



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

First Session

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2014

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2014**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**First Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We will now proceed with the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

**Bill No. 30 - Essential Home-support Services (2014) Act.**

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would move that the bill just tabled be added to the order paper and be considered for debate in Committee of the Whole House on Bills today.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

## **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would move we waive the Committee of the Whole hearing of Bill No. 30 and proceed directly for consideration of Bill No. 30 third reading.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading.

**PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 30.

**Bill No. 30 - Essential Home-support Services (2014) Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30 be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's home support workers do extremely valuable work. Hundreds of vulnerable Nova Scotians and their families depend on these workers to help them stay in their homes and communities, where they want to be. Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians and ensure our most vulnerable citizens are taken care of. This legislation ensures patients and their families can continue to count on essential home support services during a strike. Government cannot stand by while patients are put at risk.

Now an essential services agreement must be in place before a strike can begin or continue. Government supports the principles of collective bargaining, but we must also ensure essential services are provided. We all value the important work home support workers do for their clients. This legislation gives Nova Scotians peace of mind and sets out a reasonable process so patients and families know they'll get essential support even during a strike. It maintains the employees' right to bargain collectively and take strike action, while ensuring the most vulnerable are protected in the event of a labour dispute.

Mr. Speaker, it is the right thing to do to protect Nova Scotians, and I am pleased to move third reading of Bill No. 30.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, let me just begin for a moment by thanking the hundreds of Nova Scotians who came to the Legislature yesterday, the home support workers themselves, their fellow health care workers from across the health care system, and the Nova Scotians who came to observe because they rely on home care services, for taking the time out, some I know travelling great distances to be here.

They told us stories about the working conditions they face, about the service they provide, the difference they make in the lives of many of our fellow Nova Scotians, whether they are our mothers, grandmothers, grandparents, or other family members who rely on important home care services.

I know that the government wants to make this all about money. It's never as simple as that. In this case we heard from home support workers who are paid for eight hours a day, but often work 10 or 11 hours a day - meaning they work part of their day without any pay at all. We heard from home support workers who don't have the protections of a hospital or a clinical setting, but go into often dangerous places, unaccompanied, to provide this important service.

We heard from home support workers who are often driving great distances to get to the next client in the dead of winter, or in the heat of summer, and get a call from their supervisor to pull over to the side of the road and stop and turn the meter off and wait for great lengths of time before they can go back to work again. These are people who obviously have chosen their profession and care about the patients, the clients they serve, as much as anybody.

For us this whole sad situation points to the need to actually change the way our province is run and change the way our health care system is run. What we have been presented with yesterday and today by the government is yet another band-aid on the provision of health care services to Nova Scotians. We want to put those Nova Scotians who rely on these important services first. We have all, together, told Nova Scotians, particularly aging Nova Scotians, that it is better for everyone if they are able to age in place at home. And, to make that possible, we employ some very caring Nova Scotians to go and provide important at-home support services to enable that to happen.

But how many times do we have to come to this Legislature, crisis after crisis after crisis in our health care system, because a collective bargaining process has resulted in no resolution? Those Nova Scotians, those patients who we are all elected to come here and represent, go without. How many times in a row does that have to happen before we finally throw away the box of band-aids that government after government, including this one, brings in at the last minute, and actually come up with a solution that works once and for all, putting patients first, treating workers fairly, and allowing our system to move forward in a more settled and more sustainable way?

In fact I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is a report already done, a study that tells us exactly this. And that is the Ivany report, which says we can't keep going on the same old way, which says that we have a stalled economy, that we have a crushing burden of regulation and tax and that people are moving away because they pay so much in tax and get so little in service in return. In the face of that, Nova Scotians are asking us to actually change something about the way the system works. And in the face of all that, the government brings forward not a real game-changer, but actually just one more band-aid to put on the pile of band-aids that are already there on our health care system and in our province.

It is very hard to stand in this House and say that we think another band-aid is what Nova Scotia needs when Ray Ivany himself says, no more band-aids, it's time for

game-changers. I'll tell you, if this is a band-aid, it is a poor band-aid indeed. It doesn't protect patients because the effect of this bill itself is to cause strikes to go on for longer and for more Nova Scotians to go without home care services in the end. Now who could be in favour of that? Not only the 1,800 families who rely on this particular home care service, but the thousands of others who deserve to know today that there is a long-term solution to ensure their services; they are going to go without because of this bill.

