

November 4, 2019

The Honourable Christopher Mitchelmore
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour

Dear Minister Mitchelmore:

I look forward to continuing to work with you in your role as Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. As you move forward in your work, I am confident that you will support Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to obtain the skills and advanced education they need to find and keep gainful employment in our province, to deliver a responsive Income Support program to residents throughout our province, to enable a high quality public post-secondary education system, and to increase immigration to our province. Your department is vital to ensuring that people who make their home in Newfoundland and Labrador have the tools they need to succeed, and that businesses operating in our province can find the workforce talent needed to grow.

We received a mandate from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue on the course we have set out, in collaboration and cooperation with all members of our House of Assembly. We are committed to working together to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. We are building on the work advanced as part of our plan for sustainability and growth, The Way Forward. Moving into the next four years, we remain focused on growing the economy while ensuring fiscal sustainability in a balanced and thoughtful manner. We envision a better economy, healthier people, better living and a bright future. To deliver on this plan, below are some of the activities I am asking you to lead:

Post-Secondary Education

- Supporting an accessible and affordable public post-secondary education system;
- Working in partnership with industry, post-secondary institutions and your Cabinet colleagues to establish economic development hubs in priority sectors central to our Way Forward plan that will serve as Strategic Hubs for priority skills training. These hubs are to be established in aquaculture, tourism, mining, technology and aerospace;
- Launching a new Adult Literacy Plan for the province;

- Working with the federal government, as well as leaders at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic, to improve public post-secondary infrastructure;
- Receiving the results and recommendations of the Committee of Experts for the independent review of the public post-secondary system in Newfoundland and Labrador, and providing input on next steps once the final report is received; and,
- Building innovation and flexibility in the province's apprenticeship system through increased harmonization and better access to online training and services.

Workforce Development

- Launching *The Way Forward on Workforce Development*, which will include dedicated staffing resources to work with the K-12 school system to provide relevant career-development supports and sector-specific labour market information products for inclusion in the new career education curricula;
- Fostering innovative approaches to workforce development, future skills development and labour market attachment by supporting industry and community-led initiatives through the province's Workforce Innovation Centre; and,
- Providing workforce adjustment and training supports, as required, to assist individuals affected by changes in industry and the workplace through allocation of funding supports under the Labour Market Development Agreement.

Income and Employment Support Services

- Working on a program to provide bus passes to income support clients in the St. John's/Metro region through a partnership with Metrobus, the City of St. John's and the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development;
- Enhancing program integrity measures under the Income Support program by increasing the frequency of client file reviews;
- Implementing **Income and Employment Support Regulations** changes related to the exemption of child support payments and Canada Pension Plan children's benefits, in conjunction with the Support Enforcement Division of the Department of Justice and Public Safety;
- Providing opportunities for Income Support clients with moderate barriers to employment to transition into the workforce and achieve full attachment or re-attachment;
- Reviewing program and service delivery models for Income Support and employment and training programs to ensure continuous improvement;
- Reviewing expansion of Employment Assistance Services in the province to inform the potential for further expansion;
- Implementing the new Employment Enhancement Program to support employers in the forestry, aquaculture, agriculture, and fishing sectors who are engaged in value-added secondary processing by providing wage subsidies and training allowances to create sustainable, long-term employment or seasonal employment;
- Building on the success of the Student Mentorship Program by offering summer career development opportunities in the agriculture, aquaculture, technology, forestry, mining, community, and oil and gas sectors; and,
- Delivering the Youth and Student Services Program to support initiatives such as career fairs and youth employment initiatives.

Immigration

- Implementing our Government's action plan to increase immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador by 50 per cent by 2022, which includes a strong focus on newcomer retention, assisting migrant workers and international graduates to become permanent residents, engaging employers in facilitating workplace-based language training, introducing empowerment-focused employment initiatives for newcomer women, and promoting international entrepreneurship.

Minimum Wage

- Engaging with employer and employee stakeholders and monitoring the process for annual increases to the minimum wage to ensure our minimum wage remains responsive and comparable to other jurisdictions across Canada.

Tremendous progress has been made in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the work we have undertaken with our industry, cultural and community partners. These partnerships have enabled us to strengthen our resource industries and knowledge-based sectors, modernize health and social supports, and focus on improving educational outcomes for our youngest residents. However, our work does not stop there; we still have much work ahead of us to create a better economy, improve the health outcomes of residents, strengthen living conditions, and ultimately give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a brighter future.

In addition to the items outlined above, our Cabinet is also collectively responsible for delivering on all of the commitments and targets set out in The Way Forward. Achieving these actions is critical to attaining inclusive growth, improving employment levels and creating the conditions necessary for job creation, reducing poverty, improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in our province, and realizing financial sustainability. It is essential that we work together to consider the health impacts of all our decisions as part of our Health in All Policies commitment.

I expect you to continue to be collaborative, open, accountable and transparent as you implement your duties. We will continue to use evidence, research, gender-based analysis plus, and engage with the public, stakeholders and our Indigenous partners, to inform our decisions. We are focused on service excellence and will continue to respond to the needs of the people of this great province.

In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister, I expect you to continue to show collaboration in a positive and constructive manner with your Cabinet colleagues and our peers in the House of Assembly.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are counting on us to make progress. We will continue to report publicly on our activities on our Way Forward website. Together, we will improve health, social and economic outcomes, and deliver high quality services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our future is bright and together we can make our beautiful, rich and diverse province an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL
Premier