



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
INTRODUCTION OF VISITOR	8763
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 3504, Yom HaShoah - Reflect/Educate, The Premier (by Hon. D. Whalen).....	8764
Vote - Affirmative.....	8764
Res. 3505, Fort McMurray Wildfire: Red Cross - Donate, Hon. L. Hines	8764
Vote - Affirmative.....	8765
Res. 3506, Cdn. Instit. of Public Health Inspectors (Atl. Br.) - Anniv. (60 th), Hon. M. Miller	8765
Vote - Affirmative.....	8766
Res. 3507, Lyme Disease Awareness Mo. (05/16) - Recognize, Hon. L. Glavine.....	8767
Vote - Affirmative.....	8767

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 177, Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Hon. Z. Churchill	8767
No. 178, Environmental Bill of Rights, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	8767
No. 179, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Act, Mr. T. Houston.....	8768

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Sociables Pub & Eatery - Springhill Bus. of Yr. (2016), Hon. J. Baillie	8768
Kuhn, Julia - Youth Vol. Award, Hon. L. Kousoulis	8768
Intl. Day of the Midwife (05/05/16) - Midwives Thank, Ms. K. MacFarlane	8769
Child Poverty - Eradication, Ms. M. Mancini	8769
S. Shore Habitat for Humanity - Fundraising Gala, Hon. M. Furey.....	8770
Fortin, Justine - <i>Courrier de la Nouvelle Écosse</i> : Directrice Générale - Bienvenue, Hon. C. d'Entremont	8770
EECD: Students - Budgeting Exercises, Ms. L. Zann	8771
Shuman, Fred - Bedford Distinguished Business Person of Yr., Hon. K. Regan	8771
Natl. Hospice Palliative Care Wk. (05/01 - 05/07/16) - Hospice Care Providers, Mr. J. Lohr	8772
Prem.: Physician Provision - Promises, Hon. S. Belliveau	8772
Caper Gas Stn./La Goélette à Pépé Café - Opening, Hon. M. Samson	8772
Book Publishing - Funding, Hon. P. Dunn	8773
Midwifery - Availability, Hon. David Wilson	8773
Phillips, Damian: D'Escousse B&B/Pub - Congrats., Hon. M. Samson	8773
Riverview Redettes - NSSAF Cheer Championships, Hon. A. MacLeod	8774
New Democrats - Forward Looking, Ms. M. Mancini.....	8774
ScotDance N.S. Prov. Comp.: Vols./Instructors/Parents - Thank, Hon. R. Delorey	8775
So. Col. Acad. - Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Challenge, Mr. L. Harrison	8775
LeBoutillier, Ginger - Travelling Kindness Rock Proj., Hon. S. Belliveau	8776

Brandow, Connor - Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Hon. K. Colwell	8776
Brain Tumour Fdn.: Support - Recognize, Hon. J. Baillie	8776
Midwifery - Availability, Ms. L. Zann	8777
Flemming, Cheryl - Artwork, Mr. I. Rankin	8777
Merchant Navy Monument (Sydney): Support - Thank, Mr. D. Mombourquette	8778
Sutherland Harris Mem. Hosp.: Services - Elimination, Ms. K. MacFarlane	8778
SkySquirrel Technologies: CEO/Employees - Success Congrats., Mr. B. Jessome	8779
SARMU Concert - Organizers/Participants - Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont	8779
Oake, Denise - Educ. Wk. Award (2016), Ms. P. Eyking	8780
Health & Wellness - Doctor Shortage, Mr. T. Houston	8780
Fort McMurray: Contributions - Generosity, Mr. S. Gough	8780
Googoo, Kimberly - Sea Prog., Mr. A. MacMaster.....	8781
Ronbeck-MacNeil, Christina - Basketball Accomplishments, Ms. J. Treen	8781
Breton Bracelets - C.B. Reg. Jr. Achievement Comp., Mr. A. MacMaster	8782
Hollohan, Mitchell/Campbell, Cole: Site 2020 - Tech. Start-Up Comp., Mr. B. Horne	8782
N.S. Craft Brewers Assoc. - Commend, Mr. J. Stroink	8783
Wardrope, Chief Ralph A.: Milford & Dist. Emerg. Serv. - Retirement, Hon. M. Miller	8783
TD Insurance: Bus. Expansion - Grand Opening, Hon. L. Diab	8784
Allaine, Pierre: Death of - Tribute, Hon. M. Furey.....	8784
Doyle, Jessie - Holly Bartlett Mem. Bursary, Hon. R. Delorey	8784
McArthur, Florence/Elmwood Child Care Ctr. - Anniv. (20 th), Hon. M. Miller	8785
Thammachak, Ampai et al: The Glass Slipper - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan	8786

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:

No. 2229, Prem.: Ferry Terminal (ME) - Upgrade Cost, Hon. J. Baillie	8786
No. 2230, Prem.: Budget/Dec. Forecast - Disparity, Ms. M. Mancini.....	8788
No. 2231, Prem.: Budget - Mental Health Funding, Hon. J. Baillie	8789
No. 2232, Com. Serv. - Hair-Strand Test: Closed Cases - Review, Ms. M. Mancini.....	8790
No. 2233, Environ. - Kings Co. Demolition Waste Site: Fire - Costs, Mr. J. Lohr	8791
No. 2234, Assoc. of Psychologists (N.S.): Mental Health Serv. - Min. Stance, Hon. C. d'Entremont	8792
No. 2235, Energy - Port Hawkesbury Paper: NAFTA Appeal - Update, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	8793
No. 2236, Janes, Zachary - École Bois-Joli: Suspension - Details, Mr. A. Younger.....	8795
No. 2237, NSBI - Eastlink Fund: Certification - Update, Ms. L. Zann.....	8796
No. 2238, Health & Wellness: Valley Hospice - MOU Signing, Mr. J. Lohr	8797
No. 2239, Health & Wellness: Oncotype DX Test - Funding, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8797
No. 2240, TIR: Deepdale Rd. - Budget/Time, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	8798
No. 2241, Prem.: Transition Houses - Funding Levels, Ms. L. Zann.....	8799
No. 2242, Fin. & Treasury Bd.: Expenses Approval - Auditor General Recommendations, Mr. T. Houston.....	8800
No. 2243, Affaires acadiennes bureau - détails sur les changements, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8801
No. 2244, TIR - Yar. Ferry Serv.: N.S. - Fin. Responsibility, Hon. S. Belliveau	8802
No. 2245, Justice: Law Reform Commn. - Funding Elimination, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	8804

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:

ON MOTION FOR SUPPLY:

Hon. A. MacLeod	8806
Ms. L. Zann.....	8809
Mr. J. Stroink	8814
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CW ON SUPPLY AT 3:35 P.M.	8818
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 7:43 P.M.....	8818

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:]

PRIVATE & LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 176, Otter Lake Landfill Act

Mr. I. Rankin.....	8819
Ms. K. MacFarlane	8821
Hon. David Wilson	8821
Mr. I. Rankin.....	8823
Vote - Affirmative.....	8824

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 174, Financial Measures (2016) Act

Hon. R. Delorey	8824
Mr. T. Houston.....	8827
Ms. M. Mancini.....	8834
Mr. J. Lohr	8836
Adjourned debate	8846

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., May 6th at 9:00 a.m.8847

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 3508, Cunningham, Geneva - Birthday (80th),

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8848
--------------------------	------

Res. 3509, O'Connell, Vanessa: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8848
--------------------------	------

Res. 3510, Shand, Valerie: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8849
--------------------------	------

Res. 3511, Smith, Neal: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8849
--------------------------	------

Res. 3512, MacKinnon, Melanie: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8850
--------------------------	------

Res. 3513, Weeks, Marjorie: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8850
--------------------------	------

Res. 3514, Ross, Marjorie: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8851
--------------------------	------

Res. 3515, Atwood, Lurla: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8851
--------------------------	------

Res. 3516, Joyce, John: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8852
--------------------------	------

Res. 3517, Shaar, John & Sandra: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8852
--------------------------	------

Res. 3518, Atwood, Jerry: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8853
--------------------------	------

Res. 3519, Sears, Jennifer: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition,

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8853
--------------------------	------

Res. 3520, Bell, Jennifer: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8854
Res. 3521, Gregory, Jeff: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8854
Res. 3522, Waybret, Greg: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8855
Res. 3523, Crowell, Evan: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8855
Res. 3524, Stanley, Darlene: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8856
Res. 3525, Richardson, Crissy: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8856
Res. 3526, Quinlan, Christine & Troy: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont	8857
Res. 3527, Stoddard, Cathy: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8857
Res. 3528, Smith, Cassie: Barrington Mun. - Vol. Recognition, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	8858
Res. 3529, Molloy, Olivia: MLA Writing Contest (2016) - Thank, Hon. L. Diab	8858
Res. 3530, Easley, Clara: MLA Writing Contest (2016) - Thank, Hon. L. Diab	8859
Res. 3531, Rae, Kailyn: MLA Writing Contest (2016) - Thank, Hon. L. Diab	8859



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin the daily routine, I'd like to take the opportunity to make an introduction.

If I could draw the members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, I have with me here today a distinguished resident of the Eastern Shore constituency, a recently retired litigation practitioner, and very active person in our community in any number of causes.

Would the House give a warm welcome to Ms. Jean McKenna, please? (Applause)

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 3504

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Premier, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas yesterday at sundown, Jewish Nova Scotians began the observance of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day; and

Whereas we pause to remember the countless innocent people, including six million Jewish men, women, and children, who suffered and died at the hands of the Nazis; and

Whereas it is important to always be mindful of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust and our collective responsibility to ensure that these events are neither forgotten nor repeated;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly mark this time with people around the world to both reflect on and educate ourselves about the enduring lessons of the Holocaust.

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.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 3505

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many Nova Scotians have family connections or live in Fort McMurray, Alberta, and are closely watching the wildfire situation there; and

Whereas along with our thoughts and prayers, Nova Scotia stands ready to provide Alberta with whatever help is needed, just as we have in the past and just as they would for us; and

Whereas the Alberta fires are a sobering reminder to all of us that wildfires are extremely dangerous, so caution and care are very important when burning a brush pile or setting a campfire;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature strongly consider sending donations to the Red Cross emergency appeal to support the evacuees.

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.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MILLER: I'd like to direct the attention of the House to the east gallery, where we have joining us Sara Baird, Heidi Darling, and Mark Durkee. I would ask them to please stand for the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 3506

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas 2016 marks the 60th Anniversary of the Atlantic Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors; and

Whereas Canadians and Nova Scotians depend on the institute and its members, such as environmental health officers, food safety specialists, and public health officers, whether they are working in a remote setting, rural area, or urban centre, at all levels of government with business and private industry; and

Whereas public health inspectors over the past 100 years have excelled at protecting our health and well-being where we all live, work, eat, and play;

Therefore be it resolved that we recognize the Atlantic Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors for their proud history of ongoing contributions in the service of protecting and improving the lives of Atlantic Canadians.

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.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Before I read this resolution, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: It is my pleasure to introduce Donna Lugar, Anne Bezzina, Rebecca Mombourquette, Leanne Morgan, and Suzanne McCarthy. These guests are tireless advocates for Lyme disease awareness, and they work hard to make sure Nova Scotians know how to prevent it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members of the House to give them a warm welcome today.
(Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 3507

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Nova Scotians from Yarmouth to Cape Breton enjoy taking to the outdoors to hike, bike, camp, and take part in other outdoor activities to have fun, get active, and stay fit; and

Whereas being active outdoors means taking steps to protect ourselves, our families, and our pets from black-legged ticks which carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease; and

Whereas raising awareness and practising preventive measures such as frequent tick checks and proper tick removal when enjoying outdoor activities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House help raise awareness by recognizing the month of May as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Nova Scotia.