Yesterday we learned that there is 9,000 hours' worth of Nova Scotians on the waiting list for home care services. Under this bill, where the home care system will be allowed to ramp down to 20 per cent or 30 per cent of capacity, they will never see the services that they need so they can be looked after in the comfort of their own home. If this is a band-aid, it is a poor band-aid indeed, Mr. Speaker.

For the workers themselves, the people who by the hundreds came to this House to tell us, often in tears, about the stories of the people they meet every day, asking to be treated fairly for the work they do. Not just the average hourly wage, which by the way is the grand sum total of \$16 an hour, but the hours they are expected to work without pay, the travel, the hardship, the harm's way that they are often put in. They are not looked after by this bill either, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, if all they are asking for is fair treatment and they are willing to put that to the test by submitting themselves to an arbitrator, to binding arbitration, and the government says no to that, it leads to the obvious question: what is the government so afraid of with an independent arbitrator that they said no to something that is so obviously fair? The one shot the workers would have at a fair settlement, at fair pay for fair work would be an independent arbitrator and the government said no.

Now, we on this side of the House are obviously as concerned about the public finances as anyone. We want to see the government live within its own means as much as anyone. But when they looked at our health care system, they said, you know, all those CEOs and the 10 health authorities and all those executives making six figures and more, we're going to take our time and study that and someday get to a solution there, but right now we can squeeze the \$16-per-hour person. That is the exact opposite of the way to go about getting our public finances in order, but it is obviously the Liberal way. This bill is not good for patients, who are our main concern, of course, but it's not fair to the workers who provide that service themselves, either.

Mr. Ivany says, why is Nova Scotia falling behind when we have all these natural resources? We have all these universities and community colleges and people who are so well trained, and we're in such a great place in the world to trade, and yet our economy is held back. And Nova Scotians are screaming out the answer. The answer is that it has been mismanaged, and this bill is an example, because in an attempt to squeeze a few pennies out of the workers who were here yesterday, the government has been extremely short-sighted even as a financial manager.

We know in our hearts and in our heads that those Nova Scotians who are going to be denied home care services - they don't know how many and they don't know for how long, but it will be worse under this system that the government proposes - many of them will end up in our emergency rooms when they are forced to leave their homes because they can't get the care they need, and then in our hospital beds where their care is less appropriate to their circumstances and more expensive at the same time. This is an example of a band-aid - a poor one that leads to more mismanagement in our health care system and more cost in the end - the exact opposite of what the Ivany report wants to someday see from a government in Nova Scotia.

Reading the bill, and taking it to its logical conclusion, it is offensive to Nova Scotia families to have a government tell them that they will decide whose grandmother gets care at home and whose doesn't - and if they can't decide, it will be bargained away, and if they can't decide, the Labour Board will decide who gets care and who doesn't. It is high time to throw away these band-aids and get on with really changing the way this province is run, as the Ivany report suggested.

Of course, for all of us - at least on this side - our first concern is for the patients themselves, and we want to do our job here in a responsible way. That's why yesterday we made no attempt to hold up the progress of this bill through its various stages here at the Legislature. There is a real work stoppage going on, and every minute we're here debating, real Nova Scotians are going without the care at home that they need and deserve. We've moved the bill along every stage as fast as possible so that they can get back to getting that care.

After all, the Ivany report says that one of the game-changers should be that the Parties find ways to work together. In that spirit, yesterday at the Law Amendments Committee we actually reached out across the aisle here in the Legislature with some strong and fair and compassionate and reasonable amendments to the Liberal bill to make it better, to make sure Nova Scotians get the care they need right now, and to give those care workers a chance at a fair settlement. It's a solution that doesn't just work for today, it works for all time - a real game-changer in two ways. It's not a band-aid - it really changes things - and secondly, it's an offer to work with the government to make this work better.

All Nova Scotians are going to see shortly that, in the face of that opportunity to show the entire province that we're serious about the Ivany report, they said no. They rejected outright any co-operation from the Opposition side of the House. Mr. Speaker, I know that Nova Scotians will be very disappointed to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, we are now confronted with a very bad bill that, at its best, tries to put a band-aid on a long-term problem yet again, and even when it passes, as I am sure it will with the Liberal majority, will make the system worse.

