



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

12:01 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now begin with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 12 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 37 of the Acts of 2005. The Correctional Services Act. (Hon. Lena Diab)

Bill No. 13 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990. The Children and Family Services Act. (Mr. Eddie Orrell)

Bill No. 14 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1997. The Gas Distribution Act. (Hon. Andrew Younger)

Bill No. 15 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 277 of the Revised Statutes, 1989. The Builders' Lien Act. (Hon. Lena Diab)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read a second time on a future day.

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 47

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Education Week is an annual event celebrated by school boards and schools across the province, the 2014 Education Week theme is Active Citizenship: Get Involved, Take Action, Be the Difference; and

Whereas among the latest recipients to receive this year's Education Week award is Melanie Miller, Grade 7 teacher at West Hants Middle School, in Brooklyn, where Melanie is described as someone who makes things happen; and

Whereas Melanie was recognized for her efforts to teach students in the classroom and in the community to ensure a prosperous future for the next generation of Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Melanie Miller for encouraging students to recognize how their actions can influence their community.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 12:11 a.m. we'll conclude at 1:11 a.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

ENERGY - ONSHORE EXPLORATION LICENCES: COMPANIES - FUTURE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. There are currently four companies that hold onshore exploration and production licences here in Nova Scotia - those are licences that will soon become worthless. My question to the Premier is, what discussion has his government had with these four companies about their future in our province?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I will ask the Minister of Energy to respond.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: I appreciate the question. As the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition would know, we not only have had discussions with those companies but the one who is most active has actually said that the moratorium will not affect their plans and that they look forward to working within those rules. Anything beyond that, of course, would be proprietary company information that would be up to them to share that I wouldn't be able to share, and I'm sure he understands that.

MR. BAILLIE: In fact one of those companies, St. Brendan's Exploration, actually wrote a submission to the Wheeler Expert Panel and their president, Edwin Macdonald, wrote to the panel on behalf of his company: "St. Brendan's has been patiently observing . . . this review process for the past two years. We anticipate that established regulations will facilitate our capital investment decisions"

I'll ask the Premier, has the government asked St. Brendan's to stay in the province or is the "closed for business" sign flashing for them too?

MR. YOUNGER: I'm very glad that the member actually brought up St. Brendan's because they are the ones that said that they look forward to working within these regulations; they were the ones that issued the statement. In fact, the activities they use do not use hydraulic fracturing.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that St. Brendan's had a lot to say about the government's ban on new shale gas development, new jobs in our province. For example many members of the government have suggested that is little onshore potential anyway, they'll go find out but that they don't anticipate there maybe is that much gas, quite the contrary to what the Wheeler report estimated.

My point is that prior to the announced ban by the government, Edwin Macdonald of St. Brendan's said: "St. Brendan's sees substantial potential for hydrocarbon development onshore Nova Scotia and accepts the challenge of developing the industry within the bounds of existing and future regulations."

Mr. Speaker, this company was looking to invest millions of dollars in rural Nova Scotia, but the government said no to shale gas development, despite recommendations from its own experts and from companies like St. Brendan's that are willing to actually create jobs in the province. I'll ask the Premier, in light of St. Brendan's optimism of only a few months ago, why has the government turned their backs on new employers like Edwin Macdonald?

MR. YOUNGER: I know it's inconvenient when you have your second supplementary written and you get an answer that doesn't work for it.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with St. Brendan's and our staff have spoken with St. Brendan's. They have actually issued a public statement since the announcement by the government stating that they look forward to working within those regulations. In fact they are still excited about the opportunities in Nova Scotia and I'm looking forward to their continued investment in this province, investment that they said would continue despite that legislation.

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

PREM. - AMALGAMATIONS: KNOWLEDGE - EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it's very nice to see you again. My question through you is to the Premier. Many organizations have been through amalgamation in our province over the last number of years: municipalities, school boards, health care organizations, and many of these amalgamations have taken place under Liberal Governments. In all cases, labour issues that required resolving went to the Labour Relations Board as per Section 31 of the Trade Union Act. None have done what this government is doing.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, is, why does the Premier think he knows better than every other government and organization that has faced a similar situation in the history of our province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Over the last number of months the Minister and the Department of Health and Wellness have been working with union leaders, knowing full well that we are committed to restructuring health care in this province. The things that they had told us were they wanted all four unions to survive; we have committed to that. No benefits that health care workers have earned over the past will change; all of that will be in place.

