November 19, 2018

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* [Our File #: AESL/039/2018]

On October 22, 2018 the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour received your request for access to the following records/information:

"Any messaging prepared for the fall sitting of the house of assembly during the month of October 2018."

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to this information has been granted in part and the responsive records are attached. Access to the remaining records, and/or information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exception to disclosure, as specified in the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* (the act):

Section 27.(1) In this section, "cabinet record" means
  i. that portion of a record which contains information about the contents of a record within a class of information referred to in paragraphs (a) to (h).

Section 27.(2) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose to an applicant
  a. a cabinet record

As required by subsection 8.(2) of the act, we have severed information that is excepted from disclosure and have provided you with as much information as possible.

Section 42 of the act provides that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review this partial refusal of access or you may appeal the refusal to the Supreme Court Trial Division. A request to the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.
The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John's, NL A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at (709) 729-4276 or SharonSeaward@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

SHARON SEAWARD
ATIPP Coordinator
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Job Creation/Economic Growth
October, 2018

Summary:

- It is anticipated that questions will be raised regarding the Provincial Government’s efforts to create jobs and economic growth.

Anticipated questions:

- The unemployment rate is still one of the highest in the country. What are you doing to grow the economy and get people to work?

Key Messages:

- The most recent data suggests an improvement in economic labour activity, with increasing employment and decreasing unemployment levels, especially compared to 2017 levels.

- Our government is a partner of business and supporting economic development. We are helping to create new jobs for Newfoundland and Labradors.

- Our approach is delivering results. Our work with industry, businesses, the Federal Government and municipalities is putting people to work.

Secondary messages:

- There are promising signs of more potential improvements in employment over the coming months.

- Our Cabinet Committee on Jobs, which includes a team of ministers, has been busy. Their work has led to partnerships with such industries as technology, agriculture, aquaculture and oil and gas.

- My department is developing a Comprehensive Human Resource Plan, which will involve significant collaboration with sector associations and industry groups to better respond to labour market needs and support industry diversification.

- Newfoundland and Labrador has an incredible foundation from which to build our economy – we have a highly-skilled workforce, innovative business community, considerable natural resources and a world-class post-secondary education system.

Prepared by: CPEB and Workforce Development Secretariat/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Labour Shortages in Fishery
October, 2018

Summary:

On September 7, 2018, The Telegram reported a shortage in skilled labour may limit fishing industry growth based on a report by the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters. The report noted 40 per cent of fish harvesters will soon reach retirement age, placing a "serious limitation" on the economic growth potential of the fishing industry.

Anticipated questions:

- Will you show the fishery the same support you have been giving oil and gas, aquaculture, and other industries?
- What are you doing to ensure there are young people entering the fishery?

Key messages:

- Our government recognizes the fishing industry has always played a key role in the province's economic growth, especially in rural areas. We are committed to ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador continues to have a sustainable commercial fishing industry.

- Through The Way Forward, our government is engaging with industry stakeholders, our federal colleagues, and other partners to seek market access and value-added opportunities for the fishing industry to increase employment and economic benefits.

- We will continue to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians prepare for good jobs in all industries. We are working closely with our partners to prepare our workforce and the fishing industry for a productive and prosperous future.

Secondary messages:

- We recently signed new Labour Market and Workforce Development Agreements that provide $900 million over six years in federal funding for employment and training for workers in all sectors, including those wishing to enter or retrain in the fishing industry.

- This fiscal year we provided funding to the Fisheries Science Stewardship and Sustainability Board to develop a training and quality enhancement project for the revitalization of the cod fishery.
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Prepared by: Workforce Development Secretarial/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour

Population Decline

October, 2018

Summary:

- On September 27, 2018 Statistics Canada released population estimates for Canada. Canada’s population increased by over half a million in a year largely from international migration.
- There was population growth in all Atlantic provinces with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador which saw a decline of 0.6 per cent.

Anticipated questions:

- With such high unemployment rates, people are leaving because they don’t have jobs. What are you doing to increase employment, keep people here and attract people to our province?
- Why aren’t we seeing better results from your immigration action plan?