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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 177 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (Hon. Zach Churchill)

Bill No. 178 - Entitled an Act to Establish an Environmental Bill of Rights (Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse)

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

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: Seated in the west gallery today, I am pleased to have my wife, Carol. I am going to introduce her first this time, Mr. Speaker; I won't make the same mistake as before. With her I am so pleased to have my dear friends Raylene and Jan MacPherson, and also Beth Ferguson and Betty Garby. If I could ask them to stand. I have known Raylene for quite some time and I have known her to be a very strong lady and now the rest of the world is getting to see why, so if the members would give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

Bill No. 179 - Entitled an Act Respecting Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SOCIABLES PUB & EATERY - SPRINGHILL BUS. OF YR. (2016)

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Sociables Pub & Eatery for being named the 2016 Springhill Business of the Year. Open just over two years ago, Sociables has become a regular stop to enjoy great food and fine service. This is truly a family business for owners Krista and Brent MacDonald, and Jeff and Trudy Harrison. They employ ten people.

Sociables is a great addition to the Springhill business community. Jeff and Brent work well together and have brought a new sense of buy local to the area. They are proud of the quality food and drink that they offer, and I can attest to both. They are praised by their employees for the work atmosphere that they have created. It is a great place to visit. Congratulations Sociables.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax-Citadel-Sable Island.

KUHN, JULIA - YOUTH VOL. AWARD

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Volunteer Awards were held recently and a middle school student in my riding was awarded the Youth Volunteer

Award. I wanted to take a minute to congratulate Julia Kuhn as the list of activities she volunteers for is extensive.

From being a youth volunteer at the IWK to the Rotary Club Brigadoon Camp, school clubs, as well as her empathy and passion know no limits. I am proud to have such an exceptional youth as a student at Gorsebrook Junior High in my constituency. Clearly, her selflessness benefits her school peers and all the people in the community she touches with her positive attitude.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

INTL. DAY OF THE MIDWIFE (05/05/16) - MIDWIVES THANK

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day of the Midwife. Midwives are educated health professionals who develop trusting relationships with expectant mums by providing care through pregnancy, labour, birth, and the postpartum period. Midwives also care for newborn infants in their first six weeks of life. Midwifery services are available at the IWK Health Centre, the South Shore District Health Authority, and the Guysborough-Antigonish Strait Health Authority. We support expanding midwifery care in the province. It's an important and valuable service for families.

Today on behalf of the PC caucus, I say a big thanks to our highly trained midwives, for providing first rate care to Nova Scotia's mums and babies. Happy International Day of the Midwife.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CHILD POVERTY - ERADICATION

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, in 1989 a resolution was passed in the House of Commons to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. Decades later, the percentage of Nova Scotia children living in poverty was 24 per cent higher than it had been in 1989 when that promise was made.

Nova Scotia has the third highest rate of poverty in Canada and the highest in Atlantic Canada. This is not only shameful, it is also costly. Research shows that poverty can be a cause of poor health. Poor health, Mr. Speaker, is expensive. A 2010 report by CCPA estimated that the health-related cost of poverty in Nova Scotia was \$240 million. Good management of our health care resources demands that we develop effective poverty reduction strategies.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

S. SHORE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - FUNDRAISING GALA

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm always pleased to have an opportunity to recognize members of our community who make a real difference.

Each year the South Shore Chapter of Habitat for Humanity organizes a benefit dinner and gala to raise funds for their next build. This is an incredibly dedicated group who work year round to organize and coordinate an amazing evening of great food and great company, for a great cause. The community's support for this event has been incredible year after year.

With Peter Mansbridge as this year's guest speaker, the tickets didn't last long. A sellout crowd of 300 filled the room and raised \$35,000. I'd like to thank all the organizers and volunteers who put the time and effort into this fundraiser to make it such a great success, and thank all who attended for their continued support of this great cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FORTIN, JUSTINE - *COURRIER DE LA NOUVELLE ÉCOSSE*: DIRECTRICE GÉNÉRALE - BIENVENUE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: M. le Président, après 15 ans à titre de directrice générale du Courrier de la Nouvelle Écosse, Mme. Denise Comeau Desautels, prend sa retraite bien mérité. De le 22 Avril, 2016, Mme. Justine Fortin est devenue la nouvelle directrice générale pour ce journal.

Justine Fortin est natif de Montréal, Québec. Elle est diplômée en droits et communications ayant un intérêt dans les politiques est admiratrice des médias émergents et les qualités dans cette genres. Elle est aussi une grande défenseuse de la langue française, parles ou écrits.

Mme. Fortin, bienvenue dans notre régions francophone et je lui souhaite bonne chance dans cette nouvelle carrière.

Mr. Speaker, after 15 years as Director Générale of the Courrier de la Nouvelle Écosse, Ms. Denise Comeau Desautels has taken her well-deserved retirement.

As of April 22nd, Ms. Justine Fortin became the new Director Générale for this newspaper. Justine Fortin is a native of Montréal, she's a graduate of the University of Montréal in Law and Communications. She has an interest in politics and is also an admirer of emerging media. She's also a great defender of the French language, spoken or written.

We welcome Justine Fortin to our region and wish her well in her new career.

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

EECD: STUDENTS - BUDGETING EXERCISES

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to hear the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development talk about students in our schools participating in budgeting exercises to learn real-life lessons. The minister indicated many students don't know the cost of an apartment, but based on this government's approach to wages and income support, I'd say some members of this House may not either.

The CCPA recently calculated a living wage for Halifax. A family of four with two children could be expected to have monthly expenses of more than \$5,000, Mr. Speaker, and that doesn't include any money for debt repayment like student loans, retirement savings, savings for children's education, life insurance, or any savings to own a home.

The cost of living is increasing, inequality is growing, and it's time Nova Scotia had a government that understands working should lift you up, not drag you down.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

SHUMAN, FRED - BEDFORD DISTINGUISHED BUSINESS PERSON OF YR.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell you about a Bedford businessman who was recently honoured as Bedford's Distinguished Business Person of the Year. Fred Shuman started Say it With Stitches in 1986, together with his wife Claudette. At the time, he was employed by Okanagan Helicopters, supporting offshore exploration. He continued to fly while running Say it With Stitches, and in 1989 the Shumans purchased the building where the business is located today, on the Bedford Highway, and the business continues to thrive after three decades.

Fred has served his community in a volunteer capacity for many years. He has been on the board of the Rock Church Christian Association for 28 years. He has also been active with CFIB, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, OTANS, Promotional Products of Canada, and the Bedford Business Association, where he is the new president.

I'd like to congratulate Fred and Claudette on the success of their business and commend Fred on his honour and wish him every success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**NATL. HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE WK. (05/01 - 05/07/16)
- HOSPICE CARE PROVIDERS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, May 1st to 7th is National Hospice Palliative Care Week. This year's theme is Hospice Palliative Care First. Increasing awareness and education is one of the best ways to advocate for change and ensure that every Canadian has access to quality hospice palliative care. Providing comfort and peace for people living and dying with life-threatening illness should be our goal.

Today I want to thank everyone at the Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association and everyone who is working so hard in our province to provide hospice care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

PREM.: PHYSICIAN PROVISION - PROMISES

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this session may be drawing to a close, and I feel some comfort knowing that Nova Scotians are aware of the many ER closures and shortages of doctors across this province.

Personally, I am not upset that the Premier promised a doctor for every Nova Scotian. I am upset that from now on I won't be able to believe his comments when it comes to a doctor for everyone. The Premier's promise carries no weight at all.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, this story is to be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

CAPER GAS STN./LA GOÉLETTE À PÉPÉ CAFÉ - OPENING

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the opening of a new business in Arichat. The 13th Caper Gas station started serving customers in July 2015 and introduced the province's first 24-hour unattended gas pump system. In addition to the gas pumps, the business also features a small takeout coffee shop, La Goélette à Pépé Cafe, which, in addition to allowing customers to enjoy various custom-branded coffees, teas, and snacks, serves as a hub for local artisans to sell their handiwork.

Community and family are extremely important to the independently-owned Caper Gas, and this is reflected in the fact that this new business is located in the same building that once housed a gas station that was operated by co-owner Brian Boudreau's father, Carl, for many years.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Brian and Lisa Boudreau of Caper Gas on all their success and growth and for carrying on a family tradition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BOOK PUBLISHING - FUNDING

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to suggest that Nova Scotia book publishing is in potential chaos. Local publishers have lost their operating funding and plans indicate that the Creative Industry Fund will focus only on export-related projects. In other words, financial support will be weakened and this will be a negative direct impact for book publishers.

Publishers are experiencing difficulty with publishing books because they do not know the amount of funding that may be available. This appears to stifle the industry's potential for growth in the province. Nova Scotia publishers support approximately 800 creative, talented, educated Nova Scotians, including writers, artists, illustrators, editors, production managers, salespeople, distributors, and booksellers.

Cultural industries shape our society, develop our sense of identity, and provide us with a sense of pride within our communities.

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

MIDWIFERY - AVAILABILITY

HON. DAVID WILSON: People all over the world are honouring the International Day of the Midwife today, May 5th. Midwifery provides a high-quality, specialized service that places women and newborns at the centre of care. Midwives are able to take the necessary time to develop trusting relationships with the mothers. Research shows that women with midwives have shorter hospital stays and fewer interventions during labour, and are more likely to breastfeed.

However, midwifery services are currently available in only three sites in Nova Scotia, so we'd like to urge the Department of Health and Wellness to develop a plan to integrate midwifery across the health system and across the province. Then, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians can truly celebrate the International Day of the Midwife.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

PHILLIPS, DAMIAN: D'ESCOUSSE B&B/PUB - CONGRATS.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: The entrepreneurial spirit brings a great deal to our rural communities. Last year, Mr. Damian Phillips, a native of the U.K., renovated a 170-year-old building on the D'Escousse harbourfront and turned it into a charming bed and breakfast called The Groundswell. Damian offers hiking and cycling, as well as sailing and

kayaking packages. He also offers equipment rentals for kayaking, biking, surfing, and the accurately named stand-up paddleboarding.

This spring, Damian has added a pub with delicious locally-sourced food, local craft beer, and live music featuring some very talented Cape Breton musicians. I'm sure that this will be a very popular spot for Richmond County residents and tourists alike. Please join me in congratulating Damian Phillips on the successful launch of both a bed and breakfast and a pub in D'Escousse, Isle Madame, and in wishing him continued success with his new business.

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

RIVERVIEW REDETTES - NSSAF CHEER CHAMPIONSHIPS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: I rise today to congratulate the Riverview Redettes cheerleaders who are provincial cheer champions for a second year in a row. Head coach Emma Nickerson and the Redettes stepped up and pulled off the best performance of the season when it counted, winning the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Level 4 Championship at the County Recreation Centre in Coxheath. The Riverview Redettes assistant coaches are Madison Waterfield and Brianna Lesnick. Riverview also placed third at the Highland Regional Championships.

Today, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating the Riverview Redettes and their coaches on their outstanding performance.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

NEW DEMOCRATS - FORWARD LOOKING

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: There have been many references to the historical record during this sitting of the House, many comments casting back to governments of the past. This Legislature may be the oldest in Canada but that does not make it a museum. It is a place for lively, forward-looking debate. It is not an archives. On the opening day of the Nova Scotia NDP leadership convention, Gary Burrill said, "I believe that we are entering a new moment - a time when we as New Democrats will . . . lead our province on a course to a stronger democracy, and to greater environmental, economic, and social justice." We are going to continue to look forward to a future of great possibilities. We invite Nova Scotians to look forward with us.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: May I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. DELOREY: I'd like to draw my colleagues' attention to the east gallery, where a constituent, a student at St. Francis Xavier University and a former Page with the P.E.I. Legislature, Julia O'Hanley, is here to see how we handle ourselves in the Nova Scotia Legislature, perhaps something she could take back to P.E.I. when she goes. If you could give her the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

SCOTDANCE N.S. PROV. COMP.: VOLS./INSTRUCTORS/PARENTS - THANK

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The Antigonish Highland Dance Association hosted the ScotDance Nova Scotia Provincial Competition the weekend of April 23rd. Dancers showcased their hard work and talent while competing for a spot to represent Nova Scotia at the 2016 ScotDance Canada Championship Series this summer in Winnipeg. All participants gave it their all, and it was truly a sight to be seen for anybody who enjoys the art of highland dancing, and for that I congratulate them.

Special recognition should be given to Antigonish dancers Courtney MacDonald, Abigail MacDonald, Megan Smith, Carly MacDonald, my niece Hannah Delorey, and Erin Gilfoy. Each has earned a spot as a Nova Scotia provincial representative for the 2016 ScotDance Canada Championship. I know they will represent Antigonish and Nova Scotia well on the national stage.

