of them was to assign an independent oversight to their

investigation. They have selected a retired Supreme Court Justice. I would suggest to members of this House, a well-respected retired Supreme Court Justice who has significant experience and background and has provided that person with unfettered access and oversight to the investigation. Mr. Speaker, we should allow the RCMP to do their investigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We believe that all the details in this situation will likely not be known until there is an inquiry into what happened on the events of Easter Sunday. We believe it is appropriate for this inquiry to happen, to take place after the investigation is completed as well.

I ask the Premier: When can the family, and when can the people of Newfoundland and Labrador expect to see this investigation completed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I would expect, and I do expect, that the RCMP will conduct a comprehensive, a full, fair and frank investigation into the events that have taken place involving the tragic loss of life of Mr. Dunphy.

Mr. Speaker, I would not in any way put a timeline or a deadline, impose that upon the police to complete their investigation. There is no way for me to know when they are going to complete their investigation. I asked them to do a full, fair and frank investigation, complete their work in a comprehensive manner, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to seeing what the results of that investigation are when they have completed their work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I met with the outfitting association just last week. The Minister of Tourism met with them just a couple of months ago. The Minister of Tourism committed \$100,000 over three years to help sustain their industry organization. We are looking to provide some funding as well. They came to us and that was one of their asks. They had many asks that they put on the table.

Mr. Speaker, again, when it comes to the fees for outfitters, we looked at ways that we could have raised revenue for the Province, we looked at what the fees were for non-residents, we looked at other jurisdictions, and we decided to bring the fees up to where the levels are in other jurisdictions. So non-residents, coming to this Province, are now going to pay their fair share compared to what they pay in the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, these small business owners stand to lose thousands of dollars – I spoke to one in excess of \$20,000 – because of the staggering increase in fees. Outfitters have sold packages in advance, signed binding contracts, with no way to recover the cost. They are requesting that you hold off on these increases for at least a year. We have to stop paying lip service to the tourism industry.

I ask the Tourism Minister: Will you demand the Environment Minister reverse this decision and lessen the negative impact on the tourism industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, when you look at the outfitting industry and the business model that they follow – I have been online. I had a look at how they charge their rates. Mr.

Speaker, some of the outfitters charge their fees, their rates, and then they have their licence fees separate from that. A lot of them do that. Everybody is going to be impacted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at a business model – and I was in business for twenty-five years – you look one, two, three years out. Costs can change. Insurance rates can go up. Cost of labour could go up. The price of gas could go up.

Mr. Speaker, if you take an average hunt, for a moose, for instance, it is about \$5,000 for four or five days hunting. If an outfitter decided to raise their rate 10 per cent for next year, he would pick up the lost money for this year. He would pick up more money for next year and out years. It would be very profitable for them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

Concerns have been raised about the protocol surrounding the decision for police to visit Donald Dunphy's home on Easter Sunday.

I ask the Premier: Will he commit to establishing an inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to look into the protocol and events surrounding the shooting of Donald Dunphy?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned earlier, it is a tragic event that occurred involving the loss of life. Mr. Dunphy's loss of life is tragic in many, many ways.

Right now, there is a police investigation ongoing. The police investigation is also partnered and paired with an independent

oversight by a retired, respected Supreme Court Justice who has great experience and background in criminal procedures and criminal law.

I think it is appropriate before we reach any further decisions or attempt to make any further decisions that we wait for the outcome of the investigation, which I hope to be a comprehensive, full, fair, and frank investigation carried out by the RCMP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Will he please tell this House who deployed the police officer to Donald Dunphy's house and why?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very inappropriate to try and speculate and lead to what the outcomes of the investigation are going to be. I take it the RCMP are doing a full investigation of all of the circumstances surrounding the actions and what led up to the actions on that terrible and tragic day. I think it is just wrong for us to try and speculate or reach a conclusion, or discuss details of a matter that is still before police investigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Will he explain the chain of command between government, the Protective Services Unit, the RNC and the RCMP, and who gives instructions to the Protective Services Unit?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear that the questions being raised by the member opposite are directly in relation to the loss of life that her previous questions refer to. I think it would be very inappropriate to discuss any aspect of what is being investigated by the RCMP until we find the results of that investigation, receive a report from the RCMP, we have a report from the retired Supreme Court Justice who is having oversight to it. I look forward to receiving those reports. We will make decisions after that, what the next step should be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Are the contents of the email supposedly written and sent by the RNC officer concerning details of the Dunphy case reflective of the policies of the Protective Services Unit?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Premier said on a number of occasions, the whole issue of the Dunphy shooting is very tragic, and all of us in this House, I am sure, extend our condolences to the family.