Key Messages:

- We are making great progress on increasing the number of newcomers to the province through our collaborative immigration action plan. 2017 represents the highest ever number of immigration applications supported through provincial immigration programs in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- The Cabinet Committee on Jobs is working with the aquaculture, agriculture, mining, technology, forestry and community sectors to stimulate new business activity and create new jobs. These sectors are very excited about new economic opportunities and employment that are being created through actions outlined in our sector plans.
- We are also developing a Comprehensive Human Resource Plan which will involve significant collaboration with sector associations and industry groups to better respond to their labour market needs and support industry diversification.

Secondary messages:

- To help achieve our goals, we are working on an Economic Growth Strategy. McKinsey, a company with world-class credentials and experience will help us build on our progress to date and capitalize on the strengths of our province.

Prepared by: Immigration/Workforce Development/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Calls for Changes to Labour Laws
October, 2018

Summary:

- Calls for replacement worker legislation and changes in legislation to force the use of binding arbitration have been made during the ongoing dispute at D.J. Composites and during the strike at IOC in Labrador West last spring.
- In May, the House of Assembly passed a Private Members Motion introduced by the MHA for Labrador West “urging government to begin consultations with unions and employers to identify measures that would support the collective bargaining process thereby avoiding prolonged work stoppages.”
- The consultation process is being finalized.

Anticipated Questions:

- The House of Assembly will be opening shortly. Will your government immediately amend the Labour Relations Act to prohibit the use of replacement workers and allow for binding arbitration to avoid long disputes such as D.J. Composites?

Key Messages:

- We are very encouraged that the company and the union are returning to negotiations this week. Both parties have also reached a consensus to go to binding arbitration on any issues that may not be resolved through the negotiations.

- As a government we need to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained between the rights of workers and the needs of employers. This must be our primary consideration on matters such as binding arbitration and replacement worker legislation.

- In response to the Private Members Motion in May put forward by our government, we have directed our labour relations officials to undertake consultations with unions and employers. The consultation process is being finalized and we look forward to hearing the views of unions, employers and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Secondary messages

- The best resolution is one that is mutually agreed to by the parties through collective bargaining and it is best, when necessary that both parties agree to binding arbitration, rather than having it imposed.
We have taken several measures to assist the parties in resolving the dispute at D.J. Composites, including conciliation services, the appointment of an independent mediator and speaking with both the union and the employer.

Prepared by: Labour Relations Division/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour  
Labour Relations Board – Annual Report  
October, 2018

Summary:

- The Labour Relations Board's 2017-18 Annual Report was tabled in the House of Assembly on September 21, 2018.
- The Labour Relations Board reviews and considers various types of applications, including applications for certification, unfair labour practice complaints and complaints with respect to the duty of fair representation. The Board also conducts reviews of labour standards decisions and occupational health and safety matters.
- The Annual Report notes that 24 applications were carried over in 2017-18 from previous years and that there has been a 23 per cent increase in the number of applications filed with the Board.

Anticipated questions:

- Why are some applications to the Board being carried over into the following year? Is the Board not capable of making timely decisions?
- Why has the number of applications increased? Does this speak to a poor labour relations climate in the province?

Key messages:

- The Labour Relations Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body that provides a valuable service to the province in such areas as certification of unions and first collective agreement applications, among others.
- The number of applications to the Board fluctuates from year to year with the nature of the applications reflecting a wide range of issues – from certification for a union to a grievance a member may have with their union.
- There is always a certain level of carry-over from one year to the next depending on the timing of the receipt of the application and the complexity of the application. For example, applications that are received late in the fiscal year will likely carry over to the following year. The Board will take the necessary time to thoroughly and appropriately deal with an application.

Prepared by: Communications Division, AESL  
Approved by: DM/Minister
Labour Relations Board  
LRB Ruling - FISH-NL Complaint  
October, 2018

Summary:

In September, the Labour Relations Board released its decision regarding the application for certification made by FISH-NL. This follows a hearing held on August 20, 2018, regarding the application which was filed in December 2016 by Fish-NL for certification to represent inshore fish harvesters.

The Board has dismissed the FISH-NL application for certification. The decision is based in part on the findings of the Board that FISH-NL does not have the majority of the existing bargaining unit and it is not appropriate for the Board to order a certification vote.

Anticipated questions:

- What is your reaction to the Board’s decision? Are you concerned that there seems to be resistance to having another union certified in the province?