One of the things during this conversation was they didn't want to have run-off votes. They wanted to make sure that the disruptiveness of run-off votes wasn't going to take place and affect work places across this province and indeed that is not the case. Furthermore there is a structure in place that a mediator will work with them over the next 90 days to find the resolution to which union will represent the four categories that all four unions agreed to.

One of the reasons why things are working differently is because we actually consulted and communicated with the organization we're involved with.

MS. MACDONALD: Unfortunately, we've been down this road before in terms of the reshuffling of health authorities in the province and in those cases I think one of the lessons that was learned was that the approach could be different and the health care unions worked very hard to provide an alternative. However, they have a perfectly good process in place. It has, in fact, been used to reach resolution in the past and so the question is really very simple. My question to the Premier is, why is he throwing out years of experience and opting to go down an unknown route that is already causing chaos?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the honourable member missed. Union leaders asked that all four unions be preserved, they are. The union leaders all agreed that there should be four categories of bargaining, they agreed to that. They did not want run-off votes. I apparently hear now someone has changed their mind but the fact of the matter is, this will not cause disruption in the work places across this province. It will ensure that workers' rights are protected.

The things that they have earned in negotiations will be respected regardless of what is being said out there. This bill does not take away any earned rights that workers have in this place. What it does set forward is a constructive negotiation path going forward and it preserves the system in the long run for all of Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Well Mr. Speaker, I always thought that in a democratic system, the fundamental building block is the right to choose and I find it very hard that the

Premier can't see the connection between what he's doing in his legislation and this process, and that basic democratic right.

We knew the Premier would be creating many new problems by choosing to merge district health authorities, but it seems that wasn't enough. The Premier needed to create even more problems in the way he's choosing to handle labour relations in the health care sector.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is, why won't the Premier take the advice handed to him and start fixing issues in the health care system instead of creating new ones?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're looking forward to the passage of Bill No. 1 so that we can continue down the road of tearing down the walls that have been created in the health care system, and that are delivering services to less than one million people. This will protect workers. It ensures that the hard-earned benefits that they have will be there and continue to be there going into the future. It makes sure that labour negotiations going forward are not an ongoing situation. There are four very clearly defined negotiations that will take place that - I want to remind the honourable member - the union leaders have all agreed to. Most importantly, this will ensure that the health care system that we all want there for our families will be affordable into the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: INVERNESS HOSP. CT SCANNER
- PURCHASING DETAILS**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In an article from *The Chronicle Herald* that I will table about the CT scanner for the Inverness hospital, the minister stated that there was an understanding that the next CT scanner the province purchased would be from GE. The tender that was piggy-backed off of does not provide details on this understanding.

Can the minister please explain this understanding that locks Inverness into receiving this particular CT scanner despite questions - including from the chief of staff - whether or not it is the best scanner to serve the community's needs?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I guess my message yesterday didn't get out, but perhaps if the member opposite is speaking for his entire riding and he doesn't want the scanner, I know other hospitals who would open their door tomorrow to a new scanner.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the minister feels threatened, because now he's making threats against the people of Inverness. If the minister has such

great confidence that proper procedure has been followed, why are people who are representing him refusing to provide information to the community?

The purchase of the CT scanner for Inverness utilized an RFP issued by the Annapolis Valley District Health Authority. The original tender was not made available on the Nova Scotia tenders website. The community of Inverness and surrounding communities have been asking to provide the money, but have been kept in the dark about the process. So why was the tender for a \$1.5 million purchase not made publicly available?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member for Inverness, there is a procurement option - a procurement practice - in the Department of Health and Wellness that when an agreement is made for a very significant purchase, like a scanner, a linear accelerator, and also as we had ultrasounds required in Antigonish, there is the process whereby you can add future procurements to a contract. This is exactly what we did. It's very open and can be examined as one of the processes to procure future equipment.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it's strange, because I understand the ultrasound machines have yet to arrive in Antigonish for use at that hospital, yet we have a CT scanner sitting in the basement of the hospital in Inverness wrapped in plastic because the room is not ready for it. Will the minister go on record declaring his confidence that this procurement has been conducted in a transparent and fair manner?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the people in the district went through every part of the process as it should be conducted in conjunction with the Department of Health and Wellness.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ACCOUNTABILITY REPT. ON ER CLOSURES - TABLE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Liberal Government has become distracted by their work on the amalgamation of the district health authorities and they really have taken their eye off what really matters, that is front-line care.