Let me be very clear as the Minister of Justice, on behalf of government, to the member's question. We are not prepared and will in no way entertain discussing the details that are pertinent to an ongoing investigation in that case before this House of Assembly until the investigations are concluded. At that point in time, as we have been very clear, the Fatalities Act provides me, as the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, with an opportunity to call an inquiry if I deem it necessary. It also provides Cabinet, the Lieutenant Governor in Council with an opportunity to call for an inquiry if they

deem it necessary. Up until those investigations are concluded, we are not prepared to discuss those details.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the minister his time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Did anyone in government assist in the writing, editing, or dissemination of that email?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. KING: I can only say, Mr. Speaker, it is a travesty what I am hearing here this afternoon. The member opposite is asking the Premier of this Province or the Minister of Justice to stand on their feet and discuss an ongoing criminal investigation in this Province. It is absolutely ridiculous what you are getting on with here today.

There is no place for any of us in this House of Assembly to discuss the nature of what transpired between the RNC and Mr. Dunphy and his family and what is currently before an ongoing investigation. I say it is shameful for the member to stand on her feet and raise that line of questioning here in this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

MR. POLLARD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Select Committee appointed to draft a reply to the Speech from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I am pleased to present the report of the Select Committee which reads as follows:

To His Honour The Lieutenant Governor, the hon. Frank Fagan.

May it please Your Honour, we the Commons of Newfoundland and Labrador in legislative session assembled beg to thank Your Honour for the Gracious Speech which Your Honour has addressed to this House.

I move, seconded by the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, that the report be adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the report be received, hon. Government House Leader?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader, I believe you are going to move that the debate be deferred.

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, with apologies.

I move, seconded by the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale, that debate on that matter be deferred.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Further reports?

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, thankfully the Official Opposition did not take no for an answer. We continued to advocate. We continued to raise this issue. We continued to raise this in Question Period. As a result, we have this legislation here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister of the advance copy of his statement here today. Yes, it is a good piece of legislation, but there is always room for improvement. I have to note in debate last year, and I will bring up the fact again to the minister that we also need something that is going to end up covering things such as rollerblades and scooters. We still only have a 90 per cent compliance rate of usage of kids out there and such who are using helmets.

We have a report from the CBC that quotes a very interesting statistic that I will make the minister aware of. Between 1990 and 2011, nineteen per 100,000; it went up to twenty-six people per 100,000 as regards to accidents in these particular areas of scooters and rollerblades and stuff.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member his time for speaking has expired.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Premier said that he asked the RCMP to do an investigation on the shooting death of Donald Dunphy.

I ask the Premier: Why did you personally get involved in this investigation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If those were the words I used yesterday, I certainly did not intend to mislead the House. I certainly never gave any direction to the RCMP to conduct an investigation into the death of Mr. Dunphy, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the words of the Premier were very clear. It said that I asked them to do a full and fair and frank investigation. The Premier has had lots of time to withdraw those remarks. I understand sometimes in this House we can get a certain stat wrong or a certain name wrong, but remarks like this are very clear.

We all know this started about a Tweet to the Premier's office. It is a very serious and important issue. Someone from the Premier's office called the police. The Premier even, on the day, called and personally supported the young RNC officer. We know that the Premier's office is directly involved in this.

I ask the Premier: Are you or your office currently under investigation on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to clarify on the member's first question once again, I have not looked at Hansard to see exactly what my words were and I already said

to the member before his last question that if I misspoke or if my words were misconstrued or misunderstood, I fully apologize to the House and I want to correct it that in no way have I directed the RCMP or the RNC or any police service to do an investigation.

Mr. Speaker, it is not my place to do that. I have never done that. I will not do that as Premier. That is completely within the boundaries of the police services to decide what they want to do there.

