



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2013

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2013

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

[The First Session of the 62nd General Assembly was opened with historic ceremony on a cool, sunny day.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable J.J. Grant, preceded by his escorts and aides and by Mr. Ken Greenham, Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, entered the House of Assembly Chamber. The Lieutenant Governor then took his seat on the Throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then departed and re-entered the Chamber followed by the Speaker, the Honourable Kevin Murphy; the Chief Clerk of the House, Neil Ferguson; and the Assistant Clerk, Annette Boucher.

The Speaker, with the Sergeant-at-Arms on his right and the Clerks on either side, took up his position at the foot of the Table of the House.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, that the ladies and gentlemen be seated.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you to the First Session of the 62nd General Assembly of the Nova Scotia Legislature.

For some of you, it's a "Welcome back." For others, this is one of the first opportunities you've had to take your place in this Chamber.

For all, it is an occasion to be proud of, an occasion to be enjoyed by you, your families, and those who worked so diligently in your name. Congratulations and best wishes.

The 2013 Provincial Election

In October of 2013, Nova Scotians voted for change. Government is deeply aware of the confidence that has been placed in its program for change, and will work with unwavering purpose to achieve and implement its plan on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

Elections are a fundamental element of a proud and mature democracy, and the willingness of so many citizens to engage in the public affairs of our province is a source of confidence and optimism in Nova Scotia's future.

However, the reluctance of many others to participate in the electoral process is a source of real concern.

During the course of my government's mandate, steps will be taken to address this erosion in voter participation. These steps will be based on engaging with Nova Scotians in a discussion about our electoral process.

In keeping with that goal, government understands the need to strive for a collegial and co-operative tone in the Legislative Assembly. It is important for all members to remember that initiatives should not be rejected solely on the basis of source. Of course, vigorous and informed debate is both expected and desired.

In essence, my government believes that open and decorous debate will contribute to enhanced public trust in the Legislative Assembly. In turn, my government is confident that such constructive debates will be an important contributing factor for increasing the participation of Nova Scotians in the electoral process.

Government's Strategic Priorities

My government believes in the determination and optimism of Nova Scotians. Therefore, my government will provide strong, clear leadership and a path forward that will be built upon the idea of harnessing the potential of our province and its people.

Nova Scotians are working hard - to create jobs, to find solutions, to make life better in their own communities. But for too long, the day-to-day priorities of Nova Scotians have been neglected in many areas of our province's affairs.

My government will seek to redefine its role and relationship with Nova Scotians, and it will do so by always placing the needs and aspirations of citizens at the foundation of its decision-making.

The following priorities will guide my government:

Within government's statutory authority over the provision of electricity, specific steps will be taken to ensure true consumer choice and fairness.

The needs of Nova Scotia's entrepreneurs will be met through appropriate forms of assistance, and there will be enhanced support for employee training and skills development.

A re-investment in our school system will ensure that every student and educator has access to the classroom supports and modern educational curriculum required to excel in a rapidly changing world.

Health care will be realigned to place the needs of patients, families, and individuals first.

Investments will be made in our communities so that seniors, people with disabilities, and those in need, get the services and care they require.

This realignment of government's underlying strategic priorities will require a great deal of thought, effort, and deliberate action.

In pursuit of these strategic objectives, my government will rely on the lessons of the past and the hard-won successes that have guided us through our long and distinguished history as a province.

Matters of Recognition

In keeping with that sentiment, I want to recognize the valued contributions of a number of Nova Scotians who have passed since I last had the opportunity to address this Chamber.

Builders and entrepreneurs Ben McCrea and James Philip Dumaresq - their impacts on the skylines, streetscapes, and economy of our province continue to this day.

Artists Dr. Alex Colville and Rita MacNeil, two of Nova Scotia's most distinguished and celebrated cultural icons - while their canvases were distinct, their individual works tugged at our very identity and shaped how the world saw us and how we saw the world.

Public servants Rose Marie Abraham, Dr. J. Clair Callaghan, Bertha Mantley, Dr. Vincent Audain, and the Hon. Malachi Jones - their lives and careers were dedicated to improving the well-being of our institutions, our communities, and our people.

Civil rights champion and social activist Dr. Burnley (Rocky) Jones - like no other, he lent his voice to those who could not be heard, and sought justice for those long deprived.