Mr. Speaker, I will just conclude by telling you, sir, and all members of this House and all Nova Scotians, that when it comes to yet another band-aid bill, a poor band-aid bill like this, I say through you to the government that you are on your own. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, there wasn't much difficulty for our caucus in deciding how we were going to vote on this bill. This bill is not a bill that we support. It is a piece of unnecessary legislation that did not have to be here, and it is regrettable that we have had to spend time here debating and taking up the time of members with a piece of legislation such as this.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday when the home care workers were here, and I thank them for their presence, I couldn't help but be reminded of my dad. I lost my father two years ago, but prior to that, my father was in and out of the health care system quite a bit, when I was in fact Minister of Health and Wellness. Among the most amazing caregivers that he encountered were home support workers from the Antigonish and Area Homemaker Service, which this bill applies to, as well as all of those other home care services that are listed.

I and other members of the NDP caucus are very torn when the issues in front of this House are issues that pit health care workers against patients and patient care. We are the Party that, in government, put \$24 million into the home care budget two years ago, the largest infusion of finances for that sector that this province has ever seen since home care was established. We did that because we fundamentally believe and know the importance of those services for the people of the province. But we also know that those services are delivered by an amazing, diverse array of health care workers who are home support workers and other health care professionals, like nurses and occupational therapists, et cetera.

Yesterday, I started the debate on behalf of our caucus by saying that we look at legislation and we ask if it needs a variety of tests. We understand there is a balance and the balance has to be taking care of multiple considerations. Unfortunately, this piece of legislation fails on all of those fronts, Mr. Speaker. It actually creates the conditions in which we may see a protracted and prolonged period of instability in the health care system.

I know members of the government have aspirations that this bill, in fact, will deal with an immediate situation right in front of them, but there are longer-term implications for this kind of legislation. Labour relations in the Province of Nova Scotia have resulted in very, very, very few strikes in the health care system in our province. There are almost no strikes in the health care system. To fundamentally start to alter what is a regime of labour relations that has worked in preventing strikes in our health care system is a very serious matter. That is, in fact, a feature of this bill that we cannot support.



We know that people in the province could be very much harmed by this in the longer term. You may get some short-term gain from this, in terms of putting the home support workers currently on strike back to work. But I can tell you that last night, close to midnight, I was getting lots of e-mails, and I am sure you were as well, from other health care workers who aren't directly impacted by this bill who now are fundamentally alert and worried about the implications of this legislation for them. They very much see the writing on the wall. Their fear is that this legislation is a signal of what the government will do in labour relations in the health care sector more broadly. Although I hope it's not the case, I fear that as well.

I think it's very possible that this government has chosen one of the most vulnerable groups of health care workers to make a point with before they face health care workers who aren't so vulnerable in terms of their political clout. That is truly, truly concerning.

As the Leader of the Official Opposition said - and we heard many of these workers yesterday and we talked to them outside and downstairs - these are not high-waged health care workers. These are not greedy health care workers looking for something that is unfair, that is unreasonable. These are people who go to work every day for very modest wages, and they see other people, with the same training, doing the same work but in a different setting, making more money. And they say, you know, that doesn't seem fair. We would like to have that addressed.

What has the response of the government been to that very reasonable request? Their response is, we've given you a very generous offer; what is on the table is what other groups have been given.

But that's not accurate. That absolutely is not accurate. It is the case that there is a pattern for wage increases in the health care sector, but that doesn't mean that no other issues get dealt with, including issues that have some monetary implications when they're about fairness.

We've heard a fair amount about how this is like the paramedics' situation, which it isn't, for a whole variety of reasons. First of all, when a person doesn't have home care they can call 911 and get a paramedic. When the paramedics are off the job, who are you going to call? There is no backup for paramedics. So, comparatively it's not the same. But it is in this regard, I suppose, if you look at the paramedics' situation, the paramedics wanted a defined benefit plan. We can debate the merits of whether or not that was a good thing, some people believe in defined benefit plans, some people don't. The fact of the matter was every single, solitary health care professional in this province have defined benefit plans, except for the paramedics.

In the case of the paramedics, they got pattern in terms of wage increases and a fundamental unfairness in the system was also addressed; we shouldn't have second-class

health care workers working in a particular area. I know money is an issue - we all know money is an issue in the Province of Nova Scotia - but you bargain with people fairly and you give them some hope that unfairness will be addressed at some point if it can't be addressed immediately. You do it over a period of time, you say, okay, this is how we can get to that point, we're willing to look at that and work toward that.

With Bill No. 30, there's no hope in this bill for home support workers. There is no hope in this bill to address the unfairness for that group of primarily lower-waged women who do really important work in our health care system to prevent people from having to go into more costly and more expensive long-term care and acute care every single day. Those workers save this province millions of dollars and we come up with Bill No. 30? No hope. We say, too bad, so sad, we're going to not only give you no hope, but we're going to use you to set an example for what labour relations in the province are going to look like under our government for the next four years, and we hope that message gets through to the nurses, the technicians, the physicians of the province.