As for the matters at hand and details of the circumstances that have taken place – and I will be clear – what I expect from the police is that they carry out a full, comprehensive investigation on the matter. We look forward to seeing the results of that, as well the oversight by the retired justice who is involved with this as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, given the tragic events on Easter Sunday, I think the question that I asked on the second question – I appreciate the fact that the Premier explained the position and the remarks about yesterday, but the second question was about the Premier's office. Is the Premier's office a part of the current investigation being carried out by the RCMP?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, if his question is are we playing a role in the investigation, clearly we are not. We have no involvement with the investigation. It is entirely up to the police to carry out that investigation. It is up to them how they direct and how they investigate. In no way, do I or my office have any involvement in any decisions on the progress of that investigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The question is not about the involvement and who called for the investigation; the question is about the ongoing investigation.

My question to the Premier about his office: Is your office currently under investigation on this matter by the RCMP?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: I have no knowledge of it, Mr. Speaker. I cannot provide him with an answer. I do not know if my office is under investigation.

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier also said yesterday that the RCMP has a number of options available to them, one of which was the appointment, as the Premier previously mentioned, of Judge Riche.

I ask the Premier: What other options are you referring to?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the other option that would be available as we have seen exercised in the past from time to time, whether it is the RNC or RCMP, they have an option of calling in another police force from outside the Province or within the Province, depending on the nature of the investigation. That would be totally at the discretion of the police force.

As the Minister of Justice in particular with responsibilities for this, I have no authority in operational matters. There is nowhere in

legislation that gives me the right to impose my view on the RCMP. It is an operational decision that they make as to whether they do what they have done or choose another course of action.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I just listened to the answer from the Minister of Justice and I refer to page 48 of the Luther inquiry where it talks about the unprecedented step where the RCMP called in the OPP for an investigation. It also says, they were “not ordered or forced by the Minister of Justice who had the authority to do so; rather this was at the invitation of the R.C.M.P.”

I ask the Minister of Justice: Are you sure you do not have the authority to intervene here?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can only say to the member opposite, I cannot speak to the circumstance you just quoted. Since you seem sure I do have the authority, I would say to the House that I will go back and double check. I am advised by those who write the legislation that the Minister of Justice does not have the authority to intervene in direct police forces, but I will certainly go back and double check that before I give a concrete answer to this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, given that we had Judge Luther, the former chief of the Provincial Court say that the minister does have the authority, I look forward to the answer on Monday in this House.

Recommendation 26 of the Luther inquiry calls for an outside police force to be used in the

event of a police shooting in this Province. The family of Mr. Dunphy is also calling for an outside police force to complete this investigation.

I ask the Premier: Will you now support this call?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Back to the previous question, irrespective of what the member is quoting, I can say to you very categorically that I am certainly not looking for that authority as the Minister of Justice. That is why we have police forces. They are trained professionals who make decisions on this. It should not be in the hands of a politician to decide who investigates what files and when.

With respect to the ongoing investigation, we have been very clear, Mr. Speaker, that both police forces are engaged here in different pieces of an investigation. We will see that through. Upon conclusion of those investigations we will make a determination whether further actions are required.

As I have said many times before, if an inquiry is required either through the fatalities act that I am responsible for or through Cabinet, the Lieutenant Governor in Council will make that determination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am shocked to hear in this House today that the Minister of Justice is abrogating his duty to the people of this Province as the administrator of the Department of Justice. Perhaps the Attorney General would like to say.

Again, I ask, you have the authority. The Luther inquiry says to do it. Why will you not call in an outside police force, as you have the authority and the power to do so?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the eagerness of the member, but I will say to the House, I do not take my direction from my critic across the way. I will read the legislation and see what direction I have.

I will say very categorically, that whether I have the authority or not, I certainly do not intend to intervene and call in another police force. I intend to let the investigation that is underway proceed. I have confidence in the RCMP to carry out the particular piece of investigation they are doing. As I said a few moments ago, at the conclusion of that we will make a determination as to whether an inquiry is required.

At the end of the process, all the members on this side of the House want what the public want, which is the truth and the facts of what happened. We will go to whatever lengths it takes as a government to make sure that we and the public are made aware of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Department of Justice is not following the recommendations in the Luther inquiry.

The Lamer inquiry discussed the tunnel vision that can occur when police forces investigate their own. There is also the negative public perception that may arise when this occurs.