Key messages:

- Under legislation, the Labour Relations Board is required to assess any Application for Certification to determine eligibility and to conduct a vote if necessary. The Board has made a determination on this particular application and has outlined the reasons for its decision.

- As you know, the Board operates arm’s length from government and has the sole jurisdiction to decide applications for certifications of unions.

- I understand that if they so wish, FISH-NL can reapply for certification in six months.

Drafted by: Corporate Services and Policy/Communications Division  
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Minimum Wage
October, 2018

Summary:
- On April 1st, 2018, the minimum wage in Newfoundland and Labrador increased from $11.00 to $11.15 reflecting the commitment to make future adjustments based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada. Newfoundland and Labrador will make future adjustments on April 1st, annually, the date already established in the rest of Atlantic Canada for minimum wage adjustments.
- Nova Scotia also adjusts minimum wage based on increases in the national CPI; New Brunswick adjusts based on changes in provincial CPI while PEI uses an ad hoc approach.
- The NDP and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour have previously indicated that the current wage is too low and that future adjustments should be based on increases to the provincial Consumer Price Index rather than the national CPI as announced by the provincial government in February 2018.

Anticipated Questions:
- Will you increase the minimum wage to $15 as the current process does not accurately address the needs of the working poor?
- Why did you link minimum wage adjustments to changes in the cost of living across Canada rather than the real increases that the working poor actually experience living here?

Key Messages:
- Following extensive consultations, we have established a growing minimum wage that is tied to an economic indicator.
- This model ensures a more open, predictable and well informed approach to increasing the minimum wage, as opposed to the ad hoc approach that has been used previously.
- The minimum wage across all Atlantic provinces is within the same range with slight variations. For example, while Newfoundland and Labrador is currently at $11.15, Nova Scotia is at $11.00, New Brunswick is $11.25 and PEI is $11.55. The next increase in all Atlantic provinces will occur on April 1, 2019.

Secondary Messages
- Determining the minimum wage is always a matter of balance and any time we plan to adjust the minimum wage, we must look at it from the perspective of both employees and employers.
- Consumer Price Indexes fluctuate. Since 1990, the annual average rate of inflation nationally has been higher than provincial approximately 46 per cent of the time.
The increase on April 1, 2018 marked the third increase in minimum wage for a total of 65 cents since April 1, 2017.
The minimum wage will be adjusted again on April 1st, 2019, based on the consumer price index for Canada which will be released in January.

Background:

Current rates in Atlantic provinces:
- PEI – $11.65
- NB – $11.25
- NL – $11.15
- NS – $11.00

Examples of other provinces:
- Quebec - $12.00
- Ontario - $14.00
- Saskatchewan - $10.96
- Alberta - $13.60

Prepared by: Labour Standards Division/ Communications Division
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Adult Literacy Plan
October, 2018

Summary:

- Government conducted public consultations on the development of an Adult Literacy Action Plan in Spring 2018. Five public consultation sessions were held throughout the province in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, and St. John’s. Discussions were also held with adult learners, education and training facilities, public libraries, community organizations, Indigenous governments and organizations, technology firms, and unions and organizations representing labour and employers.
- An Adult Literacy Action Plan is a commitment of The Way Forward and is referenced in the Minister’s mandate letter.

Anticipated Questions:

- Where is the Adult Literacy Action Plan you have promised?
- It has been almost six months since consultations were held. What’s taking so long?

Key Messages:

- Addressing low literacy rates in our province is a priority for our government, as identified in our platform, A Stronger Tomorrow, the Minister’s mandate letter, and reflected in The Way Forward, our roadmap for guiding the future of the province.

- Improving adult literacy is a key component to building our workforce and driving economic growth across the province. It is more than just reading and writing. The development of a plan must consider such things as employability, digital literacy and technology.

- We continue to work toward the development of the plan for 2019-20.

Secondary Messages

- The consultations provided input from individuals and organizations that have insight and an in-depth knowledge of the impact of adult literacy on learners, communities and the workplace which is central to the successful development of a Provincial Adult Literacy Action Plan.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour  
Appointment – CNA Interim President  
October, 2018

Summary:  
- On July 26, 2018, Government announced the appointment of an interim President at College of the North Atlantic, Bruce Hollett.