Legislator and journalist the Hon. Jane Purves - a candid and passionate member of this House, she courageously and publicly fought her own personal battles and those of her constituents. Jane always spoke honestly and openly with the public interest at heart, even when she knew it wouldn't be popular.

This was a group of remarkable Nova Scotians. Their passing is a matter of great sadness; yet simultaneously, the memory of their contributions -the legacies they have left to our province - will be a source of enduring pride for all of us. Each understood the capacity and promise of change, and that is the perspective we must embrace and maintain as we navigate this province's fundamental shift in direction.

Respect for Nova Scotians

Our country was founded as a strong and vibrant liberal democracy. It is a history that makes us all proud, especially here in Nova Scotia - one of the first four provinces to join Confederation.

However, we must keep pace with the expectations of citizens, and institutions must evolve in tandem with legitimate expectations. Transparency and accountability are pillars of our democracy; both must be continually protected and improved.

This is why my government will:

- immediately begin a full and independent review of MLA salaries and benefits, pensions, living allowances, and other expenses;
- enact legislation to increase transparency with regard to economic development assistance;
- ensure through legislative change that taxpayers' dollars are protected from partisan advertising and politically motivated signage

Fairness in Power Rates and Energy Policy

Over the last 10 years, electricity rates in our province have climbed by nearly 30 per cent - households and businesses have been hurt by this trend, while the power monopoly has profited.

My government has already taken steps to address some of the fundamental flaws in the Maritime Link agreement and shifted responsibility and risk to where they justifiably belong.

Additionally, my government's first piece of legislation will be the Electricity Reform Act - a bill that will permit consumer choice and competition while laying the groundwork for consultation with Nova Scotians on our energy future.

Upon the passage of this legislation, Nova Scotians will be offered greater choice among power providers. This will allow local providers of renewable electricity to compete with Nova Scotia Power and sell directly to customers. Compelling regulated power companies to compete for your business is a solution that puts Nova Scotians first.

My government's plans for reforming the electricity market were borne out of discussions and consultations that took place in communities across Nova Scotia. As we move toward implementing those plans, we will once again be seeking input from the people of the province.

My government will involve the public and experts on what our energy future will look like - and how we can best organize ourselves to take advantage of it. As our province continues its commitment to move toward cleaner and innovative energy sources, we know it is imperative that Nova Scotians are able to voice their concerns and have them addressed frankly and honestly. For instance, the practice of hydraulic fracturing is a huge concern for Nova Scotians.

That's why there is a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in the province while the independent review is underway. This review, led by Dr. David Wheeler and a panel of experts, will help determine whether the practice can be done safely given Nova Scotia's geology. During this legislative session, my government will also introduce legislation banning the importation of fracked waste water into our province.

Another important element of our energy and economic future is the activity taking place in our offshore. Our government will continue to invest in geoscience research. We will also ensure that this information is made available to companies so that they have the information needed to assess the opportunities available in our offshore.

An Economy Built on Putting Nova Scotians First

There is no doubt that the last recession took its toll on jurisdictions throughout Canada and the world. Of course, Nova Scotia was not exempt from these global pressures and, like many other areas of Canada and the world, our province has been slow to recover from the recession's impacts.

In fact, recent economic data has clearly outlined the challenge that now faces government:

- Our province has shed 3,000 full-time jobs in the last year, while trailing every other province in the country in terms of economic growth for two decades;
- Federal transfers are not keeping pace with changing demands and demographic shifts; and
- Our population is facing further decline which, in turn, is placing further pressure on programs and services.

These realities underline the need for change. A fundamental change will require my government to direct more of its economic attention toward small- and medium-sized Nova Scotia business.

In the past, too much emphasis was placed in too few areas, and our collective economic strength diminished in the process.

Instead, my government will refocus its attention on small businesses - offering supports and incentives to help them grow their operations. For example, term loan guarantees under the Credit Union Small Business Loan Program will increase from 75 per cent to 90 per cent.

My government fully understands that businesses must be able to prosper in Nova Scotia, but not at the expense of Nova Scotians. Therefore, while working with businesses my government will attach job guarantees to repayable loans and keep processes transparent through public reporting. Legislation will be introduced by our government in the coming days that will greatly improve the transparency and accountability of Nova Scotia's economic assistance programs.