I would also like to recognize the volunteers, dance instructors, and parents for the hard work they have done organizing the event and preparing the dancers for competition. I ask that my colleagues in the House of Assembly join me in congratulating all involved in the ScotDance Nova Scotia Provincial Championship on their successful and culturally enriching event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

SO. COL. ACAD. - SAMSUNG SOLVE FOR TOMORROW CHALLENGE

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I want to rise today to extend congratulations to South Colchester Academy on being co-winners in the first-ever Samsung Solve for Tomorrow challenge. As my fellow members may recall, students at South Colchester Academy used science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to solve water issues that were not only flooding their school's soccer field but also damaging a nearby river's ecosystem. Their creativity, determination, and collaboration have won them a \$50,000 Samsung classroom technology grant, tailored specifically to meet the classroom technology needs of the school. I would also like to say thank you to our members and the people of Nova Scotia who showed their support to SCA by voting for their project.

Congratulations once again to the faculty and, most importantly, the students of South Colchester Academy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

LEBOUTILLIER, GINGER - TRAVELLING KINDNESS ROCK PROJ.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, connecting people all over the world through the art of giving is happening right here in Nova Scotia. A teacher in Nova Scotia's Hants County, Ginger LeBoutillier, started the Travelling Kindness Rock Project at the start of last year's school year. She was inspired by the beauty of Australian Aboriginal art.

Five months after this project began, nearly 200 rocks were being sent all over the world, to places as far away as Argentina, from Nova Scotia, for people who are in need of support or cheering up.

Mrs. Ginger LeBoutillier is the daughter of proud parents, Luella and the member for Queens-Shelburne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

BRANDOW, CONNOR - DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize and congratulate Connor Brandow on attaining the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, which creates opportunities for young people to develop skills, get physically active, give service, and experience adventure. The award can play a crucial role in their development outside the classroom.

Connor Brandow of Lake Loon achieved the distinction of receiving the Bronze Award for those 14 years old. This award gives Connor international accreditation for his experiences and allows his achievement to be recognized worldwide.

I applaud and commend Connor Brandow on his tremendous achievements, and wish him every success in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

BRAIN TUMOUR FDN.: SUPPORT - RECOGNIZE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the month of May marks Brain Tumour Awareness Month. This country is fortunate to have the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada to serve the needs of those Canadians affected by all types of brain tumours. Every

day, 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour. These tumours affect all aspects of day-to-day life, including vision, hearing, and memory.

Beyond the physical effects, brain tumours can also take an emotional and financial toll on individuals and their families. Despite advancing medical research, brain tumours remain unpredictable and complex. Sadly, there is no cure.

I am pleased to recognize the support offered by the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada to the 55,000 Canadians living with a brain tumour. Their hard work helps those affected to find hope. Thank you.

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

MIDWIFERY - AVAILABILITY

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, today we are here to honour the International Day of the Midwife. Midwifery provides women an alternative: a high-quality, specialized service that places women and their newborns at the centre of care. Midwives develop comforting and trusting relationships with mothers. Women with midwives have shorter hospital stays; fewer interventions during labour; and are more likely to breastfeed.

However, midwifery services are currently available in only three sites in Nova Scotia. So I urge this government to make midwifery a priority in Nova Scotia and plan to integrate midwifery care across the province and throughout the health care system so that in this way, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotian women are honoured and can truly celebrate International Day of the Midwife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

FLEMMING, CHERYL - ARTWORK

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Cheryl Flemming of Prospect. Cheryl is a trained architect, a skilled dancer, and an accomplished artist. Since moving to the Prospect area, Cheryl has been inspired by the dramatic coastline with its sharp contrast of harsh ruggedness and mystical beauty. She has become more inspired about landscape and *plein-air* painting to capture the beauty of this truly unique and unspoiled area. Cheryl's work has been described as "an artist with a loose style that has thought and spontaneity at the same time. Passion, drama, and imagination are evoked in her figurative and landscape work."

Cheryl's work is on exhibit at a number of galleries in the province and can be viewed at her home and family business, Sand Castle B & B, in Prospect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Congratulations to Cheryl on all these impressive accomplishments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

MERCHANT NAVY MONUMENT (SYDNEY): SUPPORT - THANK

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, last week I joined with the member for Northside-Westmount on Sydney's waterfront, as the community celebrated the unveiling of a monument recognizing Canada's brave citizens who were part our Merchant Navy, who braved the high seas during two world wars. These sailors risked their lives boarding supply ships across the submarine-infested waters of the Atlantic Ocean, to ensure that supplies made it safely to our troops.

I want to thank all levels of government for their support of this project and all involved with making this monument a reality. Most importantly, thank you to all the Merchant Marines with us today, or who have passed, and to their families, for your commitment to our safety and to our democracy during two world wars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice on an introduction.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, I appreciate that. I'd like to draw the members' attention to the east gallery, and I would like to introduce Bruce Holland to you today. Some of you may know Bruce; he is a former member of this House, from 1993 to 1998, and during that time he was Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Sport. He represented Timberlea-Prospect, and that's one riding that hasn't changed its name, which is interesting.

He is currently the publisher of the *Parkview News*, so well-known to a number of us in the Mainland North part of Halifax, and he is also the executive director of the Spryfield & District Business Commission. I wonder, Bruce, if you would rise and we will give you a warm welcome, where you are so well-known. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SUTHERLAND HARRIS MEM. HOSP.: SERVICES - ELIMINATION

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, over the span of 25 years the services offered at the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital in Pictou have been slowly eliminated. What was once a full-service hospital where surgeries were performed, babies delivered, that offered an outpatient clinic and a full slate of doctors, has now been reduced to a handful of doctors, a part-time blood clinic, and a restorative care unit.

With the recent news of another doctor leaving and the shutdown of the after-hours walk-in clinic, Pictou residents have been dealt another blow to their front-line health care. Constituents routinely contact me because they do not have a doctor, or their doctor is leaving, and now they have lost the after-hours clinic.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Pictou West deserve much better. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

**SKYSQUIRREL TECHNOLOGIES: CEO/EMPLOYEES
- SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this time to acknowledge the achievements of a Hammonds Plains business that is taking off - literally. SkySquirrel Technologies are the makers of automated drones and software used to inspect crops, particularly wine grapes, and perform analytical analysis on the resulting data to improve yields and reduce costs for vineyards.

The company was awarded a \$1 million fund in start-up for their first round of investment this month and looks to be well on track for future success, with wine being an \$85 billion industry worldwide and a growth business here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate SkySquirrel's eight employees and CEO Richard van der Put on their ingenuity and economic success, and wish them and the vineyards they serve all the best in this year's growing season.

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

SARMU CONCERT - ORGANIZERS/PARTICIPANTS - CONGRATS.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, SARMU will be presented on Sunday, May 8th to Tuesday, May 10th, at Drumlin Heights Consolidated School in Argyle, featuring local talented musicians.

SARMU was born in the late 1970s at Sainte-Anne-du-Ruisseau Consolidated School, and although that school is now closed, the show has maintained its name and tradition for 39 years, featuring students from Drumlin Heights and École secondaire de Par-en-Bas, showcasing a variety of musical styles and genres. The SARMU concert has always been presented on Mother's Day and the two days following, to allow an opportunity for everyone to attend this high-quality event.

I continue to offer my congratulations to all the organizers, co-producers, volunteers, and musicians who participate. May it continue to grow and thrive for many years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

OAKE, DENISE - EDUC. WK. AWARD (2016)

MS. PAMEYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate teacher Denise Oake of Dr. T.L Sullivan Middle School, on winning a 2016 Education Week Award in April.

This year's theme for Education Week was Media Literacy: Empowering Critical Thinking in a Digital Media World. The awards were given to educators who are helping students develop the skills they need to understand, create, and critically interpret text and print onscreen and in digital format. These educators are also teaching students how to be respectful, ethical and responsible digital citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in thanking Ms. Oake for her hard work and dedication and congratulate her for receiving this award.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - DOCTOR SHORTAGE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: The government at times is in a bit of a state of denial about the doctor shortage around Nova Scotia. Let me tell you, the doctor shortage is very real, and the number of calls I get into the constituency office is really quite breathtaking.

I had a call yesterday from a lady whose 90-year-old mother is looking for a doctor. She called the Health Authority, and the Health Authority said, well, maybe see what family physician your children have. She did, and she went, and of course that doctor is full; he's not taking any new patients. So she went back to the Health Authority.

Now if you can believe this, Mr. Speaker, the Health Authority instructed this 90-year-old lady who's desperately looking for a doctor to call her MLA or her MP. Now we have the government holding their hands up in the air saying "No problem here," and the Health Authority is completely overwhelmed. They don't know what to do. "Call your MLA" is the advice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

FORT MCMURRAY: CONTRIBUTIONS - GENEROSITY

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: The City of Fort McMurray, Alberta, has been ravaged by catastrophic wildfires that continue to be out of control. Among these citizens are many Nova Scotians who moved west seeking employment. Let's keep them and everyone affected by this terrible tragedy in our prayers.

We must remember the emergency crews who are risking their lives in the line of duty and the volunteers giving unselfishly of themselves at great personal risk. It is reported that over 88,000 people have been evacuated. It is also estimated that over 1,600 structures have been destroyed.

Although Fort McMurray is many miles away from us here in Nova Scotia, remember that they are part of us and this great Country of Canada. Let's all be generous in our contributions when called upon, whether it's financial or emotional support, because we are all in this together.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GOOGOO, KIMBERLY - SEA PROG.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Ms. Kimberly Googoo, a sea cadet from Waycobah, was chosen as one of the Canadian cadets to go to sea this past March break. This program offers cadets the practical opportunity to demonstrate navigation, seamanship, and leadership components of the corps in real-life situations. Kimberly had to complete Phase 3 training and have a high level of physical fitness to be selected.

The program helps cadets learn about themselves, discover hidden strengths and talents, and understand the value of teamwork. Let us congratulate Ms. Googoo for her achievement as we look to see her continue to demonstrate her leadership abilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RONBECK-MACNEIL, CHRISTINA - BASKETBALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Christina Ronbeck-MacNeil is an inspiring young basketball star who lives in the constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and has received recognition from *The Beacon* as our athlete of the month for March.

This 13-year-old superstar has been a player on the Dartmouth Lakers now for two years. Being a Grade 7 student at the Eastern Passage Education Centre, she decided to join the girls basketball team there as well. Christina recently participated in the Lions Free-Throw Competition and, after two rounds, moved to the finals.

I ask that this House please join me in congratulating Christina and wishing her all the best on her bright future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

BRETON BRACELETS - C.B. REG. JR. ACHIEVEMENT COMP.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Congratulations to Breton Bracelets, a non-profit organization that won first place in the Cape Breton Regional Junior Achievement competition and then went on to share first place at the provincial competition.

The organization includes CEO Kati VanZutphen, Brenton Sutherland, Alex MacDonald, Holly Bond, Jenna MacLennan, Emma Munro, Connie Campbell, Siobhan MacDonald, and Hannah Beaton. They manufacture bracelets made from recycled copper and branded with "Cape Breton Island." Let us acknowledge their hard work and the successful implementation of their idea into a commercialized product.

We should also acknowledge their generosity. Breton Bracelets will be making a donation to L'Arche Cape Breton, an organization dedicated to providing homes and the dignity of work for community members.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

**HOLLOHAN, MITCHELL/CAMPBELL, COLE:
SITE 2020 - TECH. START-UP COMP.**

MR. BILL HORNE: Fall River's Mitchell Hollohan and co-developer Cole Campbell of Site 2020 Incorporated were the recipients of first place in Zone 4 of the I-3 Technology Start-Up Competition announced by Innovacorp on January 21st. Their company created innovations that could increase safety for road construction workers. The system networks smart, portable traffic lights with a tablet, allowing a single employee to manage traffic safety and create an innovative platform for communication on construction sites.