I ask the Premier: Given the conclusions of the Luther inquiry and the Lamer inquiry, why are you not supporting the call for an outside police force to conduct this investigation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Again, Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. What we are supportive of here is making sure that all information that the public needs to know becomes public. We will do whatever it takes to support and facilitate that process.

We are currently involved in a situation that is very tragic for a number of people and a number of families. We need to find out what happened. We need to let the investigation take its course.

As I said a few moments ago, at the conclusion of that, through the facilities act I will look at the medical examiner's recommendations. Cabinet obviously will give every consideration to the interests of the public. If the public is satisfied and we are satisfied, it will be case closed. If the public is not satisfied and we believe there is a need for further investigation, then we will consider calling an inquiry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, on page 146 of the Luther inquiry, Judge Luther says in reference to bringing in an outside police force such as the OPP, and I quote, "The wisdom of already having in place the established protocol with the O.P.P. for such major incidents was borne out in an abundantly clear fashion in this investigation. This Memorandum of Understanding or something similar should continue to be renewed. It serves our people well."

I ask the Minister of Justice: Does this Memorandum of Understanding with the OPP still exist?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that our two police forces, both the RNC and the RCMP, do engage the OPP. I cannot speak to the specifics as to whether there is an official Memorandum of Understanding but I will certainly endeavour to check and get back to the

House. I think there is but I am not definite, so I will check.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I ask the Premier: Given that your Chief of Staff was the former Chief of the RNC, are you or are you not aware that this MOU does or does not exist?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I think the question has already been answered. I stood on my feet thirty seconds ago and said I believe it exists but I am not definitive. I want to check it out with the proper authorities and I will report back to the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I ask for the last time: Why do we need to relive what we have already been through? We have had the Luther inquiry; we have had the Lamer inquiry.

I ask the Premier: Why do you still resist having an outside police force conduct this investigation? Why are you resisting this?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite indicated this is the last time he will ask the question, so hopefully it is the last time I will have to answer it and be very crystal clear as to where government and where I stand on this. There are currently investigations ongoing before a very serious incident that has happened in this Province, very tragic, and our hearts go out to everyone involved in that and I am sure the members opposite share in that respective comment.

We will let the investigation unfold. We are committed to see that through. We are confident that the RCMP will do their due diligence. Upon the conclusion of that, I will review the medical examiner's report and recommendations. Cabinet will also give consideration to what is in the public interest, and if there is not full disclosure and there are still some issues with confidence in the public then we will consider calling an inquiry, but we will do so upon the termination and completion of the investigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Conservation said yesterday: I was in business for twenty-five years. Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between signing the front of a business cheque and the back of a paycheque. He lacks business experience. He suggested that business owners should always look two or three years out. That is exactly how outfitters do it. That is why they sell their hunting packages in advance.

I ask the minister: Why did you not follow your own advice and consult with outfitters before hitting them in the pocketbook?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say to the member opposite I was in business for twenty-five years. The last ten years in business, I was regional manager for a major company with over \$160 million worth of sales a year. That is \$1.6 billion in ten years of sales.

I was in charge of profit. I was in charge of loss. I was in charge of distribution. I was in charge of marketing, Mr. Speaker. So challenging me and my business experience, I take offence to that. I will just put that out there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, when you are in business, you need to think about the future, always. You need to make adjustments when costs go up. So your labour costs go up, your costs go up for insurance, your costs –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the minister his time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of tourism did not respond when I asked him about this loss of income to small business owners in our tourism trade. Would he answer my question today?

Given that your government made these increases retroactively, I ask the minister: Will you commit to working with your uninformed colleague in Environment and drop this increase for one year as requested by the outfitters?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Again, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the big game resource and what we have here in this Province, it is second to none in the world. As a matter of fact, we have the only caribou population that is hunted in North America or pretty much anywhere in the world.

We have helped protect that herd. Mr. Speaker, 40 per cent of the licences for that herd is reserved for non-residents which go to outfitters. They charge up to \$10,000 for a hunt for these woodland caribou, massive antlers on them. That is why hunters want to come here and hunt.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the industry. We will continue to work with the industry. We understand that this is a challenge going forward for some of these outfitters, but they have the ability to pass those costs on. They have the ability to raise their rates next year and recuperate any costs that they incurred

this year and going forward into the future. The ability is there for them to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am glad the minister mentioned caribou. Mr. Speaker, all the caribou herds in Labrador are classified as threatened to some degree. Three years ago government implemented a five-year ban on harvesting the George River caribou herd, the last herd to be protected. Confirmed reports of illegal hunting of the protected Mealy Mountain caribou herd is cause for concern.