Mr. Speaker, the annual Accountability Report on Emergency Department Closures for 2013-14 is overdue so through you to the Minister of Health and Wellness, when will the Minister of Health and Wellness table this year's Accountability Report on Emergency Department Closures?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sackville-Cobequid for the question. During the Fall session of the Legislature that document will be tabled.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, emergency room closures were down when the Minister of Health and Wellness was in Opposition and I haven't heard very much in the last year that would have continued that progress. I can't help but wonder if the minister's district health authority amalgamation or distraction has led to an increase in emergency room closures throughout this province.

I'm wondering if the minister could tell Nova Scotians how many hours the emergency rooms in Nova Scotia were closed so far this year?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that exact figure available but I will certainly provide the member with that figure, up to probably the end of September.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to receiving that information and look forward to seeing the accountability report.

Mr. Speaker, the ER report is not the only report that the government has to bring forward and give an explanation on how things are, hopefully, improving in health care. Of course I'm talking about the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. That, too, requires the government to give an update on that strategy so I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness when Nova Scotians will get an update on the work being done to implement the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that was adopted for the province?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite and to the whole House, as many people in Nova Scotia have been taking a look at the Together We Can strategy, with the number of recommendations that are there, it is an ongoing implementation process. In fact, we got additional recommendations when Janet Davidson did the Youth Mental Health report. We know that a number of these are being implemented each and every year and over the course of this year there will be an update on how many of the recommendations are now available to Nova Scotians.

I know that a number of those have been implemented. We have added some human resources to mental health. It's an ongoing, very, very challenging area and I know our government added to, I think, the most critical area and that is adding to SchoolsPlus and dealing with our youth where 70 per cent of mental health problems first appear and that's good progress, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: CONTINUING CARE STRATEGY REVIEW - TABLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, when this government first came to power one year ago, they promised to deliver care for seniors. They announced a 100-day review of the Continuing Care Strategy. The 100-day review started

243 days ago. The minister has sat on this review for nearly five months, while their families wait and wait and wait.

Will the minister commit to tabling this report in this House before the session ends so these families can know what they can look forward to in long-term care in this province?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member for Argyle (Interruption) Oh, yes, and now we have to get Barrington in there as well. It's an important question, and the member can certainly be given what took place in the first 100 days, and I think he's aware of that. Maybe he would like for me to go through the list, but it was certainly highlighted by the fact that we put into place a refresh of the Continuing Care Strategy, which puts emphasis on more delivery of health care in the home.

That progress is very measurable, because the member will surely remember that when he was Minister of Health there were over 5,000 hours required for home support service just in Capital Health. That is now down to less than 1,000 hours. We also have put in place a team that are developing a dementia strategy. This was all within the first 100 days. This is all available for the minister to be able to see, and of course in the budget, in line with delivering more care in the home, we added \$12 million this year.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I thank the minister for his answer on that one, but a 100-day review should have a final report at some point along the way, so that we can look at long-term care and how it's going to be treated in the future. As of September 2014, there are 2,531 seniors on a wait-list waiting for long-term care. This government has, in my view, ignored the plans for seniors in the Throne Speech, failed to deliver on that 100-day review, and let that wait-list grow to a record high.

There are 2,531 individuals with 2,531 families eagerly waiting for some relief from this government. So my question to the minister is, what can the minister say to those thousands of families that are waiting to get their loved one in the correct care that they do so deserve?