The competition was held in five zones across the province with each zone winner receiving \$100,000. Nova Scotia's future will thrive with the innovative ideas of these young adults. Please join me in congratulating Mitchell and Cole and wish them every success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South on an introduction.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a moment and invite all members of the House to welcome Alice Pickings to the gallery today. She is the president of the Lunenburg Progressive Conservative Association, a keen observer of this House on television, here to see it live today, so welcome to Alice. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

N.S. CRAFT BREWERS ASSOC. - COMMEND

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge that tomorrow, May 6th, marks the beginning of the second annual Nova Scotia Craft Brewers Week. For the next 10 days the Nova Scotia Craft Brewers Association, led by their executive director Kirk Cox, will be hosting events all across the province, promoting and celebrating this rapidly growing and successful industry.

Many of us here in this Legislature have breweries established in just the last few years, creating jobs and improving the local economies. Within my own riding of Halifax Chebucto there are two such businesses: the Good Robot Brewing Company and Unfiltered Brewing. Both have made a name for themselves in the community and continue to grow and prosper.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House of Assembly to join me in commending the Nova Scotia Craft Brewers Association and all of its affiliated breweries for helping to create, promote, and celebrate this phenomenal industry.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**WARDROPE, CHIEF RALPH A.:
MILFORD & DIST. EMERG. SERV. - RETIREMENT**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate retired Chief Ralph A. Wardrope of the Milford and District Emergency Services. Mr. Wardrope began volunteering his time with the fire department in September 1974. After serving at the rank of firefighter and captain he was named Fire Chief in March 1987. He would remain the trusted leader of the Milford Volunteers for 28 consecutive years.

In March Mr. Wardrope retired from his position as Fire Chief. Although he has stepped down, he still remains active within the fire department. He remains dedicated to serving our community as a firefighter, and we are grateful to continue to benefit from his 40-plus years of experience.

A banquet was held to celebrate the countless hours, day and night, that Mr. Wardrope has contributed through his 28 years as a Fire Chief of the Milford and District Emergency Services. Retired Chief Wardrope is a true example of an upstanding and compassionate member of our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

TD INSURANCE: BUS. EXPANSION - GRAND OPENING

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate TD Insurance for their grand opening at their beautiful, new Halifax site overlooking the Northwest Arm. I'm so pleased to be joining Frank McKenna, TD Deputy Chair and Kenn Lalonde, TD Insurance President and CEO, for a celebration of 20 years of presence in Atlantic Canada and cutting of the ribbon ceremony.

Much work goes into planning for a new business expansion site and I am excited that TD Insurance has chosen such a great location, near the Armdale Roundabout, to serve the residents throughout the Halifax community.

I would like to recognize Catherine Décarie, associate vice-president of Client Services, and Armdale resident, for committing her energy and talent to the company's expansion and the upcoming grand opening ceremony. I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating TD Insurance for its success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

ALLAINE, PIERRE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the late Pierre Allaine. Pierre passed away on April 5th at the age of 88. Pierre was born in Paris, France, and during the Second World War, as part of the French Resistance, helped POWs escape into the unoccupied French Zone. Pierre was an active member of the Bridgewater Legion Branch 24 and was a regular participant at the Remembrance Day ceremony in Bridgewater, reciting the poem *In Flanders Fields* for those assembled each year.

Pierre will be remembered fondly and missed tremendously. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to Pierre's family and friends.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

DOYLE, JESSIE - HOLLY BARTLETT MEM. BURSARY

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues may know of a remarkable young woman who tragically passed away in 2010. Holly Bartlett was born with an eye condition that caused her to lose her sight at the age of 13, but she never let her disability define who she was.

Holly graduated from Prince Andrew High School in 1997, winning several awards and scholarships, including the Walter and Wayne Gretzky Scholarship. She then went to St. F.X. and graduated with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, and was of course on the Dean's List. She also earned a Human Resources Certificate from the

Nova Scotia Community College and, at the time of her death, was enrolled at Dalhousie University.

Besides her long list of academic achievements, Holly had a great sense of humour and adventure. I have many fond memories of her. She was truly an extraordinary person, and it's no wonder that Holly's family and friends started a bursary to be awarded annually in her honour.

The Holly E. Bartlett Memorial Bursary is available to a full-time undergraduate female student from Atlantic Canada who has a minimum average of 75, demonstrates financial need, and a commitment to community service as well as student activities.

This year's recipient is Jessie Doyle of Antigonish. Jessie is a second-year student at St. F.X. University. She was awarded the bursary on April 13th and while I wasn't able to be there in person to congratulate her, I did write her a letter to share what I learned from Holly - most importantly, seeing the ability to value and appreciate people's abilities, to see past what we often classify as disabilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jessie on winning the Holly E. Bartlett Memorial Bursary in 2016, and wish her the best of luck. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MCARTHUR, FLORENCE/ELMWOOD CHILD CARE CTR. - ANNIV. (20th)

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, for 20 years Elmwood Child Care Centre and Director, Florence McArthur, has been entrusted with the care of East Hants children. During that time Mrs. McArthur has grown her business from a small home-based centre to three locations with over 200 children. Each day children are welcomed by caring, well-trained staff who deliver high-quality programming. Mrs. McArthur and her staff strive to meet the needs of our children and their families with their wealth of experience and a guiding philosophy of learning through play.

Their commitment to the complete development of children was demonstrated through the East Hants Outdoor Play Project, a pilot project within the Fundy region and first in the province that maximized outdoor play, exploration, and physical fitness. This partnership with Health and Wellness, as well as five community health boards, was a great success. Mrs. McArthur and her staff truly are leaders in early childhood development in Nova Scotia.

There is no greater treasure than our children, Mr. Speaker, and Elmwood has contributed greatly to their happy, healthy growth and development in East Hants. We wish Mrs. McArthur and the Elmwood staff, and all the children, a happy anniversary.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

THAMMACHAK, AMPAI ET AL: THE GLASS SLIPPER - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment today to tell you about five Grade 12 students at Charles P. Allen High School, in Bedford, who have started their own non-profit organization.

Ampai Thammachak, Stephanie Manuel, Anna Negulic, Lynda Ofume, and Julia Thorne, started The Glass Slipper - an organization dedicated to providing prom dresses at no cost, while spreading confidence and strengthening self-esteem.

The girls have collected over 100 dresses and are preparing to give them all away before prom to girls who may not be able to purchase their own. They spend their lunch hours and after school working on receiving donations and crafting motivating messages they'll attach to each dress.

All of the girls are graduating this year and they're heading to universities in Halifax, Winnipeg, and Kingston - and their goal is to expand the organization nationwide.

I want to congratulate these C.P Allen students on this initiative, and thank them for the great work they're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for Members' Statements is almost expired.

The House will now recess for a few seconds while we ready for Question Period.

[1:59 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:00 p.m. The House reconvened.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: FERRY TERMINAL (ME) - UPGRADE COST

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Yesterday, I asked the Premier how much Nova Scotia taxpayers are going to have to pay to - believe it or not - upgrade the waterfront terminal in Portland, Maine. The Premier didn't answer that question, so I'm going to try that simple

question again today. I'd like to ask the Premier, how much are Nova Scotia taxpayers going to pay to upgrade the terminal in Portland, Maine?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (THE PREMIER): I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for the tremendous work he has been doing on behalf of the citizens of Nova Scotia to ensure that we have that international link, working with our partner, a long-standing partner that has worked with successive governments in the province, Bay Ferries. We're looking forward to that connection starting. We're looking forward to welcoming our American visitors. We're looking forward to a tourism season that will surpass last year's positive season.

MR. BAILLIE: I see we're no farther ahead today in getting that answer. Nobody is looking forward to the season more than the people of Portland, Maine, because their downtown is going to get upgraded at the expense of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. This government has learned nothing from the last bad ferry deal; they signed an even worse one. I'll give you an example: the list of eligible expenses that the taxpayers are going to be expected to cover includes the winter layup costs for the new boat, and I'll table that. I'd like to ask the Premier why he expects the taxpayers of Nova Scotia to pay for a boat for 12 months when we only get four months of service.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again I want to thank Bay Ferries for working with the province. They operated that ferry service for a number of decades before the changes that took place in 2010-11. They do a tremendous job operating the ferry from Digby to Saint John. We're continuing to see a positive season of tourism across the province. I want to thank those tourism operators who continue to stick with the government to make sure that we continue to drive the economy not only in southwestern Nova Scotia but indeed across the country. Furthermore, I want to thank them for having the courage to invest in their tourism operations so that when those American visitors come, they can continue to see not only the general beauty of this province but also continue to see top-quality accommodations.

MR. BAILLIE: I guess the taxpayers are just supposed to pay. The Premier won't even tell them how much. They're just an open chequebook as far as he's concerned, as long as it saves the seat in Yarmouth. Let's just call it what it is. Taxpayers have to pay - won't even answer the question how much. What kind of deal is that? It's a very bad deal. You know what else taxpayers have to pay for from that same list? We have to pay for the terminal wages at both ends of the route - Portland and Yarmouth, both ends. We have to pay for office printers for the company, tax advice for the private company that's going to run the route. The taxpayers of Nova Scotia have to pay for their tax advice. Even currency exchange rates are paid for. It's very obvious what the taxpayers are expected to pay because of this bad deal. I'd like to ask the Premier, what does Bay Ferries have to pay for?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Again, I want to thank Bay Ferries for continuing to work with the government to ensure that we welcome our American tourists, American friends, to come here to enjoy the beauty of this province and enjoy the accommodations that are across the province. I want to correct the honourable member. This ferry service is not that of Yarmouth; indeed it's a Nova Scotia ferry service.

I also want to tell the honourable member that the member for Yarmouth lives in his riding. He works and plays with the members that he represents. He knows how to represent them, and they, quite frankly, have all the confidence in the world - as do I - in that member.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PREM.: BUDGET/DEC. FORECAST - DISPARITY

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: The Premier has some explaining to do about the great disparity between the December forecast update and the numbers presented to us in this budget. In December, we were told the total departmental expenses would be \$4.4 million over budget. Just a few short months later, the budget revealed that, in fact, departmental expenses were \$59.5 million underspent - unbelievable. I ask the Premier, why is there a \$65-million discrepancy for departmental expenses between the December forecast update and the budget?

THE PREMIER: I'm not sure what the honourable member is looking for. Should we aspire to be overspent? I'm not sure what her question is.

MS. MANCINI: When you compare the recent budget numbers with the December forecast update, it is hard to believe your eyes. In December, we were told that the Department of Health and Wellness was forecasted to be \$3.7 million over budget. Then, in the blink of an eye, we were told in the budget that the department was in fact \$23.8 million under budget - unbelievable. I ask the Premier, why is there a \$26.5 million discrepancy in the Health and Wellness budget between December and April?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the questions. Indeed, I want to thank all Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker, who over the last number of years have worked with our government to make difficult choices in the short term so that for the long-term financial stability of this province we can invest in the things that Nova Scotians want for them and their families like child care, investing in classrooms. We're continuing to provide services that I believe respect the values of Nova Scotia, and we are going to continue to do so.

MS. MANCINI: Can we change question period to question and answer period? It is painfully obvious that the Premier and his government are playing short-term politics with this budget.

Back in December, when they were seeking a public sector wage pattern, they wanted us to believe that the province was in dire financial straits. Now, just a few months later, in preparation for an election, they want Nova Scotians to believe that they have balanced the budget. It is unbelievable.

I ask the Premier, given the conflicting stories this government has been telling Nova Scotians in recent months, why should we believe this is a balanced budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question; I am enjoying her enthusiasm today. I want to tell you this has been a challenge for all Nova Scotians to help the government get back to a base of fiscal balance. We had a very difficult four years under the NDP Government that cost us dearly. Nova Scotians have recognized that there was a price to pay for electing the New Democratic Party, and they have continued to work for us. They continue to work with our government to move forward.

I am very proud of the surplus that we have that is before this House that is being debated. I do not think anyone in the province should be popping champagne corks. There is a lot of work to do, a lot of difficult decisions that continue to be made. But we are going to continue to manage this province in the best interest of all Nova Scotians, not a select few.

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

PREM.: BUDGET - MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, by now, we have all learned you have to read government press releases with a grain of salt. Certainly, our seniors in the Pharmacare Program have learned that earlier this year. Now, it turns out you have to read the Budget Address with the same grain of salt.