Beyond transparency, our government is working to create a competitive economic environment focused on growing good, sustainable jobs. My government realizes it cannot solve this alone, but it can lead the way forward with a new vision of economic innovation: harnessing research, maximizing comparative advantages, eliminating barriers to competitiveness, expanding apprenticeship opportunities that will

keep our skilled workers in Nova Scotia and, finally, getting government out of the way of business.

There are areas, however, where government must and will play a key role. My government will continue to take steps to ensure that Nova Scotians return home to their families safely at the end of the work day. We will hire more workplace safety inspectors and, because safety is a shared responsibility, we will work with industry to ensure officers are visiting more high-risk workplaces and enforcing safety regulations.

Business operators should be able to focus on growing their business, employing Nova Scotians, and giving back to their communities. With this in mind, changes to bring balance and responsibility to first contract arbitration will be brought forward in this session.

My government will create a fair and competitive environment for business by engaging in a responsible and comprehensive review of taxes, regulations, and fees, guided by the principles of simplicity and fairness. All regulations will be tested for their efficiency and effectiveness. Regulations that protect Nova Scotians will be strengthened; wasteful and redundant regulations will be eliminated. The development of that broad review has commenced, and we will formulate a plan to simplify our regulatory regime -and leave as much money with Nova Scotians as possible.

Fiscal Responsibility

Within itself, government is fully cognizant of the need to restore fiscal balance to its own affairs.

Across government, a 1 per cent target for expenditure reduction has been set and a great deal of work is currently underway to identify appropriate areas for increased efficiency.

Government remains mindful of its duty and obligation to support Nova Scotians in need. Therefore, government will maintain fiscal discipline without further burdening our most vulnerable citizens or a new generation of Nova Scotians engaged in study. To that end, the provision of health care and education has been exempted from this process.

A true and accurate update on where our province stands financially will be delivered to Nova Scotians in mid-December. My government will then implement a fiscally responsible plan to deliver a balanced budget prudently.

Our province is witnessing a population loss like we have never before experienced. We must reverse this trend. Our province needs talented and capable individuals if we are to have a healthy economy and improve the provincial finances.

In our province newcomers have played an important role in developing our economy, and our government wants to continue to welcome newcomers to communities from one end of the province to the other.

That is why my government will create the Premier's Immigration Advisory Council, which will be made up of immigrants to Nova Scotia who have experienced the strengths and weaknesses of our immigration system. The council will bring forward concerns on immigration issues, and propose solutions to improve Nova Scotia's attraction and retention of immigrants.

The Council will also help lead my government's efforts in seeking the changes required to carve out our own future when it comes to immigration. Nova Scotia must be an active partner in national discussions and our government will engage on two fronts - building strong relationships with provinces and enhancing our collaboration with the federal government.

Our Future is Educated

If Nova Scotians are to be put first, my government needs a bold vision for education.

There has not been a comprehensive curriculum review in this province for 25 years. My government will undertake a full review with a blue ribbon panel of experts to find out what is working and what isn't. The world has changed significantly in the past 25 years, and our education system must adapt. Students need to earn achievements, see the value of their efforts, and be taught by teachers who can focus on teaching.

In addition, my government is reaffirming its commitment to restore the funding removed from public education over the last four years. It will take time and deliberate action to undo the damage done by decisions of the past, but we know that educational dollars achieve some of the best return on investment of any expenditure government can make. That commitment goes beyond Grade Primary - this is why my government is investing in Early Intervention Programs. Ensuring that every child begins their public school career with the foundation for learning already in place is critical to their progress through the school system.

Improving Health Care Through Improving the System

For too many years, our health care system has been neglected. My government will begin to develop solutions so all Nova Scotians get the care they need, when they need it. My government will do what it takes so that our health care system puts patients first.

My government will improve community-based decision making by streamlining administration so Nova Scotians can access treatment faster. My government will address

wait times by reinvesting in front-line health care, by reducing the number of CEOs and vice-presidents, and by reducing the district health authorities from ten to two. This transformative process will not happen overnight, nor will it occur without the valuable input of all those involved in our health care system. Administrators, front-line workers, patients, volunteers, advocates, and communities will have their voices heard.

Nova Scotians need better access to programs, services, and a variety of health care professionals to prevent and manage chronic diseases like arthritis and diabetes. Hospital admissions can thus be reduced, and when patients do end up in hospitals, we need to make sure they return home as quickly as possible.