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you very much, and the member asks a very good question. When we did the 100-day review we outlined three of the major areas that we would focus on. One of the areas, I can assure the member, is that that number for nursing homes will come down, because we will be providing care right in the home, and that's where the vast majority of Nova Scotians want to receive care - 92 per cent of Nova Scotians now get care there. If the former minister had asked me, I could've given him an updated statistic, because we have brought that list down by 100 just in the last few months.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you. I've got the list, and quite honestly, there are 2,000 people waiting for long-term care. Out of that 2,000, there are 271 lying in hospital beds today, and we know what happens when someone is in that hospital bed. There is no

other place for them right now, but of course they are not in the appropriate level of care, and quite honestly, that acute care bed should be used for what it is. It's an acute care bed so people can get their surgeries and things that they need, but our system is blocked up with that.

So my question to the minister is, what is your plan to open up those 271 beds so that they can be used for the services that they are, such as acute care?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, one of the other realities that we should point out to the members and to all Nova Scotians is that during the past year somewhere between 25 and 30 per cent of all those on the wait-list who were called weren't ready to go into a nursing home. So, in some ways, people are taking out some early insurance that they will get on the list. We are working first and foremost to have a strong criterion, a strong assessment, so that the right people are going into our nursing homes.

In terms of getting people out of hospital and into the right facility, we now have a number of restorative programs across the province. This is the kind of care that we need in place to help people transition back to home, or it could even be back to a nursing home. The Restorative Care Program that we see in Springhill, which was really a model for the province, we have it at Digby General and a number of other hospitals, and this is going to help take relief on the acute care bed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - EMERGENCY RESPONDERS: WORKING CONDITIONS - IMPROVEMENT

HON. DAVID WILSON: I would think that everyone in this Chamber would agree that our paramedics, firefighters, law enforcement officers and other emergency responders play an important role in protecting and treating all Nova Scotians. What steps has the Minister of Health and Wellness taken to support and improve the working conditions for our emergency responders?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: This is a very important ongoing area to make sure that those who are delivering direct care to our patients. In one of those areas we will have a development during the Fall session that I believe is going to be a wonderful assist to paramedics and their future. So I would say to the former paramedic, stay tuned.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I look forward to that. Across Canada in the last six months, 23 emergency responders have taken their own lives. That number includes loss of emergency responders from our own province here in Nova Scotia. It's our duty to protect those who protect us. Right now the Workers' Compensation Act only recognizes a post-traumatic stress disorder if it occurs immediately following a traumatic event. So I'd like to ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, does the minister recognize the need to

update legislation and policy pertaining to WCB in order to properly support our emergency responders who are diagnosed with PTSD?

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you to the member opposite. He raises a really significant question and it is one that has not been addressed, I don't think, in the fullest manner, and one that I will take under advisement that, perhaps through amendment, we can make sure that when somebody requires that kind of help, either immediately, or people who have gone through some trauma and even years later.

I know in my community recently, I had a fireman come to me and ask me if I knew someone in the mental health system who provided that very kind of help. Because we live in a military community, we were able to have somebody with that kind of expertise willing to take on somebody who, again - there's a great collegiality among firemen and the complementary services they share on the base. But in terms of our province and the bigger question, I thank the former minister for raising that in the Chamber tonight.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I know first responders and emergency responders across Nova Scotia look forward to working as we move forward. It's my sincere hope that political differences can be set aside for the benefit of all current and future emergency responders in our province. So I'd like to ask the minister, would the Minister of Health and Wellness commit to meeting with myself and emergency responders about making Nova Scotia the most inclusive province in the country regarding coverage to cope with post-traumatic stress disorder?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this is an area that I can certainly communicate with the member about a positive direction that we can take a look at.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

COM. SERV. - CHILDREN AT RISK: PROTECTION - CHANGES

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. The Cape Breton Victoria Child Advocacy Society held a town hall gathering in Sydney this past Saturday called Speaking for Nova Scotia's Children at Risk. Close to 100 engaged citizens came together to seek solutions to the perils of our most vulnerable youth at risk.

Advocates are seeking two real actions for positive change. The first is to change the age of the definition of "youth" from 16 to 18 years, and the second is to establish an office and a commissioner for the rights of children. My question to the minister is, do you agree that our fellow Nova Scotians care, and are you prepared to make the changes necessary to better protect our children at risk?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the member for the question. I know the topic is very near and dear to his heart, as it is to mine. It is actually part of exciting new legislation that will be coming forward in the next couple of years. As you know, there have been eight different reports over the last 15 years looking at consultations to try to change the Children and Family Services Act.