Anticipated questions:  
- This position took a long time to fill previously and the appointment lasted less than a year. How long should we expect the College to be without permanent leadership yet again?  
- Do you have confidence in the recruiting efforts of the IAC? Will the IAC be used to find a new President?  
- Will this negatively impact the implementation of the College’s Modernization Plan? What’s the status of the plan?

Key messages:  
- The recruitment for a new President will be conducted through the Independent Appointments Commission. I have every confidence in the Commission’s ability to recruit and to recommend qualified candidates to government.

- We have every confidence in Mr. Hollett. The new President is expected to ensure the College’s program offerings align with government’s Way Forward priorities for industry sector development and economic growth.

- CNA’s Modernization Plan is an active plan. As required, the College is providing semi-annual updates to government on its progress. The first was received in September 2017, the second in March 2018 and the most recent update was received in September 2018. CNA is on track to complete all actions on time.

Secondary messages  
- We will continue to work closely with CNA to ensure the next steps in its modernization plan are effectively addressed.  
- Mr. Hollett has extensive executive leadership and has twice held the position of President of College of the North Atlantic on an interim basis. We look forward to his leadership at the College while the recruitment for a permanent President is conducted.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Communications Divisions  
Approved by: DM/Minister
KEY MESSAGES

Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Compulsory Certification Application for the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic Trade
October, 2018

Summary:
- The Department has received applications to designate the following three trades for compulsory certification: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic (RACM), Sprinkler Fitter and Boilermaker.
- The designation of RACM is being considered first. The Department is undertaking targeted industry stakeholder consultations to inform a decision for compulsory certification of the RACM trade.

Anticipated Questions:
- Why is this trade being considered for designation as a compulsory trade?
- What will the impact of designating the RACM trade as a compulsory trade be on uncertified employees currently working in the trade?
- What will the impact of designating the RACM trade as a compulsory trade be on employers?

Key Messages:
- The safety of employees, employers and the public is paramount. Compulsory certification in the RACM trade could address public and worker safety and consumer and environmental protection.
- Consultation with industry representatives, employees, apprentices, journeypersons, employers and the public will help determine if compulsory certification is required for the RACM trade.
- If the RACM trade is recommended for compulsory certification, the Department will develop an implementation plan that includes transition and support options for current employees to ensure opportunities is available to become certified and continue working in the field.
- If the RACM trade is recommended for compulsory certification, the impact on employers with a Certified Journeyperson on staff will be limited. Support opportunities will be provided to all employers to address potential negative impacts on their businesses.

Secondary messages:
- The Department is required, on behalf of the Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board (PACB), to undertake targeted industry stakeholder consultations with limited public consultation to inform a decision on an application for compulsory certification of RACM trade.
- NL follows a standardized approach to consider the designation of compulsory trades.
- NL is the only province in Atlantic Canada where the RACM trade is not compulsory.
Prepared by: Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division/Communications Division
Approved by:
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
International Student Fees
October, 2018

Summary:

- In 2018, Memorial's Board of Regents approved the University's budget for 2018-19. The budget included an increase in tuition for new international students from approximately $8,800 to $11,460. The increase was first introduced as part of MUN's 2017 budget.
- Since that time, the CFS-NL has been calling for free tuition for international students, stating that it will help attract newcomers to the province and help with retention.

Anticipated questions:

- Will you take action to have MUN reduce tuition fees for international students?
- How can you expect to attract more international students when you are increasing tuition rates?

Key messages:

- International student fees in our province remain the most competitive in the country.

- Tuition rates are set by the Board of Regents. Even with the increase to tuition for new international undergraduate students, tuition will remain the lowest in Canada — approximately 58 per cent lower.

- Government recognizes fully the importance of attracting and retaining international students and will continue to work collaboratively with Memorial University to ensure it remains competitive in attracting and retaining international students.

Secondary Messages

- Through our Immigration Action Plan, we have amended the field of study requirement for international graduates. This change allows more applicants to be eligible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program further helping them gain work experience.

- We have introduced two new programs to support international students and graduates with work placements to secure employment and connect them to the workforce.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Communications Division
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
MUN Pension Plan Reform
October, 2018

Summary:
- Memorial University’s President has noted the ongoing challenge of the institution’s pension liability. The pension is currently 93 percent funded with a gap of between $150 million and $180 million.
- The university has been granted a temporary exemption from making solvency special payments into its pension plan and was granted a deferral from making going concern special payments into its pension plan for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Anticipated Questions:
- What is government doing to assist with Memorial’s pension liability?
- If government is encouraging joint sponsorship, shouldn’t government be providing financial support for that?