Far too many Nova Scotians don't have access to a family physician, or primary care provider such as a nurse practitioner, leaving many without care and putting added strain on our emergency rooms. My government will provide up to \$120,000 in tuition relief to 25 new doctors per year for four years, in exchange for a five-year commitment to practice in underserved communities in Nova Scotia.

In addition, my government will immediately appoint an expert Physician Recruitment and Retention Action Team so that Nova Scotia is able to competitively recruit new doctors and keep the ones we have.

Supporting Our Seniors, Caring for Our Citizens

As our population ages there will be additional pressures on our health care system. My government will work with health care providers and Nova Scotians to turn our challenges into solutions. My government has begun work on evaluating, updating, and implementing the Continuing Care Strategy to ensure that it meets our long-term needs, both at home and in facilities where our senior population is cared for.

The increase in sexual assault and sexual violence in our province is a grave concern. Too often the organizations that work to address these issues have been asked to do far too much with too little. My government will develop a multi-year strategy that will provide services directly to victims but will also focus on prevention.

Our Communities

This government recognizes the importance of local communities in building a strong, viable province. We are committed to partnering with municipalities and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to advance the interests of Nova Scotians through the establishment and development of effective and sustainable municipal government. To that end we will engage in open and frank discussion regarding local governance issues, support continuation of existing provincial-municipal partnerships, and seek opportunities to work collaboratively on important municipal initiatives. The relationship between the

provincial government and our municipalities is one that must be repaired and strengthened if we are to meet our challenges head-on.

My government is also committed to the long-term health of our valuable, traditional natural resources, as we look forward to a future in which industries can be innovative and sustainable.

Our fisheries and agriculture industries are the backbone of rural economies and communities across the province. My government will work with partners in these important sectors to focus on their expansion and modernization through research and innovation, and to encourage Nova Scotians to buy local.

Transportation is a critical part of strengthening communities from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. My government is committed to continuing discussions with the federal government to extend twinning on Highway No. 103 and to complete Highway No. 101. We will also improve access to Burnside Industrial Park through the completion of the Burnside connector and remove the MV Miner, an environmental liability, from the Cape Breton coastline.

My government is expanding tourism opportunities by renewing our major trade and convention facilities, and restoring and enhancing our ferry connection to the United States.

Another vessel - the iconic Bluenose II - has been lovingly refurbished by Nova Scotia craftspeople to the highest standards of safety and quality. My government will join them in celebrating Bluenose II's return as Nova Scotia's sailing ambassador next spring as she helps to welcome the world to our shores.

Nova Scotians know how important culture is in our provincial identity. It is the heart and soul of a sustainable future. In partnership with the cultural community, my government will develop this province's first Culture Strategy, which will establish a new vision for culture in Nova Scotia. Together with the sector, we will identify ways that government, communities, and citizens can work together to preserve and enhance culture for the benefit of all

Strong, diverse, and vibrant communities are key to creating more opportunities for Nova Scotians to live, work, and raise their families here. My government is committed to a productive and respectful relationship with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. We look forward to working with Mi'kmaq leaders and communities to foster training and employment opportunities that will drive sustainable economic development in rural Nova Scotia.

My government will continue to champion diversity and social inclusion in the province by, for example, working with the Government of Canada on a new funding

agreement to support the planning and delivery of French-language services. This will ensure that Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians have access to important public services that enhance the quality of life for their communities.

We must make time to savour that quality of life and honour our cultural identity. That's why my government is respecting and acknowledging hard-working Nova Scotians by providing a statutory holiday in February to enjoy our beautiful province and spend time with loved ones.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR FALL 2013

During this First Session of the 62nd General Assembly, my government will bring forward a legislative agenda designed to put Nova Scotians first.

In the coming days, the following pieces of legislation will be introduced:

- An Act to Amend Chapter 155 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Executive Council Act; and Chapter 376 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Public Service Act.
- An Act to Ensure Accountability in Providing Economic Development Assistance in Nova Scotia.
- An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act.
- An Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 1996. The Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- An Act to Amend Chapter 475 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Trade Union Act.
- An Act to Establish a Holiday in February.
- An Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2004. The Electricity Act, Respecting the Sale of Renewable Electricity.
- An Act to Amend Chapter 376 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Public Service Act, Respecting the Office of Communications Nova Scotia.
- An Act to Ban the Importation of Hydraulic Fracturing Wastewater.