I ask the minister: How has this herd been impacted by illegal harvesting?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, caribou is a valuable resource in Labrador, and we understand the attachment to the Aboriginal community and to other residents of Labrador – an important resource, important food source. We want to see these herds come back. We think that is possible. The research that we are doing right now is showing that some of these herds are starting to flatten their decline. So our research is showing that there are some positives there.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of illegal hunting, you are exactly right; it is something that is not acceptable. Every single animal that is out there now is important to the replenishment of that herd and the resurgence of those herds.

We have some information about certain hunts that have occurred in the last number of months. We have investigations ongoing. We have evidence that we have collected, and we will continue to do the work of enforcement.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, I am glad you mentioned evidence, because there are several cases of illegal caribou harvesting in Labrador that remain on the docket – some for as long as three years waiting to be processed. Individuals from Quebec have already and are once again planning to return to harvest more caribou from Labrador.

So I ask the minister: What enforcement measures will you put in place to protect the caribou herds in Labrador from illegal harvesting?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we have investigated two illegal hunts in the last couple of months. We have gathered evidence of both those hunts. Some of that evidence includes actual carcasses. Justice officials have interviewed hunters from the area. So we have gathered evidence.

Sometimes it is very difficult to bring this in front of the courts, but we do have a plan. We know that there is a threat to go and harvest animals again. We have an action plan in place. In the next few days we are going to see what the Innu from Quebec are going to do, but we have a plan in place, and we will take action immediately if we see any illegal hunts that are happening in the near future. So we are on top that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment stated in the House of Assembly yesterday, “No, we did not talk directly about fee increases” The outfitting association confirmed they were not consulted on these staggering retroactive fee hikes.

So I ask the minister: Since you also hold the portfolio of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, responsible for red tape reduction, will you reverse your irresponsible retroactive decision that adversely impacts business and their ability to plan?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, there was no retroactive decision made here. Actually, when we look at allocating licences for the outfitters, we have a two year plan. We allocate them every two years. We let them know two years in advance how many licences they have. We do not tell them what the fees are going to be. We reserve that right as a government as things change.

We also reserve the right, if there is a crash in a herd, to take the licences back. We did that a number of years back with the caribou, Mr. Speaker, to try to protect that herd.

Mr. Speaker, there is no retroactive happenings going on here. So I do not know where his information is coming from.

In terms of the fee increases; again, Mr. Speaker, the outfitters in moving forward can charge more money. They can rejuvenate that revenue going forward and charge more for these fees.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, having a right to do that does not mean the government does not have a right to consult.

The outfitting industry creates local jobs, brings millions of dollars, new dollars into the Province’s economy. Increasing fees is a deterrent and contradictory to your government’s red tape reduction initiative. The last report on red tape said this government is losing ground.

I ask the Minister of Business, who was not consulted on these retroactive fee increases, what he plans to do to ensure the Environment, Service Newfoundland and Labrador Minister reduces red tape versus increase it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Again, Mr. Speaker, the outfitting industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, we think it is a very robust industry. We spend millions of dollars researching and making sure of the sustainability of all the big game animals that are out there.

In terms of the fees; the fees are necessary, Mr. Speaker. We have some of the lowest fees in Canada when it came to non-residents. There are provinces in Canada that do not allow non-residents to hunt their big game. We allow them to come here.

Mr. Speaker, \$167 extra for a moose hunt is not unreasonable. We understand the business models that the outfitters are following. Mr. Speaker, again I reiterate, they can find ways to get that back. They can find ways to charge that and pass it along to the non-residents who are coming here hunting our herds that we spend millions of dollars a year to manage and sustain for the people of the Province and also for (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last night we held a housing forum in St. John's and some of the stories from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing tenants were nothing short of alarming and heartbreaking. Parents told us of children's bedroom windows that cannot open – an obvious safety concern; children being placed on puffers and steroids to cope with leaks and mouldy carpets, and no units being furnished with fire extinguishers.

