

## **May 28, 2014 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS Vol. XLVII No. 34**

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman):** Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we start proceedings today I want to acknowledge some special guests that we have with us. In the Speaker's gallery we have Dr. Lawrence Newhook with his wife Judy. They are from Meadville, Pennsylvania.

They are accompanied today by Lawrence's son, Dr. Timothy Newhook and his wife Dr. Alexandra Newhook. They are from Virginia. They are going to be visiting the William Henry Newhook Memorial Clinic in Whitbourne, which is named after Dr. Newhook.

Welcome to Newfoundland and Labrador and welcome to the gallery.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think we will hear a little more about their visit from the Premier in a few moments.

I am also very pleased today to welcome to the public galleries Ms Cyrilda Poirier – and I apologize for the mispronunciation if that is the case. Cyrilda is the President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Francophonie Federation. We will learn a little more about the federation in a few moments as well from the minister.

Welcome to the gallery.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** Her French will be much better than mine.

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**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MS SULLIVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to inform my colleagues that May 30 is Provincial Francophonie Day.

Mr. Speaker, in 1999, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador declared May 30 Provincial Francophonie Day. May 30 is a very symbolic date for the Francophone and Acadian community in

Newfoundland and Labrador. It was on this date in 1987 that the first sod was turned on the site of the future Sainte-Anne School and Community Centre at Mainland on the Port au Port peninsula, which, of course, is the traditional heart of the Province's French-speaking community.

Depuis cette date, Monsieur le Président, les Francophones, les Acadiens et leurs nombreux amis et partenaires, y compris le gouvernement de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, se réunissent tous les 30 mai pour lever le drapeau franco-terre-neuvien-et-labradorien qui exprime l'esprit et la ténacité de la communauté.

Our government will continue its long-standing tradition of partnering with the Francophone Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador to mark Provincial Francophonie Day with a flag-raising ceremony just outside of these doors. My colleague, the Member for Port au Port, and the only Francophone member of the House of Assembly, will represent the provincial government at this event and will help raise the flag outside of Confederation Building.

Monsieur le Président, les élèves de l'école Francophone locale, l'École des Grands-Vents, montreront leur fierté communautaire en faisant flotter de petits drapeaux et en se joignant à la chorale Francophone, La Rose des Vents, pour chanter Ô Canada et l'hymne de Terre-Neuve.

Last year, our government proudly signed a five-year federal-provincial agreement on the delivery of French language services; recognized the late Emile Benoit, a well-known musician and storyteller from the Port au Port peninsula as a Person of Provincial Significance within the Provincial Historic Commemorations Program; and financially supported Festival Jeunesse de l'Acadie – a Francophone youth project held in Mainland on the Port au Port peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating the Francophone and Acadian community of Newfoundland and Labrador for its role in contributing to the tapestry of our Province's cultural diversity. We can all be proud to be part of our Province's past, present, and exciting future.

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. We, too, join the government in celebrating Francophonie Day. Despite the small and scattered Francophone population in our Province, we recognize that almost 25,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians speak both of our official languages and that more and more children are opting for French Immersion. We must strive to make these opportunities more readily available.

The French Shore Historical Society of Conche, in my district, has a 225-foot tapestry of Jacobean linen that depicts the history of le Petite Nord. Through assistance from the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, they are commemorating the Treaty of Utrecht, signed 300 years ago, and will travel the Province to places like Plaisance and Port au Port. The Port au Port peninsula has a rich French and Acadian history and culture, and I strive and encourage people to visit and look at the contributions made by the late Emile Benoit.

The Official Languages Act of 1969 really coincided with the collective rebirth of interest in French heritage and since then, we have seen a lot of organizations stage the socio-cultural projects for the promotion of their identity and language.

Fédération des Francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador does a great job of promoting activities of the Francophone community on a provincial scale.  
Félicitations!

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. I am always pleased to celebrate Provincial Francophonie Day. It is important that we recognize all the cultures that are part of the history of Newfoundland and Labrador because for so long, we did not do so.

When I was a teacher of French, I was a member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on French in the school system for then Education Minister Gerry Ottenheimer, and at that time there was one Francophone member from the Port au Port peninsula on that committee. We are so far ahead of where we were at that time, Mr. Speaker.

Il me donne beaucoup de plaisir de dire félicitations à toutes les personnes de la langue française dans notre Province. Merci, and congratulations to all members of the Francophone community.