- An Act to Amend Chapter 244 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Justices of the Peace Act; and Chapter 238 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Provincial Court Act.

On October 8th, Nova Scotians voted for change and that change is underway. It means a new beginning for our province - a new beginning for all Nova Scotians.

Change begins with respecting Nova Scotians. Change begins with putting Nova Scotians first, from one end of the province to the other. Change begins with trust - our government's trust in its citizens and their trust in government.

My government will be diligent in its desire to bring governance back to the people. Elected representatives are the citizens' trustees, but that does not mean Nova Scotians should be excluded from the decision-making processes. Democracy can only thrive when citizens are included in governing our great province.

This begins with an open and accountable government. This begins with respecting Nova Scotians' tax dollars. This begins with creating a province where education and health care are recognized as requirements for societal well-being.

But none of this begins by leaving any Nova Scotian behind. Our government has started to implement the mandate for change that Nova Scotians asked for in October. Our government, with the help of all Nova Scotians, will continue that change.

God bless Nova Scotia.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

[The Speaker and Clerks left the Chamber.

The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber preceded by his escorts and aides and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Speaker took the Chair.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour, the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The honourable Attorney General.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill entitled An Act Respecting Oaths of Office.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to make a Speech to the members met in General Assembly, of which Speech, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy which the Chief Clerk will now read.

of which Speech, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy, which the Chief Clerk will now read.

THE CLERK: It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you to the First Session of the 62nd General Assembly of the Nova Scotia Legislature. For some of you it's a welcome back. For others this is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): While I enjoyed it, Mr. Speaker, I move the Speech from the Throne be taken as read.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the Speech from the Throne be taken as read.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the 62nd Session of the House of Assembly and move the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne as read by His Honour Brigadier-General, the Honourable J.J. Grant.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to stand here in this historic House before my colleagues representing the constituency of Lunenburg, located on Nova Scotia's beautiful South Shore.

I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your first official day presiding over the House of Assembly. I know you will maintain order and lead us through a productive session in the House. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to say thank you to the fine people of the Lunenburg constituency for electing me to represent them in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. I am humbled by their vote of confidence and I pledge to represent the people of Lunenburg to the best of my ability each and every day. My work experiences over the years helped me to acquire the leadership skills necessary for running for public office but I must give the greatest credit to my experiences as a volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, never underestimate the skills of a volunteer board, the enthusiasm of a sports coach, the kindness of a food bank worker, the power of a smile from a friendly visitor, or the perseverance of a home and school president. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the unwavering support of my husband Ken, my sons Daniel, Samuel and Jacob, my mother Audrey, and siblings Margaret, Christine, Phillip and Andrew throughout the nomination process, my candidacy, and the writ period. They not only kept me grounded but they lifted my spirits as only a family can do.

Mr. Speaker, I have another family that I wish to acknowledge today - my amazing campaign team family. This energetic and supportive group of individuals organized and implemented a most effective campaign to win the constituency with a mandate to keep the campaign clean and positive. I wish to extend my gratitude to these two families of mine for their dedication, work ethic and most importantly, the humour that sustained me throughout the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I can't begin to tell you how privileged I feel to be a member of the new Liberal Government. As His Honour mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, our new government will be focused on families, small businesses and local communities - the backbone of our province and my constituency. Our new government will be reinventing how government operates in a number of fundamental ways, always operating with the best interests of Nova Scotians as our number one priority and our guiding principle.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to tell you and my fellow MLAs about the constituency of Lunenburg. Lunenburg was first settled in 1753 by foreign Protestants of French and German descent during the reign of King George II. My ancestors were among those first settlers to the area some 260 years ago. Today the people of Lunenburg constituency continue to embrace its rich and unique heritage.

My constituency borders those of Chester-St. Margaret's, Lunenburg West, and Annapolis. It encompasses the lands between the Martins and LaHave Rivers, extends from the rocky coastline communities of Stonehurst, Blue Rocks, and River Port, and north to the rich forest lands beyond the village of New Germany.

Mr. Speaker, what I heard loud and clear during the campaign was that the most pressing issue in Lunenburg is roads, roads, and more roads. (Applause)

Many of my constituents travel on roads and bridges that were never designed for high traffic volume. Many in my constituency, and I'm sure all constituencies in the province, now more than ever require travel to outside their communities, sometimes commuting hundreds of kilometres each week just to go to work, not to mention medical appointments and purchasing groceries for their families. It is vital for citizens in rural areas to have safe and reliable roads. Our transportation infrastructure is the lifeline for many communities in my constituency. The new Liberal Government will work to ensure our rural areas continue to have the best possible infrastructure in place and will work to improve these vital links wherever possible.