That's what the message is, Mr. Speaker, and it's not a good message - it's not good for the working people in our health care system; it's not good for the patients in our system; and it certainly will not improve health care in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Yesterday we worked hard to ensure that every voice for the health care system that wanted to be heard on this bill was here, and they made very compelling, very compelling, facts. They laid compelling facts on the table of what their lives are like, of how they feel about their work, and how they want their government to respect and treat them. And that respect is missing; it is missing in this approach. It's definitely, as I said yesterday, this is a test for a new government and it is unfortunate that this is the choice that the government has made. This is about money; it's not about patient safety.

Now, throughout this debate it has been this caucus that has been very concerned about the fact that government waited until we were in a strike to do anything. They had other choices, Mr. Speaker, they had the choice of accepting the offer that was made to them by the head of the union to take the matter to binding arbitration - not an unreasonable offer whatsoever. If the government was confident that the offer was fair and reasonable, what were they afraid of? Why was the government afraid to put it in front of binding arbitration? I'm not really sure what the answer to that might be, but maybe somebody over there knows in fact that there is a very good possibility that it wasn't fair or reasonable and they might have to address the real concerns that the home support workers legitimately have about being on call and not being paid each and every day that they have shifts scheduled.

I don't know if any of us here in this House truly appreciate what it's like to be in the shoes of those workers. Again, I remember when my father had home care and one of his favourite home care workers didn't show up - somebody else came and he wondered where this other woman was. He found out that she had been on her way to another patient,

another client's home, and she got on a patch of black ice and she was in a serious car accident. She wrote her car off and she was off work for - I don't know if she has ever been able to go back.

You know, these women work in unbelievable conditions - they are out there when there are snowstorms and blizzards, bad roads, floods, and they are driving throughout the rural communities often late at night, long periods of time from when they leave their homes early in the morning until they come home at night. It's a pretty exhausting job and it has many many dangers. It's hard to believe we would say that about home care, but it's the truth. As I said yesterday, one of the highest rates of workers' compensation claims, the fastest-growing area for WCB, is in that area.

These are people who deserve not only our respect, but they deserve fairness. That's all they're asking for, and Bill No. 30 does not give it to them, Mr. Speaker. For that reason, the NDP caucus will be voting against Bill No. 30.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this has been a rough few days for the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. It certainly has been a rough few days for the home care workers. Yesterday, we witnessed person after person coming before the Law Amendments Committee, telling their stories as to what and how they do their job. They talked about how they felt a connection to the people they serve, and that they're more than just clients; they're family.

Some people travelled from as far away as the Valley and New Glasgow or Truro, to be told that they are only allowed to speak for five minutes, including questions. In the people's House. The province has to understand, the members of this House have to understand, that this Legislature is not ours. It's certainly not the domain of the government. It is the House of the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. People came here trying to make sure that their concerns were heard, and then they were told, you have only five minutes.

I know that the committee members were following a script that had been laid out for them. I know that they have decided that this is the route to take. This government had a session in this House which was 11 days long, and the only thing that they did there of any consequence was to say we're going to have a holiday. We're going to have a holiday for the people of the Province of Nova Scotia, and it's going to cost millions of dollars, but that's okay. And then when we have health care workers who are here, serving the people who we are supposed to be serving, they are shut down. They are told my goodness, no, this isn't going to happen. You've got five minutes.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that really hurt me yesterday and it is still bothering me. In your role, you would know that the independence of this House is of the utmost

importance, and the very fact that the people of the Province of Nova Scotia - if they can't speak in this House and tell people what they feel and how they feel they're being treated, where can they do it?

I sat there through the majority of what took place yesterday. I looked across and I looked at the members of the opposite side and I saw their faces. Now I didn't hear their voices, but I saw their faces. They were hearing things from these people time and time again, and I could tell that it was bothering them. I believe that what they heard yesterday was nothing familiar to them, compared to what they were being told by the spin doctors who put this piece of legislation together.