I have said it's part of my mandate. I have said very clearly and very decisively that that Act will be opened up within my mandate and it will be changed. Actually, the definition of "child" will be raised to 19, because I know that many children right now between the ages of 16 and 19 fall into that sort of no man's land of gap within the Act.

There are many other different changes I'm looking at, including the definition of neglect, which I believe is fairly outdated in the Act and needs to represent the changes of child family welfare in the Province of Nova Scotia today.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for that. I guess my next question would be, if we're going to raise the age up to 19, can we expect that to happen in the near future, or how long do you expect it will take for that to happen?

MS. BERNARD: I have a schedule for the legislation that I'm bringing forward and I believe that that is going to be in either the Spring or the Fall of 2016. It is currently being researched now, taking all the reports that have happened over the last number of years and making sure that no stone is unturned. I know it's a difficult Act to open up. I know there is lots of consultation that has happened; it will continue to happen. I am committed to it, the Premier is committed to it, it was part of the mandate for my department when I became minister and it's something, quite frankly, that is long overdue.

MR. ORRELL: I'm glad to hear there's a set timeline. I hope it can be set on time. I hope it can be sooner than that, because ignoring children at risk costs everybody, but most importantly those who are abused, neglected and/or rejected. The price of a lost life to inaction is a price that Nova Scotians can't afford to pay, so the sooner the better.

My next question is, will the government do the right thing and establish an officer and a commissioner for the rights of children?

MS. BERNARD: When the Attorney General's recommendations came out recently and in the past - we are up to 20 out of 23 recommendations. I really want to focus on the Act, because I believe when you have legislative teeth - and no one knows better than myself about what children go through in this province, with my previous work experience. My concentration right now is on that Act, to make sure that it's ironclad, that it is truly, truly in the best interests of the children. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

STATUS OF WOMEN - WORKING WOMEN: RIGHTS - PROTECTION

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

Over the last days as Critic for the Status of Women, I've been hearing from many women of various ages from across the province. While they differ in life experience, they've all expressed grave concerns that their human rights as women are being stripped away by the actions of this government.

I know that the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act desires, as I do, to help improve life for women and girls in this province. So my question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, how will the minister ensure that the rights of working women in Nova Scotia will be maintained and protected in spite of the actions being taken by her government with respect to the health amalgamation?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I've actually listened to some of the rhetoric that has been happening around this and I really find the assertion quite nonsensical. I don't think it's a helpful analysis whatsoever. I think that when you put energy, time and the commitment that this government has put into a sustainable health care system, you are as pro-woman, as pro-child, as pro-Nova Scotian as you can get.

MS. ZANN: Well, Mr. Speaker, a number of women in my constituency have written to me stating that they are very satisfied with their job, their salary and their benefits. They tell me that their relationship with their patients is extremely important to them. However, they are strongly opposed to this government's actions based on their concern for democracy under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 2(d), which affirms their individual right to freedom of association.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, can the minister please explain how the Premier's proposal to organize the health merger will be better for everyone in the long run, as he has stated, since so many women feel that government dictating their choices is undemocratic?

MS. BERNARD: I must have missed something in the last many hours of being here, but at no point in time have I ever read in this legislation that their freedom of association is being taken away.

But I will tell you, if the honourable member will remember, what this government has done for women in the last year, namely increased funding to family resource centres, women's centres, transition houses, second stage housing, and has done more for the organizations that serve women on the ground who are in crisis - more than any government in the last decade.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, I actually feel quite proud that our government also did a lot for women in this province and, in fact, raised their money that they were receiving for the first time in 20 years, I believe it was.

So since 80 per cent of the health care workforce are women, they are feeling right now that they are under attack and they are feeling very vulnerable. So how does the minister justify supporting actions that they say will cause distrust, dissatisfaction and disillusionment in the workforce?