For many generations Lunenburg has been known for its abundance of natural resources, known in the past for its fisheries, boat building, forestry, agriculture, and of course Christmas tree growing. However, Mr. Speaker, this is no longer the case. The closure of the fisheries, the lower demand for our forestry products, and the challenges in the farming industry have caused our youth to go elsewhere for education, training, and work. We know there are challenges ahead relating to our economy, our population, and educational opportunities for our youth. This is exactly why the new government will be investing in education while making smart investments in our economy and communities.

Mr. Speaker, our government's plan to reduce the size of health care administration so we can focus on our valuable health resources on front-line health care services is about delivering the world class health care service that Nova Scotians deserve. I am pleased that we will be increasing access to health care professionals such as nurses and family doctors. With an aging population in my constituency we will work hard to help seniors remain in their homes longer. I am ready to work with the people of Lunenburg, to be a strong voice in this House, and have a hand in creating a better Nova Scotia for today and generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to thank His Honour for the Throne Speech and with great pride and great confidence I move that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, as read by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, be accepted as read. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, it is also an honour for me to rise today and express my thanks to His Honour Brigadier-General, the Honourable J.J. Grant, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, for his inspiring words.

I am honoured to second the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is truly a privilege to stand before you and my colleagues from both sides of the House today in this historic Chamber. I rise today not just to second the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, but also as the voice of the people of Halifax Atlantic.

Halifax Atlantic is a riding that is not only my home but a community that has helped save my life. I wake up every day thankful to the people of this amazing community and fully aware of the enormous responsibility they have placed on me. I am proud to be from such a unique and diverse riding, a riding that is reflective of the hard work and big hearts that Nova Scotians have become known for worldwide.

I am the MLA for Halifax Atlantic, a riding that is made up of unique individuals from Spryfield to Herring Cove to Portuguese Cove, Ketch Harbour, Sambro, East and West Pennant, Williamswood, Harrietsfield, and Purcells Cove. I am also husband to Rena Maguire and the proud father of Oliver Finn Maguire, who is making all the noise. I am also going to get it on record that I love both of you. (Applause)

I would not be here today without the help of so many people along the way, people like my foster father - let me correct that, he is actually my father - Yves Campagna, and the late Ruby Campagna; Linda Wilson, who recognized something in that hyper, mohawked child at Phoenix House over 20 years ago and became a mother and someone I can trust; Charmaine Tanner, who stood beside me, guided me, and was a rock during the toughest years of my life; Ainslie McNeil Campbell, who has been beside me since I first came to Canada in 1979; and my in-laws, Ruphina and Gerald Moir, who welcomed me into their home with open arms.

There are so many people who are part of this, from Kelly Gnomes to Chris Hornberger, to Donna Macready, Martha Reynolds, and Kim Dunn, who all believed in me from the start; Jennifer Langille, Alonzo McNeil, Pat Blakie, Marion Brown, Sandy Thompson, Rob Morris, Darlene Fahie, Sarah Gragg - you are a superstar - the Hubley family, Stephen Fralick, Kristian LaPierre and the LaPierre family, Maggie Fougere, David Ley, Madeline Matheson, Trevor Arseneault, Heidi Musolino, Isabelle MacPherson, and Labi Kousoulis, who was the first one to show up at my nomination meeting - he told me I had to say that, by the way - and all 75 volunteers from my campaign who worked tirelessly night and day and who put up with me, which my wife can tell you is not an easy task. There are so many more to thank, and if I missed you, I truly am sorry.

I stand here today the man I am because of you. I stand here today, and will every day, promising to be a strong voice for my community, no matter their gender, race, or political affiliation. Life is difficult enough, and we, as MLAs, need to put our judgments aside and really listen to the people we represent, and to appreciate how lucky we all are to be in this position and never forget who we are and who we represent. (Applause)

Everyone in this House has a real opportunity to show people who have grown so cynical of government on all levels that government can do great things when everybody works together with the best interests of Nova Scotians in mind. I ask all of you today, whether you are Liberal, NDP, or Progressive Conservative, to work together, to listen to each other, and to recognize that our decisions affect the people of Nova Scotia. This responsibility should not be taken lightly - like education. We can all agree that we need a

strong, robust education system so that children of families such as James and Tracy Watts, Catherine and Scott Morrison, Nick and Michelle McAvoy, and Jason William and Sarah Scott's children have the resources at their fingertips to reach their full potential.