Key Messages:
- It is necessary that Memorial work to reform its pension plan to ensure its financial sustainability.
- Memorial is faced with the same challenges the public sector faced with its pensions. Public sector workers and government came together for the collective good to restructure its pension plans to ensure their long-term sustainability. We expect Memorial to do the same.
- For ten years, the people of the province supported the plan with special annual payments. Now Memorial and groups representing beneficiaries need to get their pension on the path to long-term sustainability without government contributions.

Secondary Messages
- Since 2005, the Provincial Government has provided $127.8 million through its operating grants to support Memorial University’s special payments to the pension plan – this included $22.6 million in 2014. No special payment funding has been provided since 2015.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services /Communications Division, AESL
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Memorial University Tuition and Government Funding
October, 2018

Summary:
- The Provincial Government has reduced Memorial University’s operating grant in the past two budgets. Students have expressed concerns about the reduction, subsequent increases to international student tuition rates and fee increases for all students.
- The CFS-NL are calling for government to “reinstate funding to our post-secondary institutions”, noting that students, both domestic and international, are needed because “the province’s population is aging and shrinking”.

Anticipated Questions:
- Will you reinstate the funding you have cut from MUN?
- How can you expect international students, or any student for that matter, to stay here with tuition and fee increases?

Key Messages:
- Our government is proud to provide approximately 80 per cent of Memorial University’s general operating revenues, compared to the Canadian average of about 47 per cent. That works out to be a public investment of over $22,000 per full-time student. (Stats can 2016/17)
- In Budget 2018, our government allocated $366 million for Memorial University in recognition of its critical role in the province’s society, culture, and economy. That’s more than New Brunswick provides for its four universities, and almost as much as Nova Scotia provides all 10 of its universities.
- Our government’s commitment to affordable, accessible post-secondary education is strong. $366 million in provincial funding helps Memorial University deliver high-quality programming more affordably than anywhere else in Atlantic Canada, and well below the national average.

Secondary Messages:
- All Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can be proud of the value Memorial University provides for post-secondary students. For example, Canadian and international students can currently complete an undergraduate engineering degree at Memorial University for about three times less cost than the average elsewhere in Canada.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Communications Division
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
MUNFA negotiations
October, 2018

Summary:

- The collective agreement between MUNFA and Memorial University of Newfoundland expired on August 31, 2017.
- On June 14, 2018 MUNFA requested the appointment of a conciliation officer with an officer being assigned the following day. To date there have been 15 days of meetings between the parties.
- If the parties reach an impasse, the conciliator will write a report to the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. The report triggers a 15-day countdown for the parties to be in a position to take a strike vote or initiate a lock-out.

Anticipated questions:

- What is being done to avert a strike or lock-out at Memorial?
- If there is a strike or lock-out, what will you do to ensure students are not impacted or disrupted from their studies?

Key Messages:

- A conciliation officer has been appointed and is working with the parties in an effort to find a resolution that balances the interests of both parties and ultimately achieves a new collective agreement.
- In appointing a conciliation officer to guide negotiations, Government is hopeful that a labour dispute will not occur.
- Memorial University can speak to any contingency planning it may be doing in the event of a strike. At this time, the conciliation process and talks continue and we remain hopeful that a resolution and collective agreement will be reached.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Labour/ Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Public Post-Secondary Education Review
October, 2018

Summary:
- On October 10, 2018, the Provincial Government provided an update on the review of Newfoundland and Labrador’s public post-secondary education system. The review was announced as part of Budget 2018.
- Following preliminary discussions with Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic leadership, as well as student organizations, government is now seeking input from the post-secondary institutions and student groups on a Terms of Reference. The institutions will undertake their own consultation process with their respective communities. Also on October 10, 2018, the Public Service Commission began a merit-based recruitment process for members for an independent committee which will lead the review.

Anticipated Question:
- When will the review be established and get underway?
- Is this review simply going to be a cost-cutting exercise? Clearly Memorial can’t absorb more reductions without seriously impacting programs.

Key Messages:
- This is an important piece of work which builds on the comprehensive review of the K-12 education system and our Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes.
- We look forward to hearing the input from the university and college communities on the drafting of a Terms of Reference which will be finalized later this fall once that input has been received.
- The Terms of Reference will guide the work of the Independent committee. The report of the independent committee is due to government in Winter 2020.