MS. BERNARD: I'm sorry that they feel like that. I really don't see that analysis in this bill. Quite frankly, I'm quite familiar with gender-based analysis on any policy. I'm concerned also with the 50 per cent of the population of Nova Scotia that need a long-term and healthy, sustainable health care system to meet all their health needs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER LEVY - MYSTERY ZONE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Maritime Lobster Panel report recommended a deadline of August 2014 to determine support for the lobster levy. That date has long passed and we are still no further ahead in determining that support. Instead of consulting fishermen and organizing a vote, the minister created chaos and distrust among the fishermen and processors by announcing a 5-cent lobster tax in a mystery zone.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, will the minister continue the charade of secrecy or will he tell fishermen today where the mystery zone is located?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I'm very pleased with that question from the honourable member. Indeed we've made significant progress in a pilot project in the lobster industry that is going to be led by the industry itself. That is something that has never happened in the history of the Province of Nova Scotia before. We're very proud of that and as of yesterday we have a letter of intent signed by all parties. (Applause)

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the lobster industry is very important to this province and the Maritime Lobster Panel report deserves the support of the industry. Unfortunately by mentioning the 5-cent tax, the minister has made it less likely that the industry will support this levy. Will the minister let us know where this will happen - where will the 5-cent levy be implemented?

MR. COLWELL: Well the member may not recall there was talk about having a 5-cent levy on the pilot project only, and we will continue to work with the organization that we signed a letter of intent with around that, and exactly how we'll do that will be revealed very shortly.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Maritime Lobster Panel report and the 2-cent levy are very important moments in the history of the lobster industry in this province. When will the minister take the steps recommended in the Maritime Lobster Panel report? Why is he letting time slip away on that?

MR. COLWELL: It's very important that we consult with industry. We have started that process and there is some objection from people in the industry around a levy. We intend to consult with the industry more before we decide exactly how we're going to proceed with this, but we will be proceeding with it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MUN. AFFS.: CBRM TRIP - DETAILS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In August the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his five-member entourage took a trip to CBRM. The CBRM residents were hopeful that the minister would bring some good news and tell everyone the Liberal Government had finally gotten off its hands and taken action to speed up local infrastructure projects. The minister let everybody down by not addressing his government's long delays and instead told the municipality that they would have to resubmit their traffic accounts in order to have their project considered and moved along.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, why did the minister insult CBRM residents by wasting their time and getting their hopes up, when a simple phone call would have done?

HON. MARK FUREY: I'd be pleased to work with my colleague to demonstrate with him, and to him, effective communications in government. The residents of Cape Breton, and the mayor in particular, were quite pleased that government attended their community to have open, honest dialogue about the issues before them.

My colleague speaks to traffic counts - there is a process, we're committed to following a process, it is called transparency and accountability. For the benefit of my colleague, the application of the Building Canada Fund has been submitted and a key contributing factor to that was the very discussion that we had with CBRM.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, that's an expensive communication lesson, a very expensive communication lesson. And to say that it would take a simple phone call - it is my understanding the minister wouldn't take the municipality's phone calls when this started to happen about the infrastructure.

Not only did the minister waste more time that day, he also wasted our money. Thanks to a freedom of information request, we have learned the true cost of the minister's road trip. The cost to taxpayers was \$1,881.12 - all that, and a simple phone call could have been made.

since Cape Breton's infrastructure continues to crumble while the minister sees fit to take his entourage on an almost \$1,900 road trip, I ask my question on behalf of the CBRM and Nova Scotia taxpayers: Can we have our money back, please?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that it was indeed a pleasure to travel to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and meet with the mayor and full council. As a matter of fact, 52 municipalities that I've travelled to and visited and I've met face-to-face with our municipal leaders and their senior staff and I would not treat CBRM any differently.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it seems like pricey road trips with little to show for them are becoming a hallmark of this government. Only a few weeks ago it was revealed that the Minister of Natural Resources put taxpayers on the hook for an \$8,700 trip to Boston - for two trips to Boston. Now we see the Minister of Service Nova Scotia spending \$1,900 that a simple phone call would have fixed.

My question to the minister, will he apologize to Cape Bretoners for his pointless \$1,900 road trip and urge his Cabinet colleagues to be more respectful of taxpayer dollars?