The government patted itself on the back for spending \$271 million this year on mental health. What they did not tell us is that it's no more money than last year; in fact, it is a 0.4 per cent increase, and that is after accounting for the new EIBI program. I would like to ask the Premier, why not just be up front with Nova Scotians and tell them that there is no new funding for mental health in the budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I am very proud of the fact that I continue to have a conversation with Nova Scotians, being direct and honest about the challenges that this province faces, and I want

to continue to thank them for working with our government to continue to try to provide the services across this province.

I want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for working with community organizations and communities across this province to provide support to those families that require assistance. I thank the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for the tremendous work that is taking place in our education system across this province in early identification. I want to thank all Nova Scotians who continue to believe in our government and continue to work with us so that we continue to move this province forward.

MR. BAILLIE: Oh, Mr. Speaker, we are so far beyond the time to just have a conversation about mental health. There are real needs out there - not just a budget, these are lives. We have people that go to the emergency room and then get sent home because they cannot deal with them. We have people that call the crisis line when they are in crisis, and they are told they will have to wait three months to see a psychologist.

We are far past time for conversations. Nova Scotians want to see real action in mental health care. So I would like to ask the Premier, why didn't his government make mental health service a bigger priority in this budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question; and I want to continue and encourage him to continue the debate and read the document that I think the Minister of Health and Wellness has up today. He will be able to explain during Budget Estimates the investments we have made in the Department of Health and Wellness. I know the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development was up in the Red Chamber talking about the great investments we did in early intervention and the work we are doing in our education system for early identification of mental health issues, working with clinicians across this province - the experts in how we deliver mental health services to this province.

This is not a question of standing still. This is delivering supports for families. We're going to continue to work with our clinicians and families across this province to ensure they get the supports they need.

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

COM. SERV. - HAIR-STRAND TEST: CLOSED CASES - REVIEW

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, we know that the Department of Community Services has suspended the use of all hair-strand drug testing in child protection cases because it has been proven to be unreliable. We also know that the department has refused to open up closed cases where the same testing was used. Ontario

and New Brunswick have already begun the review of closed cases. Nova Scotia stands alone in our refusal to automatically review cases that use this unreliable testing.

Does the Minister of Justice believe that it is just and acceptable to not automatically review cases where unreliable testing methods were used?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe our Minister of Community Services would be better able to answer that question today on the issue. The question has been asked, and I'd like to hear her second question. Thank you.

MS. MANCINI: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a Justice issue when we are looking into reviewing court cases.

Yesterday during Question Period the Minister of Community Services stated that hair-strand testing is never the lone reason a child would be taken into care. I will table that. That may be true about temporary care and custody orders, but not in terms of a permanent care and custody order. In my experience as a child welfare Legal Aid lawyer, I am aware of hair-strand testing results being the determining factor in the final stage of a child welfare proceeding.

Given that this hair-strand testing actually can be a contributing factor in a permanent care and custody order, will the Minister of Justice commit today to a review of all child welfare cases that used faulty drug testing?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note what the minister said yesterday, that this is just one of the contributing circumstances that have been used in the child custody cases. It's not the only one, or even perhaps the definitive one. It is one of a series, and I think that as we go forward we'll be working closely with the Department of Community Services to consider if there is any need for further review.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

ENVIRON. - KINGS CO. DEMOLITION WASTE SITE: FIRE - COSTS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. In early March the province ordered the owners of a construction and demolition waste disposal site in Kings County to remove the banned materials.

Less than two weeks later, the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department was called to the site to put out a massive fire. The volunteer fire department has since been saddled with the bill for putting this fire out, which is reportedly in excess of \$40,000. The Department of Environment has informed them that they have no intention to cover this bill. I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the minister is this, has the minister been made aware of this, and has she considered the impact such a bill would have on a volunteer fire department, whose only job was to protect residents and extinguish the fire?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Actually, I am very much aware of the situation and what's going on in Kings County.

My inspectors were on site for quite a while, and working with the Fire Marshal's Office. It would be the fire marshal who would determine that. My inspectors instructed that the fire had to be brought under control or the site needed to be within compliance. As to that, further than that, we have a polluter pay policy. It's up to the property owner to look after the cost of the fire service.

MR. LOHR: I thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, volunteer fire departments are struggling as it is to keep members and funding together. This fire was not the fault of any volunteer agency, and as the minister pointed out two weeks ago, her department was in charge of monitoring and inspecting the site going forward.

My question for the minister is, will the minister meet directly with the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department and settle this issue, so as not to unfairly impact this department?

MS. MILLER: I thank the member opposite for the question. Again, this is something we're very much aware of, and we certainly recognize that volunteer fire departments provide a valuable service in our community. But if there's a fire in my property, where I live, I'm responsible for the cost associated with that or your insurance company is. You don't leave it up to a government department to look after that.

Even though the Department of Environment officers were there to monitor the site to see the progress that was taking place, it's not up to a government department or the taxpayers of this province to foot the bill for a fire in a private enterprise.

Also, we would certainly be willing to meet with anybody to discuss anything and to bring our message forward.

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

**ASSOC. OF PSYCHOLOGISTS (N.S.):
MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - MIN. STANCE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia brought forward an idea to help more people access mental

health services. Yesterday the member for Cumberland North called the idea an accounting solution that misses the point - and I'll table that from Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health and Wellness, who is the minister siding with - the member for Cumberland North, or the mental health professionals who want to help more people than they can help today?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure in terms of the bill per se, but I've met with the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia to take a look at the work they do in the province, the important role they play, to make sure that their students get out for their work terms across the province. I would need to take a further look in terms of how the bill could improve any service.

MR. D'ENTERMONT: Mr. Speaker, the member for Cumberland North unfortunately yesterday took aim at a group of dedicated mental health professionals who sincerely want to help Nova Scotians and improve our broken system. When will the minister stop taking policy advice from the member for Cumberland North and start listening to the strong, aware, competent professionals who work in the system?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I just met with many people at the W.O. McCormick Academic Day - from counselling therapists to psychologists to psychiatrists to our school councillors - and I certainly took that occasion to applaud the tremendous work they do right across the province, the work that the advisory group did in implementing the *Together We Can* strategy.

We have a lot of tremendous work going on to improve the mental health of Nova Scotians, from early years to senior years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ENERGY - PORT HAWKESBURY PAPER: NAFTA APPEAL - UPDATE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Energy that I asked the Minister of Business yesterday. He recommended asking the Minister of Energy.

In October the United States International Trade Commission upheld a Department of Commerce decision to charge tariffs on imports for Port Hawkesbury Paper. Port Hawkesbury Paper has indicated they are going to file an appeal under the North American Free Trade Agreement. We've heard that the government is going to be supportive of that; that is good to hear.

Can the minister update the House on this appeal, respecting any needs for confidentiality, and how the government is assisting Port Hawkesbury Paper?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refer this to the Minister of Business - I'm just joking. I want to thank the member for the question.

We've been working very closely with Port Hawkesbury Paper and very closely with our federal government. If you look back at the time frame of this, prior to the federal election we were urging our federal counterparts to start the World Trade Organization process. Unfortunately that fell on deaf ears and we are a bit behind because of that.

Once the new government was elected, Minister Freeland at the earliest opportunity started the appeal process through the World Trade Organization. We have retained our own legal counsel on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are working in lockstep with Port Hawkesbury Paper to convince the World Trade Organization and our American counterparts that this duty is unfair and that it should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, lucky for us the low Canadian dollar is helping to offset the impact of the tariff. The U.S. ruling concern centres on the cost of energy and a feeling that they have that energy is being subsidized for the mill in Point Tupper.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we have some of the highest energy costs in North America. That is not difficult to prove, so I'm sure that there is a possibility that this can all be settled positively for Port Hawkesbury Paper and the many people who work there. How does the minister feel about Port Hawkesbury Paper's chances under NAFTA? Perhaps he could expand upon that and let us know what his thoughts are with the U.S. presidential election and some of the comments we're hearing about NAFTA being torn up.

MR. SAMSON: The unfortunate thing in this whole process is the length of time it's going to take. None of these appeals are done quickly, unfortunately. We have to go down this route, as it's the only one available to us. We're working very closely with Port Hawkesbury Paper and working very closely with the federal government, which has been extremely supportive of Nova Scotia's position. Clearly, the United States Department of Commerce misunderstood how our Utility and Review Board works here in Nova Scotia, when it comes to the setting of power rates.

As I said, this has been an expensive process to date - not only for Port Hawkesbury Paper, but taxpayers have been spending significant money on legal fees. We will continue to defend Port Hawkesbury Paper's position and defend the position of the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

JANES, ZACHARY - ÉCOLE BOIS-JOLI: SUSPENSION - DETAILS

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Zachary Janes is an 8-year-old student at École Bois-Joli with autism spectrum disorder. Last week he was issued an indefinite suspension because the school says they need the support of a full-time aide and a plan from the IWK for Zachary to be in school. Today the board upheld that suspension. Does the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development feel it's appropriate to suspend a student with autism because the school is under-resourced to meet the needs of that child?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you for the question. I'm certainly not prepared to discuss any particulars of that, but I will say that one of the things that is a priority for all of us in our schools is the safety not only of children who may be autistic, but every child in that school and every staff member who works there. School boards work very hard to make sure that they have the supports in place to ensure that safety. In particular, with the supports that we give to students who have identified needs, we provide the board with funding out of which they can hire teaching assistants, resource teachers, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists. The board uses those dollars to make sure that they have the resources in place.

MR. YOUNGER: Respectfully, we can't keep blaming the board for every issue that comes; otherwise, I'm not sure why we have a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Zachary has autism. He acts out when he gets anxious, and he more easily gets anxious without an aide. The school knows this. Zachary's father, Greg Janes, is with us in the gallery today, and he has been told by the school that it's his responsibility to find an aide, to find the funding for an aide, and to find a plan from the IWK.

Since when did it become the parents' responsibility to find support for their students in school? I will table the letter from the school. Isn't it the responsibility of the school, the board, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to ensure that students have the resources they need to be in school when, in fact, children are required by law to be in class?

MS. CASEY: Just to clarify so that the member and others can clearly understand, I understand the circumstance. I understand that the family has been working with the school and the school board. But to get matters clear as to who does the funding, the department provides the funding to the boards. The boards make the decision how they use that funding to support every student, in every class, in every school.

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

NSBI - EASTLINK FUND: CERTIFICATION - UPDATE

MS. LENORE ZANN: On April 29th, I asked the minister responsible for NSBI to explain the six-month delay with the Eastlink fund. The minister replied that NSBI has been working with the CRTC to complete the necessarily certification. Well, it turns out that the CRTC granted conditional approval last October 19th, and at that time NSBI was asked to provide additional documents in order for full approval to be granted. I'll table that.

Can the minister please explain why the CRTC's request of October 19th was ignored until April 2016?

HON. MARK FUREY: NSBI continues to work with the CRTC. I've indicated to my colleague both in estimates and in previous Question Period questions that they anticipate that the appropriate procedures will be in place by the end of May and at that time will be able to take applications.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know about you but I'm getting pretty tired of hearing the same-old, same-old rhetoric over and over again when, in fact, the industry knows that the CRTC gave conditional approval and this is creating serious problems for Nova Scotia's already stymied film and television industry.

One example is Studio Black! - a mini-series of African Nova Scotian stories. CBC ran the first season and ordered a second season, which is highly prestigious, but the window of opportunity for this and other local production companies with defined shooting schedules is quickly closing.

My question, again, for the minister is, after six months of dragging their feet inexplicably, can the minister please inform the House precisely when the Eastlink fund will be ready to receive applications from Nova Scotia's television community? He has been going around and around in circles and not answering the question.

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear my colleague's comment about going around and around in circles, I think that's the conclusion that many would draw.

I've answered the question; NSBI is working with CRTC. There were conditions attached to the conditional approval that my colleague references. They continue to work, Mr. Speaker, and they have indicated to me that the fund will be open to applications by the end of May. That's the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: VALLEY HOSPICE - MOU SIGNING

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. On May 1st the minister attended the Hike for Hospice in Kentville, and said in an announcement there that the announcement for the new hospice was very close. The minister also said that the memorandum of agreement with the Valley Hospice Foundation will be signed soon. I will table those quotes for the minister.