Secondary Messages:
- Among other pieces of work, the independent review will be informed by College of the North Atlantic’s Modernization Plan, Memorial University’s Governance Review, the Industry development plans that were created as part of The Way Forward and ongoing work of the Council of Higher Education.
- It has been 14 years since a review has been completed and a review is certainly timely. There have been changes in our economy, in our demographics and changes at our post-secondary institutions. The review will help ensure our institutions are well-positioned to meet the needs of students well into the future, address emerging labour market demands, and continue to contribute to the province’s economic growth.

Background
• Memorial University is being provided $366 million, which includes $55 million for the Faculty of Medicine. Government continues to provide approximately 80 per cent of Memorial University’s general operating revenues. The Canadian average is about 47 per cent. This is a public investment of over $22,000 per full-time student.
• College of the North Atlantic is being provided $87.6 million for its 17 campuses.
• To maintain tuition levels for Newfoundland and Labrador students, $73.1 million was allocated in Budget 2018. This includes an additional $4 million to Memorial University this year and $1.1 million to College of the North Atlantic this year, to enable the continuation of current tuition levels for Newfoundland and Labrador students.

Prepared by: Literacy and Institutional Services/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour  
Program Reduction – Grenfell Campus, Memorial University 
October, 2018

Summary:

- Memorial University has suspended the education program at Grenfell Campus due to budget reductions and declining enrolment.
- The Dean of the Faculty has said they will take a year to determine other options for offering the program. Students currently enrolled will complete the program however there will be no further intake of new students.

Anticipated Questions:

- Are you concerned that reductions by government to MUN’s budget are having a detrimental impact on programming?
- Why are you allowing such cuts to occur prior to the review of the post-secondary education system?

Key Messages:

- Memorial University has autonomy over its programming and can speak to how it is managing its budget and any anticipated impacts.
- As with core government and all ABCs in the province, Memorial has been working to reduce spending and find efficiencies.
- Among other pieces of work, the independent review will be informed by Memorial University’s Governance Review, College of the North Atlantic’s Modernization Plan, the industry development plans that were created as part of The Way Forward and ongoing work of the Council of Higher Education.

Secondary Messages

- Our government is proud to provide approximately 80 per cent of Memorial’s general operating revenues, compared to the Canadian average of about 47 per cent. That works out to be a public investment of over $22,000 per full-time student. (based on 2016/17 Statistics Canada data).
- Government continues to support Memorial, allocating a total of $366 million this year. This is more than New Brunswick provides for its four universities, and almost as much as Nova Scotia provides all 10 of its universities.

Prepared by: Communications/Literacy and Institutional Services Divisions  
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour  
Child and Youth Advocate Report  
October, 2018

Summary:
- In spring 2018 the Child and Youth Advocate released "Making Waves - Ensuring Children Benefit from Child Support Payments". The report deals with the practice of recovering child support payments from Income Support benefits.

Anticipated Questions:
- You committed to having a review done on this issue. What is the status of that review? Will the department implement the recommendation of the Child and Youth Advocate to eliminate this practice immediately?

Key Messages:
- This is a very important issue and one that I identified for review. I directed staff to conduct a review of the current policy and this review is ongoing.

- The review and analysis will be completed to inform the budget process for next year.

- I thank the Child and Youth Advocate for this thoughtful and well researched report which will inform the department's work on this policy.

Secondary Messages:
- Income Support is meant to be a last resort for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with no other means of financial support.

- The Department works to support families, and particularly single parents, in a number of ways. Newfoundland and Labrador was a leader in exempting federal child benefits, as a way to increase financial security for children in the 1990s.

- The Department also works with single parents to increase self-reliance and reduce dependence through the provision of the Earned Income Supplement, where single parents in receipt of Income Support can retain a greater portion of working income each month.

Prepared by: Income Support/Communications Division

Approved by: DM/Minister
KEY MESSAGES

Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Emergency Accommodation Costs
October, 2018

Summary:

- In June, 2018, CBC carried a story on the cost of emergency accommodations, noting that an individual was paid $720,000 last fiscal year to provide the service. The information on payment was released by the department’s ATIPP coordinator as part of an informal access to information request. Each year, the department has assisted several hundred homeless individuals by securing short-term emergency accommodations and paying the cost, at approximately $3.6 million.
- As part of the Housing First approach, announced on February 21, 2018, the provision of emergency accommodations for homeless individuals transferred from Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to NLHC, effective June 11, 2018.