It is essential that we assess the quality of the curriculum that is being delivered and ensure that our students have the resources to succeed. It is time that we view our children as our most important resource and not just a budget line item. (Applause)

I believe a good idea is a good idea no matter which side of the House it comes from.

We need to be the role models that youth look up to today and tomorrow. I look forward to being part of a better Nova Scotia, and it is my honour today to second the motion that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne passes as read. Thank you. (Applause)

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to thank His Honour the Lieutenant Governor for his address to the House today, and for the work he's doing in service of all Nova Scotians.

Let me say right off the top, on behalf of those of us here in Opposition, I want to congratulate the Premier and the members of the Liberal Government on their victory in the most recent general election. I offer sincere congratulations to them for their work. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier's words outside this Chamber, that he wants to set a new and respectful tone of debate in the Legislature and I just want him to know, and everyone in his government to know, that on the Opposition side we accept that invitation and will return it in kind - it's time to set a new tone of debate in the House. (Applause)

We may be from different Parties - Liberal, PC, or NDP - but we are all part of the same family, the Nova Scotia family, and we ought to be guided by the way families talk and discuss issues at their own kitchen table or their own dining-room table. Although, when I think of the debates at my own family kitchen table, I'm not sure that's the right model - and I can say to the Premier that I can just imagine when he was growing up what the debates were like around his family table. (Applause)

If that's the model that he wishes to set, we absolutely will do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you, sir, on your election as our Speaker. It is a moment of history in our province. (Applause) We all want to live in a province where any Nova Scotian, where every Nova Scotian, can aspire to any office in the province, whether

it's the highest offices of Lieutenant Governor or Premier or Speaker, that no barrier should get in their way if their energy and their drive and their ambition can take them there - and you, Mr. Speaker, are an example of that for all Nova Scotians. (Applause)

I do also want to say that I quite enjoyed the maiden voyages, the maiden speeches of the mover, the member for Lunenburg, and the seconder, the member for Halifax Atlantic, of the Speech from the Throne here today. They are already showing the way for how we should conduct ourselves, speak to each other, here in the House of Assembly, and I thought that they did a fine job.

There are thank yous that I will start today, but time will prevent us from thanking everyone. But there are a few important thank yous that I do want to express on my own behalf and on behalf of the Official Opposition and, I am sure, of all members. As those 51 of us who sit here in the Chamber reflect on those who are there with us along the way on this journey that we're all on together, and first and foremost of course is our families - our wives, our husbands, our children - who get us to where we are. I just want to tell them that they bear a greater burden than we do here on the floor of the Legislature, and we recognize that. So let's all just take a moment, whether they are in the gallery or wherever they are, and reflect on the families that got us to where we are; they are our immediate family and part of the Nova Scotia family that I spoke of a moment ago. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne listed a number of Nova Scotians who had provided great service to our province, who we lost in the past year. Some of them I knew personally, all of the stories I do know. I won't go through them all, although I just want to add from the Opposition our sincere thanks to all of them.

With your permission, I do want to mention one just briefly - who was a member of this Chamber, who was a personal friend of mine - and that is Jane Purves, who I miss every day in this job and I know that many members do. I think for those who did not know Jane to look back on the kind of politician she was, it is a great guiding light for all of us as we go forward. I know I am not alone, but I miss her greatly.

Mr. Speaker, outside of our families, we all should reflect today on how thankful we are to our constituents, the people who actually directly send us to the House of Assembly. In my own case, the constituency of Cumberland South took me in when they didn't really know me very well three years ago and sent me here as their representative. I am so honoured that they did that. Over the last three years, I got to know them and they got to know me better. Despite that, they re-elected me in the most recent election with over 50 per cent of the vote. I cannot thank them enough.