MR. FUREY: As I said earlier, it was indeed a pleasure to travel to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and meet with the mayor and full council, as well as their senior staff. As a matter of fact, it was the second trip I made to Cape Breton to ensure that there was open, honest dialogue and clarity to the issues on the table.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**TIR - NORTHERN INVERNESS: PAVING PLANS (GOV'T. PAVING PLANT)
- DETAILS**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Without having to undergo a freedom of information request, could the minister tell us if there was a plan to pave rural roads in northern Inverness County before the government sold the government-owned paving plant?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, to the honourable member, of course there is a plan. The member knows. We actually did a road trip with the member this summer. We looked at some critical roads in the Inverness County area. Certainly there are

some infrastructure challenges in Mabou and in surrounding areas and everywhere in our province, quite frankly, given the deficit we have.

Basically the plan, in many instances, for local roads is that they flow through the department. There is much stakeholder consultation. Everyone has an opinion on which roads should be done next, so that is funnelled through the department. The department puts together the specs, the information and the details. It becomes part of the planning for each fiscal year.

We obviously have our large scale capital plan, as well as the local roads plan, so we do everything we can to get that information on the table. We certainly don't make any exceptions for Inverness. We're going to do everything we can to fix up those roads.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the government paving plant in that program was a special program. There were areas that benefited significantly from it, rural areas that sometimes have difficulty making the requirements. I know, as the minister has stated, there certainly is a process to get a road paved and I respect that.

Mr. Speaker, if there was money allotted, and granted it was in the form of a paving plant, my question would be - there's potential that it could still be allotted in the form of a package of roads going to tender. If it was a priority for the previous government, through efforts made by myself and local management at Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, could it once again be a priority for this government to pave a package of roads in northern Inverness County sometime soon?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member for the question. Obviously we have been very clear on our position on the paving plant. We were happy to remove that asset from our fleet, for sure, but the member does highlight a significant point and one of the issues with the rural paving is that we were as a government - the previous government and all the governments that came before them - we were putting out tenders for very small pieces of road in rural areas so the economics didn't make sense.

As the member would know, and I'm sure their Party supports, with respect to the Ivany report, with respect to what we want to do with the private sector, it's the road builders who do this the best in this province and in this country we've got some of the best road builders, without question.

One of the deficiencies within the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal was that we weren't packaging those tenders, Mr. Speaker, so the member makes an excellent point. We're certainly endeavouring to do that with this year's capital plan as we move forward into the 2015 fiscal year. Thank you very much.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, there are many roads throughout Inverness County that need paving, but I do think of the northern areas of Cheticamp and Margaree,

those regions specifically. We were quite hopeful that there was some paving coming, and we had some indication that there was. Those roads are still there, and they still do need to be paved, so I would impress it upon the minister - and the government, because the minister can't do his job without your support - to ensure that there is a budget available for this kind of paving, because there was a need before, I've seen under the previous government, and it had been identified for northern Inverness County.

I will ask the minister, will you continue to impress it upon your colleagues so that we can receive some paving in northern Inverness County, certainly in the next year or two?

MR. MACLELLAN: When we did that road tour, I think that the member opposite got an appreciation for how the department works. We did have a representative from TIR, one of the local managers, who certainly understands the needs in the Inverness area, in the county, and in Cape Breton.

The reality is that they work hard to get their priorities on the table as well. We are looking at the local roads in Inverness and for all areas of the province, and we're going to do our very best. I know the member will have me up for another road tour in summer 2015, so I look forward to that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - CECs: MIN. - STANCE

HON. DAVID WILSON: I'm not going to ask for a road tour. Our roads in Sackville-Cobequid fall under the municipality's responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In 2011, after heeding the warning from Dr. John Ross on emergency care in Nova Scotia, the NDP Government decided it was time to think outside the box. The idea of Collaborative Emergency Centres was born, and plans began to open the centres in rural areas of our province. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, can he please tell us what his thoughts are on Collaborative Emergency Centres in the Province of Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: That was one of the areas that I wasn't surprised at, but when I did the tour last winter in most of the communities that have a CEC there was full confirmation of how well it was working, and it was a great example of primary health care getting same day/next day, which really was the right answer. Those communities didn't need a fully-staffed ER. There were many benefits, actually, and one team of doctors that I met in Tatamagouche said that it really confirmed their future and their commitment to Tatamagouche and area.