Anticipated questions:

- The cost of emergency shelters seems very high. Is this the best way to handle this type of housing?
- Is this a good use of government funding? Do you think government is being gouged by some landlords?

Key Messages:

- The purpose of emergency accommodations is to ensure individuals in need have a place to stay until they can move into permanent accommodations. It is difficult to put a price tag on ensuring people are not left on the street.
- An individual’s needs are assessed and we provide the most appropriate response from a variety of options available. When necessary, short-term accommodations are provided by various non-profit organizations or individuals.
- All programs and services related to housing, which includes emergency accommodation services, have been moved to NLHC as part of the Housing First approach. This change was announced in February 2018, and was effective June 2018.

Secondary messages:

- Government recognizes the need to promote housing stability and address gaps in services.
- To this end, in February 2018 a Housing First approach was announced, along with several other initiatives, to help prevent and end homelessness. This approach is essential to improve housing stability and client outcomes and reduce demand for costly emergency response services.
- The transfer of the coordination of emergency accommodations to NLHC is an important step to improve the coordination of services for individuals who experience homelessness and will help strengthen efforts to assist individuals in accessing more affordable and stable housing.

Prepared by: Income Support/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Application Delays/Wait Times
October, 2018

Summary:
- The Official Opposition has raised questions in the past on wait times for application processing and increasing capacity for Foreign Qualification Recognition.

Anticipated Questions:
- We highlighted here in this House last year that government is failing on processing applications and is not using funding to attract immigrants effectively. Will the Minister provide the latest information on wait times and allocation of funding?

Key Messages:
- As intended, we are building capacity and improving application times through our immigration action plan. Over $548,000 to date is supporting projects to build Foreign Qualification Recognition.

- Application processing times for both the Atlantic Immigration Program and the Provincial Nominee Program are down between 28 and 35 per cent from 2017.

- 2017 represents the highest number of immigration applications supported through provincial immigration programs ever in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Secondary messages:
- We have completed three Expressions of Interest and as a result are funding projects through organizations such as the Association for New Canadians, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses, the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals, and the federation des francophones, among others.

- Applications for the Provincial Nominee Program are employer-driven. The number of applications received is driven by economic conditions and employers’ needs at a particular time.

- We continue to work with employers to raise awareness of the Provincial Nominee Program and have begun the necessary work to streamline the application process, as committed in The Way Forward on Immigration.

Prepared by: OIM/Communications Division
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program Numbers
October 25, 2018

Summary:
• It has been reported that Newfoundland and Labrador is not meeting its targets under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, which was launch in March 2017. This province has an annual allocation of 442 spaces in the program.

Anticipated Questions:
• Why are you not meeting your targets under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program?
• Does this mean your much talked about immigration action plan is a failure?

Key Messages:
• 2017 represents the highest number of immigration applications supported through provincial immigration programs ever in Newfoundland and Labrador.

• Since January 2018 there has been a significant increase in uptake – in fact, we have seen a 25 per cent increase over the total number of applications received and approved in 2017.

• Since January 2018, we have assisted 314 workers and 396 family members to become permanent residents in NL, an increase of 22 per cent compared to the same time period in 2017.

Secondary Messages:
• We are pleased with success to date – nearly 50 per cent of employers who registered for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program since 2017 used immigration programs for the first time to address their labour shortages.

• Provincial officials continue to promote the program through partnerships with the federal government, chambers of commerce, industry and community organizations.

• Overall, since January 2017, the Department has supported 695 individuals and 847 family members toward permanent residency in the province, of which 303 individuals and 398 family members came through the program.

Prepared by: OIM/Communications Divisions, AESL
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Immigration Action Plan Progress
October 26, 2018

Summary:

- On March 24, 2017, Government released The Way Forward on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador which outlined specific actions to increase immigration by 50 per cent by 2022 by welcoming approximately 1,700 newcomers to the province each year.

Anticipated questions:

- What progress are you making on implementing your immigration action plan?
- Have the number of newcomers to the province increased since the plan was launched in 2017?