I believe that we heard from people who have a lot of compassion, Mr. Speaker. We heard people say, you know what, this piece of legislation makes me feel like I'm being bullied. And it not just a mistake that I wear pink today - I wear pink today because of the anti-bullying that we should be believing in. The way that these people were treated yesterday, they were being bullied by that government, by that Premier, on a piece of legislation that will do no good.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? We have an amazing thing happening. The Minister of Natural Resources finally has something to say. I would love to see him get up on the floor . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Address your comments through the Chair, please. (Interruptions) The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. But I can tell you that what is taking place here is nothing short of a huge, huge disappointment. The union sat down and negotiated in good faith. They believed that they had come up with a solution; a solution that meant going to arbitration; a solution they put on the table so we would not have to have this meeting of the House of Assembly on such short notice, to jam down the throats of the people of Nova Scotia a piece of legislation that will have long-lasting effects, but not positive ones. We are here today because this government has no vision of where and how to bring the Province of Nova Scotia further along.

Mr. Speaker, this group of mostly women are people who are struggling to make ends meet. They are people who, every day, will go on the roads and do their jobs when school buses aren't there, when other people don't go out, because of their bond with their clients. They get on the roads and they put their own lives in jeopardy, to make sure that, indeed, the clients who need their help get their help.

How are they rewarded for this? They are rewarded by a piece of legislation that tells them we are going to pick winners and losers. We are going to find out who is essential and who is not essential.

This legislation doesn't end the strike. This legislation will only prolong it. It will make it a longer period of time. They are going to sit down within 21 days and talk about who are essential services. That could go on for months and months and months - a privilege, by the way, that the presenters at Law Amendments Committee didn't have because they were told there was a limited amount of time that they were allotted to put their case forward. But when this takes place, you could have people getting less service while people are out there negotiating what is an essential service and what isn't an essential service, and still no sight of the end will be found.

Mr. Speaker, when we were at Law Amendments Committee yesterday, we talked and heard from a lot of people. As I said, I didn't hear the members of the Liberal caucus ask any questions, because apparently they were told they already had all the answers. The whole reason for the Law Amendments Committee is so the people have an opportunity to express their concerns with the legislation that the people who they elected were putting in place.

Mr. Speaker, we put forward some ideas yesterday in Law Amendments Committee, ideas that would not only change the face of this bill, but have a true impact on helping the people who we are meant to help. We talked about a way of making sure there were not strikes, but still letting people maintain their dignity and not feel as if they were being bullied by the people who are supposed to be here to serve them.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when you get 128-plus people wanting to make a presentation to the province about what is taking place and what is happening in their lives, in their communities, they deserved to be heard, they needed to be heard and they didn't need to be chastised for spending and coming to say what they wanted to say.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will not help those people, but it will not help the people who need their services either, the 8,000-plus clients across the province who require home care. This bill does nothing to ensure their services will not be interrupted.

This bill is a bill of a short-sighted government who does not have the needs of the people of the Province of Nova Scotia in their sights. As the Leader of the New Democratic Party said, we all know that this province is in dire financial straits and it needs to have things straightened away. But the question would always be on everybody's mind: do you straighten that away on the backs of workers who are making a little over minimum wage? Do you straighten that out by taking away from the home care of the people who need help in their own homes? I think most Nova Scotians would tell you that's not the way to do it.

You know that this government was out of power since the 1990s. Looking at this legislation, we can almost understand why. You would think that after being away from government for that long, when they had their first chance in the House of Assembly, when they did their first session, that they would have had some real and meaningful legislation. We had 11 days in the House of Assembly with no meaningful legislation brought forward,

with no plan shown by this Premier and by that government, and for the disappointment of the people of the Province of Nova Scotia who had voted them in in hopes of seeing a different style of government. What they've gotten is more of the same - more of the same, Mr. Speaker.

Here we are doing crisis management, hauling the House of Assembly in the day that the strike is starting. Now, we were all told that negotiations were going on since last year. Somebody should have been able to see where this was going. They should have known, indeed, when they were here in the last session, that there was an opportunity to put legislation in place so that if this reached that height, there could be something done. But, no, they decided to wait until the last minute.

Then they tell the people: by the way, if you don't take this offer, the next offer is not going to be as good. Then they stood there, member after member after member and talked about how bullying was not a tactic that should be allowed to be used in the Province of Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, this is bad legislation put forward by a bad government, and our Party will certainly not be voting for it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to say a few words on third reading. I guess it's fairly self-evident that I agree in essence with the three previous speakers. But you know, as I look across the way and to my left and to my right, I see some seasoned legislators, and they've been around for a while and realize the things we could do in this House. We could have - and I'm talking about the tools that are available to both Opposition Parties - we could have probably kept this House going to somewhere close to Thursday or so. The parties - I don't know what the Progressive Conservatives' thought is, but I think I know, but it's not for me to say.