My question for the minister is, would the minister clarify what “very close” means for those people who have worked tirelessly to establish the hospice; for example, does “very close” mean this Spring?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Valley Hospice Society is working very closely with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. I know the memorandum, the draft, is going back and forth, and I think it’s very important that the right deal for the hospice and the province is put in place. I think we have a signed deal with the Halifax hospice. It took some time to work out but I think it’s a great deal for the province and for Halifax hospice.

MR. LOHR: One of the issues has been this MOU. I understand there was an MOU signed a number of years ago with the district health authority, which was then dissolved. At that time we were under the understanding that that MOU would be honoured. Will the minister now honour that MOU that was signed a number of years ago with the health authority?

MR. GLAVINE: I’m pleased to say that it was the original memorandum of understanding with Valley Hospice and Hospice Halifax that are on the table and reaching a final conclusion, and that should happen very shortly.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ONCOTYPE DX TEST - FUNDING

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, over the past number of sessions we’ve asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about government funding for Oncotype DX. It’s a test for women diagnosed with breast cancer, and I’ve asked it on four occasions so I’ll qualify this one to be the fifth.

I understand the government has finally decided to fund the test. What remains to be unknown is why government has not chosen to announce the funding yet so that all health care professionals and women diagnosed with breast cancer are aware of it, so they may access this important test. Will the minister confirm that this test is being funded and give a timeline as to when he will make his official announcement?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising this important question and the importance of the test. We all know that we can look at other jurisdictions as to how they are using the test because there are some very strict protocols around when this test should be used, when it will give the kind of information to make a decision about treatment. I know the Health Authority is doing that finalization now.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: All right. He hasn't told me when he is going to make the announcement, but he didn't say he wasn't, so that's a good sign for this one.

We know that tests can save many women from needless chemotherapy and help physicians decide on the most appropriate form of treatment. Such things can prevent some women from undergoing procedures that add further stress and hardship to an already stressful diagnosis. We applaud the government for coming around and funding the test - we think, we hope. We could significantly improve women's experience with treatment, and secondly save the health care system hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Can the minister confirm that the test will be available in all areas of the province, and give a detailed breakdown of when and where it will be available?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, one of the great advances we have made in this province is around dealing with breast cancer. About two decades ago, we had some of the worst outcomes in the country in terms of treatment. Today, we are usually around second place in the country in terms of outcomes, and that's due to the provincial program that was in place. A test like Oncotype DX can probably even improve some of the outcomes that we hope and desire to put in place very shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR: DEEPDALE RD. - BUDGET/TIME

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: A question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Mr. Speaker, it was good of the minister to come down to meet with the people of Deepdale last Friday. There was talk of a plan for that road.

Bare-bones maintenance budgets will not fix the problems on this road or the many others across the province. Does the plan to fix Deepdale include a budget? Does it include a time frame?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, I do truly thank the residents of Deepdale. I had the opportunity to speak with all who came out to the conversation that we had at the beginning of the road. It was important to hear their concerns and understand what exactly they are dealing with with respect to the six kilometres that encompass the Deepdale Road and the associated roads.

We do not have those specific numbers yet. Obviously, we made the commitment to the residents at that day that we would look at some of the short-term measures we could do specifically on their road. Steve MacDonald and Gerard Jessome are pulling that together, and obviously when I have it, I will share it with the member. I made the commitment to let the residents of Deepdale know what we could do for this summer coming.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do remain hopeful, but in terms of specific numbers, I had asked the minister questions in Budget Estimates, and he revealed that the government does not have a plan to use capital budgets for gravel roads.

We know that the RIM budget is the same this year as it was last year, but it remains 25 per cent less than it was in 2008-09. The minister said that being reactive was probably the best that the government could do in terms of roads like Deepdale.

So my question is, why is the government neglecting dirt roads and the many Nova Scotians across the province, especially in rural areas, who are living on those roads?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the capital allotment versus operational, what I had said was that that has never been accessed before. So it hasn't been our specific government; in fact, that's what the message was to the residents and to the member opposite in estimates and many of the members from all sides of the House who had asked. Having access to the capital plan and being able to put roads through the capital plan gives us an increased opportunity to address those roads.

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the member is talking about our government. Everyone from Deepdale Road to every gravel road across the province says this is literally decades of neglect. This is not about the current government; this is about what has been done in the past. We are going to change that.

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

PREM.: TRANSITION HOUSES - FUNDING LEVELS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question this time is for the Premier. Last week, the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses reported that 416 women and children affected by intimate partner violence reached out for shelter on a single day. Of those, 305 had to be turned away due to lack of capacity. In the same report, nearly 76 per cent of shelters said they had relied on food donations to meet the needs of women or assist them when leaving the shelter. I will table that.

Is the Premier satisfied with his government's funding levels, which leave transition houses in Nova Scotia without enough beds or food to meet the needs of women and children?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Even though the Minister of Community Services, who is responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women is not here today, I want to thank her for the tremendous work that she has been doing not only as the minister, but also prior to coming to this House, working with our partners across this province.

I think, quite frankly, the question is offensive to everyone. Who in their right mind would suggest that anyone would be okay with anyone being abused under any circumstance across our province or indeed across our country? Of course we're going to continue to work with our partners to ensure that we provide those services to Nova Scotians, and we're going to continue to stand by women and children in this province and do the right thing to make sure that at least in their own homes they can feel safe and ensure that in this province it will be a priority of this government. We'll continue to make sure that women and children are safe in this province.

MS. ZANN: Well, I'd like to point out it's just a question, and this is, after all, Question Period. In spite of the Liberal election promise to ensure women's centres, shelters, and transition houses have the financial ability to make long-range plans to help vulnerable women and children, these organizations are facing a perfect storm of increasingly complex needs of service users plus stagnant government funding. My question for the Premier is, how much time and effort does the Premier expect not-for-profit organizations to spend on fundraising versus providing services to these vulnerable clients?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank our partners across this province who have been working with our government. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that they'll spend less time fundraising under this government than they did under that government with the cuts that took place to women and children in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**FIN. & TREASURY BD.: EXPENSES APPROVAL
- AUDITOR GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Three years ago the Auditor General recommended that the Department of Finance and Treasury Board tell all provincial agencies, boards, and commissions to evaluate their processes around approval of travel and other expenses. Three years later, the AG found this has not been completed. I'd like to ask the minister, why hasn't this important recommendation been completed?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: When the member opposite raised questions about the update to the AG Report, what I highlighted to him at that time, and I'll reiterate, is that the report that was recently released by the AG that provided an update on the various recommendations and the status of those recommendations was based on information from back in October or November 2015. I'm happy to report to the member opposite that there have been several advancements on a number of the items related to the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, between the time that the Auditor General's Office was using, in October or November, and when they tabled the report more recently.

MR. HOUSTON: It's not clear if the minister is saying that this specific recommendation has been dealt with or not, so I'd like to give the minister an opportunity to clarify that when he stands back up. The Auditor General said it's not reasonable that this specific recommendation has not been completed. This is a recommendation that's purely about ensuring that taxpayer money is being used prudently. It's a straightforward recommendation, and the minister is quite right that the report that the AG was looking at was up to November 2015. If the minister believes that specific recommendation has been implemented over the last few months, that's great news, and I just ask him to confirm that and table for this House when it has been completed.

MR. DELOREY: I have to admit I agree with the member opposite with respect to the role of the AG's Office and indeed the role of the government with respect to ensuring the integrity and the fiscal management of the province. I'd like to remind the member opposite that the success of this government in how we manage the provincial finances has been demonstrated over the past number of years that we've been in office. The way that we've been managing our finances has brought us back to the balanced budget that we were able to table earlier in the month. I think our performance speaks for itself.

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

AFFAIRES ACADIENNES BUREAU - DÉTAILS SUR LES CHANGEMENTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: J'aimerais poser une question au ministre des Affaires acadiennes. Comme tout le monde le sait, depuis quelques années, le mandat du bureau des Affaires acadiennes a vraiment changé. C'est une décision du dernier gouvernement, et on sait maintenant que le ministre des Affaires acadiennes est actuellement en consultation sur le fonctionnement du bureau. Donc, j'aimerais peut-être demander au ministre qu'est-ce qu'il voit comme des changements qu'on pourrait voire au bureau des Affaires acadiennes?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci à mon collègue de Argyle pour la question. C'est ça une question que l'ancien gouvernement NPD avait fait des changes au bureau des Affaires acadiennes, l'avoir eu mis sous un autre département. Après de cela que j'ai entendu de la communauté acadienne, c'est ils avaient des inquiétudes, aussi la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, alors j'ai appointé un comité de huit personnes, qui est

représentant et représentantes de les communautés acadiennes à travers de la province pour leur demander et pour eux à demander à leurs communautés, comment mieux avoir le bureau des Affaires acadiennes pour servir la communauté. J'ai reçu le rapport. Je peux aussi indiquer que les membres représentants de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse ce sont rencontrés avec moi-même et le premier ministre pour présenter leurs demandes aussi sur la loi, sur les services en langue française, et sur la structure du bureau. On est en train de faire la revue de ces demandes et du rapport; et, une fois qu'on aura les décisions faites, je serai content de partager avec mon collègue et avec tout le monde de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Je remercie le ministre de cette réponse là, mais dans le budget-même on a vu une diminution du budget-même du bureau des Affaires acadiennes et même aux autres bureaux des noirs et aussi du bureau celtique. Donc, j'aimerais demander peut être au ministre, même qu'il va partager à quelques temps, est-il dans quelques mois, quelques semaines, quand est-ce qu'on va voir un rapport final pour le bureau des Affaires acadiennes?

MR. SAMSON: Merci, est le fait que la revue a pris place très proche du budget, c'est à cause de ça qu'il y avait pas le temps de mettre en place les recommandations qui avaient été faites, mais je peux indiquer à mon collègue, j'ai déjà eu l'occasion de rencontrer avec la nouvelle ministre du Patrimoine Canada et l'Honorable Mélanie Joly une fois qu'elle était ici en Nouvelle-Écosse pour lui parler des montants des fonds qu'ils vit ici en Nouvelle-Écosse, des défis qui prennent place dans nos communautés acadiennes avec l'anglicisation, le fait que nos communautés sont très rurales et éloignées un à l'autre, et alors j'espère que nous aurons certainement des meilleures réponses du gouvernement fédéral que nous avons eu reçu dans la passé, mais je peux assurer le membre que cette une question qui est très proche à mon cœur, la structure des affaires acadiennes, le fonctionnement de la loi sur les services en français et, aussi vite que possible que nous aurons les réponses finales, nous allons les partager avec le membre et avec tous les gens à la Nouvelle-Écosse, merci M. le Président.

MR. SPEAKER: Très bien.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

TIR - YAR. FERRY SERV.: N.S. - FIN. RESPONSIBILITY

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The City of Portland stands to gain from the operation of the Yarmouth ferry service - the city will make nearly \$100,000 a year on the terminal fees alone, plus passengers and vehicle tariffs, fuel, licences, parking, and the list goes on and on.

Yet somehow it is Nova Scotians who are already taking on all the financial risk associated with the ferry service, with the responsibility not only, or including, the upgrading of the Portland terminal. Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, how can this be so?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. During estimates a number of questions were back and forth from the member to myself and, during that time, he had said that he did support the ferry service, and we talked about former Premier Darrell Dexter talking about how that was a significant mistake made at the Cabinet Table of which that member was a part of. So I don't think I have to talk about the merits and the impact on his community, that region, and the entire province when the service was removed by his former government.

Again, as we've said many times, we have the right operator in place, Mr. Speaker. This is the deal that will see stability on that important transportation link, and we'll see lots of Americans bring their tourism dollars here, and spend it right here in the province, and we'll benefit from that.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, apparently, again, yoga class must have been cancelled last night because I have the angry minister.

Mr. Speaker, even though Nova Scotia is taking on all the risk, this government has decided to leave it to Bay Ferries to work out the agreement with the City of Portland, therefore negotiating on our behalf. It is a company that knows the province will make up any cash deficiencies that exist.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, why has he not been part of the negotiations with the City of Portland when tens - I repeat, tens - of millions of taxpayers' dollars are going on the line?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll correct the member opposite - I actually was at yoga last night, thank you very much. That's why I am calm.