Key messages:

- We are making great progress on increasing the number of newcomers to the province. 2017 represents the highest ever number of individuals supported with a 20 per cent increase over the previous year.

- Since January 2018, we supported 25 per cent more immigration applications, compared to the same time period in 2017.

- In 2017, we nominated 547 persons under the NLPNP (258 principal applicants), and 285 persons under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) program (123 principal applicants), for a total of 832 individuals.

Secondary messages:

- We have been aggressively implementing the actions outlined in our plan in partnership with stakeholders, including employers, with 25 of 39 actions implemented or ongoing.

- Most recently, as announced earlier this summer, we fulfilled our commitment to add a dedicated stream for immigrant entrepreneurs with the addition of two new categories under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program – International Graduate Entrepreneur and International Entrepreneur. This will make it easier for more newcomers to establish businesses and create jobs in the province. The new categories will launch in November 2018.
Prepared by: OIM/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
New NL PNP Categories
October, 2018

Summary:

• On July 30, 2018, the Department announced new immigration categories – International Graduate Entrepreneur and International Entrepreneur – under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program, a commitment of The Way Forward on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador.

• Required changes to the Corporations Act to accommodate the new categories were passed in May, 2018 (Bill 18), with the changes to come into force on a day to be proclaimed by the LGC. To coincide with the proclamation, the new categories will officially be launched and information and applications available online. Section 27.1(1)(i) and 27.2(a)

Anticipated questions:

• Since announcing the new categories in July, how many applications have you received from potential international graduate entrepreneurs and international entrepreneurs? Why is it taking so long to get the new categories up and running?

Key messages:

• We are very excited about the new categories and have received very positive feedback.

• In the coming weeks, Bill 18, the amendments passed in May to the Corporations Act will be proclaimed and at that time the new categories will be officially launched.

• By bringing in the new categories we are making it easier for newcomers to establish businesses and create jobs and we are providing an opportunity for them to stay here and put their talent to work to grow the province’s economy.

Secondary messages:

• The department has been working to prepare materials, applications and information for those interested in applying under the new categories which will be ready for the official launch to coincide with the proclamation of Bill 18.

Prepared by: Immigration and Multiculturalism/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister
Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Retention - Vital Signs Report
October, 2018

Summary:

- Memorial’s Harris Centre’s Vital Signs report, released on October 10, notes that the province’s total population in 2016 was still higher than in 2011 but there is a trend of outmigration due to an aging population and low birth rates. In media interviews, officials with the Harris Centre noted the importance of immigration in addressing population decline, saying while the province is seeing an increase in the number of immigrants, efforts to increase attraction and retention have to continue.

Anticipated questions:

- What are you doing to attract more immigrants to the province and more importantly, keep them here? What evidence do you have that the immigration action plan is working?

Key messages:

- The Vital Signs report highlights an issue we have identified and are working to address through our immigration action plan, launched just a year and a half ago.

- In two short years, we have made great progress increasing Immigration. Applications between January and October of this year under both the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program have increased by 30 per cent to date over the same period in 2017.

- At the same time, building a sense of community and belonging for newcomers is critical to long-term retention. To that end, we are increasing services for newcomers to improve retention rates, focusing to date on creating inclusive communities, culturally sensitive services and workplaces, celebrating diversity, and supporting labour market and social integration.

Secondary messages:

- We are making progress through partnerships with various community organizations to enhance services for newcomers, such as the introduction of a regional Welcoming Communities Pilot Program in partnership with MNL, to help address barriers to community participation and integration.

- The Minister’s Roundtable on Immigration, created earlier this year, includes membership by diverse organizations serving and comprising newcomers to the
province – these members continue to feed their input and ideas on how to increase newcomer attraction and retention in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- Our Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (OIM) continues to meet individually with newcomers and organizations representing diverse cultural communities, as well as with municipal and federal representatives such as the St. John’s Local Immigration Partnership, on an ongoing basis, to learn how we can further support newcomers.

- Since April 2018, we have had productive discussions on a number of occasions with international students at Memorial University as well as with the Refugee Immigration Advisory Council, Association for New Canadians, Multicultural Women’s Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador, African-Canadian Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Chinese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Jewish Havura, Sharing Our Cultures.

Prepared by: OIM/Communications Divisions
Approved by: DM/Minister