For our families who see how hard it is here or in the newspapers or whatever, what they don't always see is the magic of being an MLA in your own constituency and helping people one or two or three at a time. That's what makes this job so special and for that, I

will always be grateful and will always do anything I can for the people of Cumberland South, and I am sure all members feel the same about their own constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank all of those candidates from all Parties who put their names on the ballots in the most recent election, who ran to serve their constituency and their province. There were some 180 Nova Scotians who participated as a candidate in the most recent provincial election. They all deserve our thanks.

It is said, Mr. Speaker, that the important thing is to stand up for what you believe in, to go along the journey. Of course, winning is the objective but it is the trial, the tribulation, the hardship that you go through when you run for office that really is important. I hope we all take a moment to send that message to those of all Parties who ran in the last election, whether they are here or not.

Now I will take a moment tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, to introduce the new members of the Progressive Conservative caucus to the House of Assembly, but just let me say to them that I am awfully grateful, along with the returning members, that they chose to continue to serve the people of the province and are here today. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, one final group of thank yous. In addition to family and our constituency and our fellow MLAs and candidates, of course, there are thousands of Nova Scotians who volunteered to work on election campaigns of all Parties, who believed in a cause, who believed in politics as something that was worth volunteering to do - to do without pay for many hours, night and day, before and during the election. They, too, deserve thanks.

I will just note, with your permission, sir, that in the gallery today is the president of the PC Party, a volunteer, Janet Fryday Dorey; and our campaign chair, Tara Erskine, from Halifax. They represent for us, and I am sure for all Parties, that spirit of volunteerism that ultimately makes our democracy work in the way that it does. I do want to say a special thank you to them as well. (Applause)

I'll just add one more quick one, Mr. Speaker. I see that our Auditor General, Mr. Lapointe, is in the gallery today. His term of service is coming to an end; he is retiring shortly. He did a great job. I've always said there should be more chartered accountants in politics so I'm sorry to see him go. On behalf of the Opposition I certainly want to express our best wishes to Mr. Lapointe in whatever endeavour he chooses to go into next after serving for eight years as our Auditor General. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me just say very quickly about today's Speech from the Throne, "We may have a new government sitting in the government benches, but there was nothing new from this government today . . ." Those are not my words; those are the words of the previous Leader of the Official Opposition and now our Premier, spoken and recorded in Hansard on Thursday, September 17, 2009, at the commencement of the NDP

Government. I say that because we did just go through an election campaign and Nova Scotians voted for real change and they deserve real change.

The problems that this province faces - whether it's high unemployment, whether it's the high cost of living, our taxes, our energy bills, whether it's so many young workers moving away and giving up hope of a future career or life in our province - those problems did not wait while we were all off campaigning. They are there today and the old ways don't work. Nova Scotians know that and they voted for change. The message I want to send across the aisle to the Premier and the government today is we are here to first and foremost make Nova Scotia a better place and to encourage the government to actually act, to govern, to change the way that Nova Scotia is run for the better.

I didn't see a lot new in the Throne Speech today, Mr. Speaker. It did not read a lot differently than the Throne Speeches of previous governments which promised nothing but more studies, more consultations, more tours around the province. We have a new government and they have a chance to actually act and make a difference, and when they do we will be there to support them when they actually make real change.

Mr. Speaker, we are very mindful of the fact that we have been hired by Nova Scotians to be the Opposition and we will do our job with vigour and with energy any time that the government slips, that it flip-flops on what it said, and acts differently than it did before it was in government. When they say one thing and do another, when those things happen, or they don't keep their promises, we will do our job as the Official Opposition.

The Premier said that he is going to keep every one of his promises. I know he did; I was there when he said it. Well, that's a pretty high order and I sincerely hope he does, and when they do we will be there to back them up. But if there is slippage from what they told Nova Scotians when they were seeking their votes, we will do our jobs as Official Opposition and hold the government to account.

Let me just say in closing that it is an amazing privilege to be a member of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. We all fought very hard to be here and we witnessed a change in government in peace because we fought with our words, with our ideas, with our TV ads, and with our competing platforms. We fought in peace; we did not fight with guns or bullets as in too many parts of the world, that's how they change governments. But not here in this country.

So as we conclude today's proceedings in the month of November 2013, let us remember that it is our veterans who gave us this great privilege to fight elections with ideas and words and not guns and change governments in peace.

With that I move that we adjourn debate for today and I will continue my remarks tomorrow when we reconvene Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, on your behalf, at the conclusion of this session I would like to invite all members of the House and all guests in the gallery to the Red Room for a reception.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:20 p.m.]