I ask the Minister Responsible for Housing: What sort of example are you setting as the Province's largest landlord?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I guess you can always cite individual cases, but let me point out a number to the hon. member. Since 2009, this government has tripled the spending that has gone into modernization and upgrading of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: For some twenty years, there was \$4 million put in annually. This government increased that since 2009, up to \$12 million. Mr. Speaker, 77 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing units have been modernized and upgraded. That speaks to our record. We will continue that work and the work of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They should put a few more dollars in the Budget so they can buy fire extinguishers.

Mr. Speaker, a senior with health complications was offered a housing unit with no parking. She needs her car for multiple medical appointments and to maintain her independence, given that she has mobility issues. Housing cancelled her application for twelve months because she did not accept the unit without parking.

Why can't your policies treat vulnerable people with dignity instead of forcing them to choose between a house or a car?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, his question almost paints the picture of an individual from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing who appears not to want to do the right thing for an individual. That is the impression he has left with me. In all of my dealings with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, they want to find a solution for individuals.

We have had members who have raised particular issues on this floor from this side and from the members opposite that we have taken back to officials to review. In all of my dealings with the officials at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, I find they always want to do the right thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

Yesterday in Question Period the Premier avoided giving a direct answer to a question I raised, so I am going to try again today.

I ask the Premier: Is the protective services unit a section of government or of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the protective services unit operates through the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. They have various duties that the Premier has spoken on, on several occasions. One of which includes providing some protective and investigative services to public figures, not only the Premier's Office. They are engaged any time other politicians of other counties, for example, or other parts of the Province visit, if there is some particular threat.

They clearly do not operate as an arm of the Premier's Office. They operate as an arm of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

Well, it is very difficult to find anything on anybody's website with regard to the protective services unit.

So I ask the Premier: Can he give us more details about the terms of reference of the unit as it relates to his office?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me clarify my previous answer. The RCMP is also a part of the protective services unit. To be clear, it is not just the RNC. I will certainly endeavour to seek out a list of the responsibilities of this unit.

As I said before, to be very clear, this is not a unit that is assigned to the Premier's Office. This is a unit that has specific responsibilities around public figures. It may not be government. It could be Opposition members, depending on what they are engaged in. It could be a Lieutenant Governor's house. It could be visiting politicians.

I will certainly talk to the RNC and RCMP and ask to get a list of the responsibilities of that unit. I will be more than happy to share it here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have learned today that the family of Donald Dunphy, supported by their lawyer, have expressed a loss of confidence in the investigation being carried out by the RCMP on his death and are asking for an outside police force to be brought in, as well as for an inquiry to be put in place once the investigation is finished.

I ask the Premier: Based on the red flag that is being raised, will he reconsider his position into an inquiry, into all the circumstances surrounding the death of Donald Dunphy?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it is a very serious matter. We want to know exactly what took place as well. We share that concern with members opposite, and also members of the general public. We want to know what took place.

Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite just alluded to; we have to wait for the police to finish their investigation. We have to wait for the RCMP to finish their investigation. We look forward to receiving their report and also the report of the former justice who has unfettered access to the investigators and the investigation. He has an oversight role. We also look forward to receiving a report from him as well on the outcome of their findings in the investigation.

Once we have that, Mr. Speaker, then we will consider next steps. Just to be clear, at no time did we ever say or are we saying that we are opposed to a public inquiry. What we are saying is let's get the information first then we will make our decision before we can move forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister is on record as saying that he does not see the need to add extra ambulances to the

fleet to address the red alert situation on the Northeast Avalon.

With the larger population, Mr. Speaker, on the Northeast Avalon, what evidence does the minister or this government have to arrive at that conclusion that we do not need more ambulances out there?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising a very important issue. It has been in a number of media reports this week.

I want to tell hon. members of this House that since 2006, Eastern Health has actually increased ambulance capacity in this region quite a bit. They have more than doubled response capabilities, more than doubling the number of ambulances and paramedics. So there are sufficient resources to meet our needs in this region.

We monitor red alerts very closely. Some red alerts are Level I which means there is no ambulance on standby when the call comes in. Some are Level II. It needs to be put into context. It is an issue that we are examining closely and we will continue to work with Eastern Health on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East has time for a very quick question.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, falling back on the St. John's Regional Fire Department is not the answer.

I ask the minister: Is the answer to call another ambulance when St. John's Regional is tied up?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, for a quick reply.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!