AN HON. MEMBER: You better ask for your money back. (Laughter)

MR. MACLELLAN: I won't ask for my money back, honourable member.

Look, the reality is that Mark MacDonald is a pro, he's got experience, a relationship and a vested interest with the City of Portland. Despite what the Opposition will try to put out there in terms of their narrative that they want to set up, the City of Portland is a full supporter and a partner here with us.

This is an important service for the people of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker. They support this service because they want it to work. Mark MacDonald is in this for the right

reasons. Despite what the Opposition is saying, and what they are trying to spin-out there, this will be a success and a good benefit for the people of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: LAW REFORM COMM. - FUNDING ELIMINATION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Justice. We've heard the Minister of Justice say that she and the government values the Law Reform Commission, but yet in the budget we see their funding has been completely eliminated. It was also stated by the minister that the Law Reform Commission was given a year's notice, but we have learned that's not the case. (Interruption) I'm seeing members say yes it was. Talk to the Law Reform Commission, Mr. Speaker, and they will tell you that is not the case.

Does the minister feel it is fair to make these comments about an organization which has a real history of providing valuable service to our province?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this subject again. I know it's an important issue. Certainly over the years I acknowledge there has been wonderful work done from the Law Reform Commission and the change in our budget does not reflect the fact that we value the information we've received from them.

We now have in the Department of Justice, Mr. Speaker, approximately 90 lawyers - that's three times what it was 20 years ago. There's a lot of research that happens within the Department of Justice now as well, so we hope to be able to continue a lot of the research work that has been going on.

To your question, Mr. Speaker, about the year - it was certainly a decision made a year ago. Perhaps they were spoken to in June, it might have been June, so perhaps we're talking about a matter of a few months' difference, so we might be able to discuss that. My understanding was that they had a year, but if it wasn't a full year from the time they were notified, it was close to it.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take shots at the lawyers working at Justice, but I know we had another issue similar to this one where I know it was also said by the department that there are only a couple of provinces with these Law Reform Commissions, and we know that that's not the case.

I think about the value, in terms of dollars, that the government sees this organization as a cost to the province. We look at their impact on the legal status of the child, grandparent-grandchild access, maintenance enforcement obligations, reports over

the years that have actually become part of our laws in the province. I think there are lawyers contributing their time to this organization free of charge.

Mr. Speaker, did the minister do a cost-benefit analysis on the value that her department and our province is getting for the Law Reform Commission before eliminating the funding?

MS. WHALEN: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is important to talk about this. I want to reiterate that the Department of Justice is providing space and support, so all of the administrative space and support that they need is in place in our department, so that's an in-kind contribution of thousands of dollars.

We have encouraged them to seek funding from other sources. I know there are other means, other foundations that some are providing a little bit of money. We've provided time for them to make those requests. So, Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that they will find other funders, that with our in-kind contribution they will continue to operate.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. I know that the Premier made a promise to make Nova Scotia the most open and transparent province in Canada. Yet when it comes to environmental policy, many Nova Scotians feel that meaningful citizen engagement is compromised by lack of access to information.

I'd ask the minister, what is her department doing to ensure that the government keeps its promise to be the most open and transparent government in Canada?

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

We'll now move on to the order of business, Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and have a few moments of discussion on the estimates and the debates that are taking place in the House of Assembly these days. Members of this government have talked, time and time again, about how great this budget is for Nova Scotians, what a great job they've done of balancing the budget, and how they're making life better for all Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, my question today for you and for all the members of the House is, what does this budget do for Cape Breton? How does it make a difference in the lives of the people who live in Cape Breton? Times are rough in rural Nova Scotia and we know that on Cape Breton Island, my colleagues and I - from whatever side of the road they are - realize there are challenges for the people we represent. Today I want to highlight some of those issues that we hear about in our office on such a regular occasion.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about health first. You know we've had an opportunity, and I've asked questions in this House a number of times about the doctor shortage and when we're going to get some help. We hear from people on all sides of the House - there are 1,000 people a month turning 65, people who need doctors. We have 10 family doctors' openings in Cape Breton right now.

Now the minister will say, well you know we have seven coming but that's not until July. Right now those people don't have a doctor. I don't know if you know or not and I don't know if the other members know, but when you have to go for certain tests you have to give a family doctor name because they need to send those tests somewhere. Mr. Speaker, if you don't have a family doctor, they don't want to give you the test because they have nowhere to send the results. So our Minister of Health and Wellness tells me that we have the third highest ratio of doctors to patients in the country, and yet we have our phones ringing off the hook saying, we don't have a doctor.

We have an orphan clinic that opened up and inside of two months, Mr. Speaker, it actually could not take any more clients - 1,000 people and just as many on a waiting list, people going for service and having to sit on the floor because there weren't enough chairs. That's not good for Cape Bretoners and that's not what I think they expected from this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the minister told us here in the House yesterday in debates that when you have doctors who are trained outside the province, there are only 11 residencies open to them - 11, out of all those doctors. So who makes that rule? Is it the Department of Health and Wellness? Is it the Health Authority? Is it Dalhousie Medical School? Who makes that decision?

If we have people who want to come and practice medicine in their home and on Cape Breton Island, why is it that we have such major waits for doctors? Why is it we have so many people wondering where they are going to get care?

Mr. Speaker, the minister is very fond about quoting numbers. I asked him a week ago, what is the percentage of doctors per capita in Cape Breton Island? Now he's quick to recite the numbers, yet he has not supplied that number to us. He told us he had it at his hands, it was right there, but we still didn't get it.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we talk about wait times (Interruption) I'm a little hoarse today because I can't get a doctor either. That's part of the challenge we have, that people can't get a doctor when they need it.

The minister talked about wait times and he told us that we don't have as many people waiting for home care. What he neglected to tell us was that people who have home care now are being pared back; the number of hours they are receiving is less so they can take on more clients. That's not good for Cape Breton, and it's not good for Nova Scotians.

I wonder, how often are we going to say that the wait times are less? This government, that minister, changed around how you qualify - you have to reapply. If you say no once, you have to come off the list, so of course the wait times are later. We heard yesterday that in Richmond County wait times are almost three years for someone to get into a seniors' home. Mr. Speaker, that's not good for Cape Breton, and it's not good for Nova Scotians.

Let's move on and talk a little bit about tourism. Let's talk about tourism and the very fact that this government did away with that department. As a matter of fact, if I were the people who are in the Department of Energy right now with the minister they have, I would be worried - because when he was Minister of Economic Development it disappeared; when he was the Minister of Tourism that department disappeared; and now he's the Minister of Energy. They've gone a little further with the plot, Mr. Speaker, because now they share the deputy minister with the Department of Business and with the Department of Energy. Two of the most important departments in our government, and what are they doing? They are sharing a deputy minister because they don't have enough faith in other members of the civil service to take on that role.

Mr. Speaker, if these departments are so important, why don't they have their own deputy minister? The one who is there is capable but even he can't handle both of them, especially with such high maintenance ministers as they have in that department.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know we have a tendency here to joke and carry on and talk about issues, but these issues are very important and they do have an immediate impact on the economy of Cape Breton Island and on what is happening when it comes to jobs. The Minister of Business, I don't think he's a bad person - I think he's mixed up some days

but I don't think he's a bad person. But when he puts out some of the ideas that he has, people in the tourism industry in Cape Breton Island really wonder what direction we are going in.

He talked for months about doing away with VIC centres, and he created a lot of anxiety which put pressures on the health system that doesn't have any doctors because he couldn't make up his mind. It was the pressure of the people that changed that. Mr. Speaker, they've cut the funding for the regional tourism associations; they've cut that back. Again, that makes it harder to promote the goals of the Ivany report, which was to increase tourism. They formed an arm's length organization and the chairman lives in Ontario - imagine.

Then we spent money on a marketing program and we gave that to a company in Ontario - have you watched the commercials they produced? Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that will entice people to get on the ferry to come from Portland to Nova Scotia. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, he's over there saying it's up 20 per cent - and the boat hasn't even sailed yet. It's interesting how much some of the members on that side of the House have to say, and I can understand that because when they're there, they're not allowed to speak. Nobody has pulled on his chain to allow him to speak, so now when it's my turn he decides he wants to speak. Well I would be glad to give up my time to let him speak, but then again he wouldn't be allowed to, so we weren't going to do it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sit down. Sit down.

MR. MACLEOD: I will, but I'll be back. I don't have to be to yoga until quarter after.

Mr. Speaker, some of the things we need for tourism in Cape Breton Island, some of the things that my colleagues and I know are important to advancing tourism - I'm very fortunate in my constituency of Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg that I have the Fortress of Louisbourg, I have the Two Rivers Wildlife Park, I have the famous Mira, and people come from around the world to see those things.

We have an enormous cruise industry in the City of Sydney that helps all of tourism in Cape Breton Island. That service requires a second berth and there have been overtures made time and time again to the Province of Nova Scotia, to this government, to help with that berth. At this point that still hasn't been solidified. We're hoping - all of us are hoping that this government will make that a priority for the community of Cape Breton Island.

Mr. Speaker, you know we could go on about a number of different things about what this budget has done for Cape Breton. Really I went through it as good as I could and I really have trouble identifying what it has done. Let's talk about the CBRM. Today there was another bill about the HRM Charter brought in - I think that's the third or fourth one

in this session - yet the CBRM has been looking to have a Charter developed for the needs of our community, and yet that has not come to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, we need the support for programs like Boots on the Street. The government in their budget has decreased that, but when you talk to the local law enforcement officers, they will tell you what a vital role that Boots on the Street plays for the Police Services in the CBRM.

Now, that funding is so important for Cape Breton. But we have the Department of Labour and Advanced Education that had some retirements. Do you know what the solution was? Call Halifax, just call Halifax, that's what you need to do. Mr. Speaker, that's not good for Cape Breton, we need people on the ground.

When it comes to the Nova Scotia Business Inc., again - again - we need to have more people on the ground in Cape Breton. They need to be there; they need to understand the community. They need to be part of the community in order to help invest in the community. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to what has taken place with this huge Health Authority, you can't find a decision on Cape Breton Island. When you go and ask a question it take days to get an answer, and that's not good for Cape Breton.

Although this government has spoken time and time again about this budget not hurting anybody, about how there are no increases, about how they now have a position where there is money on the plus side - the reality is that there are no services there for people who live in Cape Breton, there is no money there to make sure that simple services, like that in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for cutting alders, ditching and gravelling dirt roads, there's no increase in that, Mr. Speaker.

There's no money to help pave the New Boston Road or the Grand Mira South Road, Mr. Speaker. So for the government to be going around patting themselves on the back about what a great job they've done, I would suggest to them they should talk to my colleague, the member for Northside-Westmount, because he is a physiotherapist, and he will be able to help their shoulders from all that back-patting they're doing.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: I am pleased to rise to my feet and make some comments about the budget that has been introduced.

One of the things I have to say is that this whole idea of the government coming in and saying that they have a balanced budget and, in fact, they have a surplus, is based on this one-time figure of \$110.3 million that is really just because of federal and municipal contributions for the convention centre. I really don't see how they can say that the budget is balanced when, in fact, it's not really balanced at this point in time other than a \$17.1

million bump, which as we know, can change at the drop of a hat. In fact, the very next day after the budget is passed, it can go back down to something else and be in the negative.

I think it's interesting that the government has chosen to present this budget at this particular time. It does lead one to believe that perhaps an election is around the corner so that the government of the day can say, oh, yes, we've balanced the budget, and we have a surplus.

We know how this government likes to spin the numbers, since they have spun the numbers in so many different sectors already, including Pharmacare for seniors, where they tried to make changes to Pharmacare and told the seniors how wonderful it was going to be for all of them. In fact, it turned out to be a \$10 million money grab. Once the seniors found out about it, guess what? They complained, including the Premier's own aunt, and eventually they realized, well that wouldn't be very good if an election was to happen because that would be a lot of upset seniors who would be voting against them.