I think we've made our point. We realize, as we said in our speeches yesterday, that the government has a majority. The government acted like a majority yesterday morning. They acted like a majority in Law Amendments Committee, which was unfortunate. But nonetheless, that's where it's at.

Mr. Speaker, we could have been in here as an Opposition Party - Parties, maybe - and fought this. But what would the workers have gotten and what would the clients have gotten?

What we had said in each and every speech from our seven members was that we wanted to get it over to the Law Amendments Committee to allow the people of Nova Scotia to be heard. As my colleague from the Progressive Conservatives said before me, it was kind of a sad day when we start the whole day off with the tamping down their voices. I realize it's not easy to hear people who are in opposition to you and disagree vehemently with what you're doing, but you know the great part of that is that's democracy. I believe

for the most part, the time I spent in there yesterday, people were respectful, they told stories of what they thought was injustice from a wage perspective, and told stories about their great respect for their clients and their overall disbelief of how the government is treating them.

Mr. Speaker, we're here in an unusual sitting on a Saturday morning to vote on this legislation, and our Party will be voting against it - no secret. But I think the government has to be on notice here, because when it's your first real test of how you handle collective bargaining with the public sector and you cannot find any other option but a bad bill like this is worrisome.

Within the lifespan of this government, there will probably be over 200-some agreements, maybe even closer to 300 agreements that will come open that you will have to bargain in good faith and you will have to find a reasonable settlement that will satisfy both parties. Some of these are more difficult than others. Some involve directly the government with a government agency; others are like these ones that are in front of us today, which I could consider somewhat third-party agreements where clearly the government is the funder and there is a party that the workers are negotiating with. But you know, we all know at the end of the day, as I have often said in this House, the ghost at the table is government, they're the funder.

So if this is how you're going to treat your first real test, what are we going to do when the larger issues - now we know hurling down that proverbial highway right now is the nurses in the Capital District, members of the same union, and it's my wish and I expect the wish of every member of this House that there will be a collective agreement negotiated without any draconian measures such as Bill No. 30. I hope that Capital and the nurses can come up with an offer that would be satisfactory to all parties - but then you know, Mr. Speaker, behind that comes a myriad of others - and how government will handle that leaves me really, really afraid.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say not only to the House, but in Hansard, that this was a message sent from our Party to this government that we do not agree with how you operate when it comes to treating workers fairly and how you treated the clients of those workers fairly. So we will be voting "no" on this bill, but rest assured not only the eyes of this caucus, but the eyes of all Nova Scotians are on this government to see how it treats its citizens. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members for their considered comments. I am pleased to move third reading of Bill No. 30.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 30. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

A recorded vote has been requested.

We will ring the bells until the Whips are satisfied.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[10:00 a.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

MR. SPEAKER: Are the Whips satisfied?

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[10:22 a.m.]

**YEAS**

Mr. Colwell  
Mr. Churchill  
Ms. Bernard  
Ms. Regan  
Mr. Samson  
Mr. McNeil  
Ms. Whalen  
Mr. Glavine  
Ms. Casey  
Mr. MacLellan  
Ms. Metlege Diab  
Mr. Younger  
Mr. Horne  
Mr. Hines  
Mr. Stroink  
Ms. Arab  
Mr. Delorey  
Mr. Ince  
Mr. Kousoulis  
Mr. Furey  
Mr. Farrell  
Mr. Gordon Wilson  
Mr. Rankin

**NAYS**

Mr. MacMaster  
Mr. Porter  
Mr. Baillie  
Mr. d'Entremont  
Mr. Corbett  
Ms. MacDonald  
Mr. David Wilson  
Mr. Gosse  
Ms. Zann  
Ms. Peterson-Rafuse  
Mr. Belliveau  
Mr. Orrell  
Ms. MacFarlane  
Mr. Houston  
Mr. MacLeod  
Mr. Harrison  
Mr. Lohr



Ms. Miller  
Mr. Rowe  
Mr. Maguire  
Ms. Eyking  
Ms. Lohnes-Croft  
Ms. Treen  
Mr. Gough  
Mr. Jessome  
Mr. Irving

THE CLERK: For, 32. Against, 17.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I certainly want to thank all members for their participation and want to wish safe travels to those who are returning to their constituencies today.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I move that the House do now rise to meet again on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m..

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until March 27<sup>th</sup> at 2: 00 p.m.

[The House rose at 10:25 a.m.]