Right now we're waiting for Mary Jane Hampton's report to take a look at. She is doing an analysis of how the CECs are working. There are a few areas that may have to, perhaps, change the model slightly, but the commitment to the CEC is indeed very strong.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in 2012 a Collaborative Emergency Centre was announced for Lunenburg, an area which suffers from a chronically understaffed and often-closed emergency room. Unfortunately, the Minister of Health and Wellness has put emergency services on the back burner while he tries to figure out how amalgamating the district health authorities will happen.

My question through you, to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, can he please tell us when his department will follow through and open the Lunenburg CEC?

MR. GLAVINE: I am pleased to inform the member opposite and the House that I've had Dr. John Ross in to take a look at where we are and where we need to go. Not every CEC needs to have the exact same model. I'm hearing from Lunenburg that a family practice offering, as opposed to keeping their emergency room open, that CEC model with some variation may work extremely well there. That is, we can say, under review. We will be addressing - and hopefully next fiscal year, and after Mary Jane Hampton's report - we'll be able to decide what the best model for Lunenburg will be well into the future.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit concerned because in the initial response the minister acknowledged the success of CECs across the province. And a lot of work, time, and energy was put into the announcement of the Collaborative Emergency Centre in Lunenburg - a lot of work from a number of people who work within health care. I feel it a bit unfortunate that, at this time - we're almost a year after the government took over the reins - that we still don't see a Collaborative Emergency Centre there, or some version of it.

I would agree that each area of the province, each community has a different need, and that was really why I think the collaborative emergency model worked. That input from that community focused and formed what was going to be there. So I hope and I plead with the minister that he doesn't have to wait for a review to continue on with the opening of a Collaborative Emergency Centre in Lunenburg.

So I ask him again - will he give a timeline on when the people of Lunenburg and surrounding areas will see movement on the Collaborative Emergency Centre for their community?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, sometimes you get the question, the urging from the Opposition, but sometimes you get it coming from a very conscientious MLA for Lunenburg. I believe, as the member opposite, that CEC with different variations, different models in different communities, is in fact, the way that we'll be going. We know that there are several other sites, as well. I believe the report from Mary Jane Hampton - she's very, very astute at analyzing health care requirements, and I'm prepared, because she is going to

be providing that document very shortly. It's just about ready for publication. And when we take a look at that, I think we'll be also in a place where we can announce, with a very definitive timeline, what Lunenburg can expect for its future.

I know that the district health authority had to get a collaborative health centre in Bridgewater because they had difficulty attracting doctors. That has been put in place. It was started under the previous government. They are attracting new clinicians, including doctors and nurse practitioners to the area. So we'll have a definitive date on Lunenburg very shortly. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition. (Applause)

TIR: HWY NO. 103 - OVERPASSES

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you. Let me do this quick. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I can't believe I was that popular.

The Highway No. 103 overpasses - to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the 103 overpasses - go.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. As you know - Highway No. 103 overpasses and the bridges and the structures is something that the member has taken to the Legislature via petition, so I know it's important to his community. We actually do have a number of pieces of Highway No. 103 that we're looking at now. There is about a 14-kilometre strip that looks like it could be part of the capital plan in the very near future and I know that's part of what the community is asking for. Our local guy on the ground, Steve MacIsaac, has done a tremendous job looking at the priorities.

Look, it's an important corridor for the province. We take our highway infrastructure very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we know that we want to ensure the safety of all Nova Scotians. So it is a priority for us and I really do appreciate the question. Look, we're here to answer questions so I'm glad the member brought this to my attention and we'll look into it. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess for two minutes while we resolve into Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[1:11 a.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[3:07 a.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 1 - Health Authorities Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a third time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call the order of business - I'm just joking. (Laughter) But I'm glad to see everyone showed up just in case.

Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for this evening. We will be meeting again on Friday, October 3rd from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., at which time, following the daily routine, we will go into third reading of Bill No. 1.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on October 3rd from 9:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until October 3rd at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 3:09 a.m.]