The numbers have also been spun in the film industry. The numbers that they keep coming up with are spun. The way that they describe the tax credit is spun.

It's interesting to note that this government has hired so many different people now who have worked as reporters and journalists. Is that because they want to be able to spin the numbers and spin the stories more? Get more journalists working on it to try to sell their story? I'd say that that's probably part of that decision.

I have to say, as the Status of Women Critic and also Education Critic, there are many different other parts of this budget that I feel need to be talked about.

It was the 1970 report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women that first called for a national daycare Act, but here we are in 2016, and we've still not met the goal of a high-quality, affordable system of early childhood education and care. Our government, the NDP, did start to go down the path. We even changed the name of the department to show what our intentions were, changing from the Department of Education to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. I'm glad to see that this government is continuing down that path.

But there is just so much more that can be done. In my talks to people working in that particular sector, they say that \$6.6 million - while of course any kind of money is welcome, it doesn't really affect the overall system, which is part of what the problem is. The system actually needs to be changed, and that having grants doesn't exactly help the situation. In fact, when I questioned the minister during the Budget Estimates, she wasn't sure where that \$6.6 million was going to go and how exactly it was going to be used and how much of it was going to go to the salaries of the workers versus extra spaces. I wanted to know how that figure was come up with, the \$6.6 million, but she really didn't answer that question, so I'm still asking the question.

The evidence of the benefits of investing in early childhood education is clear. My own father actually taught this issue at the teachers college in Truro. Forty years ago, he was part of that program, the Early Childhood Education Program, and trained many teachers around the province who have gone into the field. He always felt that they were underpaid, and he brought this to many people's attention. It is nice to see that finally these teachers are going to be getting some more money, but again, they say that grants are not the way to do it.

I believe the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and I are also in agreement that these early years are critical for positive growth, development, and the long-term well-being of children. Investing in a coordinated system of early childhood education also has a long list of well-documented social and economic benefits. It enables women to have greater participation in the labour market; it boosts the GDP and tax revenue; it reduces poverty and income inequality; and it addresses population decline.

In Nova Scotia, we need skilled workers and we also need to grow the population. A properly-designed early childhood education system can meet the diverse needs of children and support parents, especially women, as they work, study, and participate in community life.

Developing a system of early childhood education is also good for economic development. Having access to affordable, accessible child care increases employment and spending, and it can enable families to move out of poverty. Child care also creates jobs within the sector. The development of a system of early childhood education in Nova Scotia would provide more short-term economic stimulus than investing in other major sectors of the economy. Those economic returns can be even higher in rural communities.

Currently in Nova Scotia, there are just under 18,000 regulated child care spaces - enough for only 11 per cent of children aged zero to two and 39 per cent of children aged two to four. Many parents begin adding their names to child care centre waiting lists before their child is even born, and once they are able to secure a space, families then have to consider the enormous cost. Parents in this province can pay between \$10,000 and \$12,000 per year for child care. That is actually more, in many cases, than a university tuition.

Many women are put in the impossible position of having to decide if they can afford to return to work, and for the families of the less than 5,000 children who do receive a subsidy from the province, cost is still an issue. Maximum subsidies are far below what parents are currently being charged. A full subsidy can leave parents with a bill of up to \$14 per day, and that means that those employed at child care centres in Nova Scotia are unlikely to be able to afford the cost of child care themselves for their own children.

The female-dominated child care workforce is one of the most underpaid sectors in the country. Early childhood educators in Nova Scotia earn only 42 per cent of the national

average. So there are many benefits to investing in early childhood education: it is good for children, it is good for families, and it is good for the economy.

Again, with this additional \$6.6 million for three areas - subsidizing child care spaces, increasing wage grants for early childhood educators, and supporting child care centres by providing inclusive programming - I wanted to know how this funding was allocated for these three areas. As I said, I came away still scratching my head because the minister was unable to actually answer that question.

That is when it comes to child care. One other point I would like to make is that many schools are still closing. There are families in Cape Breton that are facing the closure of 17 schools, and the responsibility for many of these aging buildings has been downloaded onto the municipalities.

Meanwhile, two of the schools built using the P3 model, which have been well maintained using public funds, will actually have the keys handed over to private developers. This leaves municipalities with bills for unwanted buildings while private developers are walking away with a tidy profit. This is just not a very good situation for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, and I am sure many people would like to see some of those smaller schools helped to stay open - like the school of River John Consolidated, for instance, who put up a tremendous fight.

I was there. I helped them as much as I could. They did everything from organizing a Picket-Nic around their school, where they had picnics and brought in kids and the families and stood up and did a great big group hug, holding hands and giving the school a hug. They put backpacks on the bridge in River John - 70 backpacks to show how many children would be at risk of having to go off to other schools and that would really hurt this community that has already lost so many things. They lost their grocery store, the Co-op. They've lost their bank. They have a liquor store still there (Interruption). They've lost the post office too, now? Oh dear, they've lost the post office, too. It was there last summer but I guess that has gone now.

This is a community full of people who are imaginative, creative and they wanted to keep that school and have it as a hub school. They've worked for the past two years at trying to come up with ideas for this government to accept, for the minister and the school board to accept, and they were given higher and higher hoops to jump through until finally the last straw was they were told they were expected to pay \$500,000 to fix the roof of the school.

This is a small community, full of artists, full of grandmothers and grandparents who would like to see their children stay there, who would like to try and make that community stay alive and vibrant. Mr. Speaker, when you take out the school, that's taking away the heart of that community.

This is going to be a problem for Nova Scotia and I would have liked to have seen more help there for some of these smaller schools to be able to remain open and perhaps give them more advice and give them help to become hub schools.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I'd like to talk about of course is the film industry, Nova Scotia Business Inc. and the fact that as I raised in the estimates, the fact that this government and NSBI are giving millions of dollars to very well-off banks, banks that are doing extremely well, like the Royal Bank - \$22 million to the Royal Bank, for instance, \$22 million to the Royal Bank, to the TD Bank and here's another one, to Butterfield Bank in Bermuda.

I just don't understand why they would spend money, really giving money to banks that do so well, and yet for their own film industry here, which we've already proved made \$180 million to the GDP of Nova Scotia last year and created 3,200 jobs, - 1,600 of them full-time jobs - Mr. Speaker, I just don't understand why this government doesn't see the arts and culture and the creative industries as a business. Other cities do, other cities are raking in the millions and billions of dollars right now, as we speak, while this province is watching them pass us by.

Out in British Columbia, for instance, they have so much work right now they don't even know what to do with it. They can't even get enough crews to do the work that they are already being summoned to do, Mr. Speaker. The same goes in Ontario.

Here's the funny thing, Sudbury has become Hollywood North all of a sudden. We would have gotten some of that business, Mr. Speaker, if we had our film tax credit in place, but because this government, with such short-sightedness, decided to cut that film credit, take away our Film and Creative Industries in Nova Scotia, our agency that was devoted to finding work, bringing work to Nova Scotia, helping our filmmakers create work and sustain work here, in their short-sightedness they have looked a gift horse in the mouth and said no thank you, we don't need you. Guess what, we're losing out because of that and that extra \$1.10 million that we're talking about or \$1.17 million, that would have been an actual surplus if this government had not gotten rid of the Film Tax Credit, I can assure you of that.

Here's another thing, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the television fund has been neglected, this Eastlink fund has been neglected for six months. They had a letter to Laurel Broten, the CEO and president of NSBI, on October 19th, giving them conditional approval and yet nothing was done.

Mr. Speaker, the things she asked to have done would take no time at all. Why is this government sitting on their hands and letting opportunities like this pass them by? I'd like to say it's because they have blinders on. They are not a modern government; they are not looking to the future; they are not seeing that the creative economy is a very necessary part of this province. With all of the artists and talented people that we have here, they're

giving money to banks? And meanwhile, they're ignoring the filmmakers of this province and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for the member's statement is completed. (Interruptions)

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Interruptions)

Are you finished? Are you finished? Thank you.

This budget is about opportunities for growth. This year's budget will target investments to boost export growth in Nova Scotia such as wine, culture, tourism, just to name a few. I guess, Mr. Speaker, that's what government's role is, and I stand here today to talk about how this government is getting out of the way of business and letting business thrive within Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, one big thing that this government has done over the years is to create a foundation of success for businesses. Our exports are up, our fisheries exports are up, thanks to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who has worked tirelessly in the Chinese market to increase our lobster demand. That's just to name a few.

Another prime example of what the Minister of Agriculture also has done, is invest \$2.8 million for the Aquaculture Growth Strategy for research and development. This is a very interesting initiative because I had the great opportunity to meet a gentleman the day he got off the plane from Norway, and I met him at a house party in my riding, and we started chatting. I asked him: What brings you to Nova Scotia? He just looked at me and - he didn't know I was in government - and he goes, this thing called the Doelle-Lahey report.

He said your report created a foundation for aquaculture to succeed in Nova Scotia, and one of the great things about that is his company decided to open up an office here in Halifax to create this, and the technology that he was using was monitoring fish farms, using cameras and high-definition sensors on the nets to ensure that there was no break, creating a safer place for fish to grow in communities. So, to me, that shows that government is creating a foundation for businesses to succeed.

Another prime example of that would be COVE. COVE is a great example of creating a foundation for businesses to succeed, and here is another initiative where we're creating a hub where businesses can come in and work together to really focus on our ocean sciences and our ocean technology, work directly with Dalhousie University and what they can offer in the community of sciences. And that's a huge initiative for Nova Scotia,

because it's recognizing that our coastal waters, that we can play in this \$3 trillion industry, and that we can play and succeed in that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to bring to the point that we're investing \$3.5 million for wineries and vineyards, for research, marketing development, and support for vineyards in Nova Scotia. This is another prime example of government creating a foundation of success for businesses, and not picking winners or losers.

It's interesting too on that - I met the gentleman, the head winemaker from Jost Vineyards when we were first early elected, and he came from Tuscany and then from Tuscany he went to Napa, and Napa to Nova Scotia and to the Jost Winery. I asked him, why are you picking Nova Scotia, you just came from Napa, beautiful weather, beautiful wines, and he looked at me straight and he goes, it's your water. Your water will create the best wines, and will give Tuscany and California a run for their money, and I believe the wines in Nova Scotia will surpass them in quality, taste, and flavour.

That is showing exactly, once again, what Nova Scotia can offer, in an industry that we're helping grow as a co-operative approach instead of picking winners and losers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's tough to make hard choices in government and I can respect that, but it's also that we all have to work together to move this province forward. We all have to, you know, tighten our belt buckles and work in creating a form of success, and we can all do that. We do that in our households, and we can do that here as a government and as individuals around this House.

You know, another prime example of this is working with municipalities, with the investment of \$6 million to bring high-speed Internet to more homes and businesses in Nova Scotia. Once again, this is helping municipalities create that foundation of success.

I just want to kind of change direction a bit. But before I do that, I want to recognize that CFIB stated for the last two years that Nova Scotia has the best business confidence in Canada. Again, that's government creating a foundation of success.

I also want to bring attention to a bill that was first introduced by the Minister of Health and Wellness on April 20, 2012, which was the Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers Act. Then it was introduced again on March 28, 2013.

The Progressive Conservatives introduced it in 2015, looking for a food bank tax credit for farmers. We are finally putting that forward in this budget. It creates a 25 per cent non-refundable tax credit of fair market value of donated agriculture products. Good job, Minister of Health and Wellness - proud of him introducing that back in 2012 and going forward. With that leadership of the Department of Health and Wellness, we are good.

It's funny, because the NDP wouldn't even look at that during their time in government. It takes two progressive Parties to bring this forward. These donations must be accepted by eligible food banks and the food distributed in Nova Scotia without charge for the relief of poverty.

I'm going to talk a little bit about education. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and I are in a very unique position because we both have kids in elementary school, but we have one child under the new curriculum and one child in the old curriculum, so one in Grade 5 and 6 and one in P to 3. What I'm seeing is that the learning difference between those two curriculums is incredible.

I have to say, that's the hard work of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, who worked so hard to create a curriculum for our children for success - not like the past government, which cut \$65 million. I find it incredibly rich that they stand here and preach and preach about the education system. You know what? They don't understand what a curriculum can change to create success for our children, as ours does today in this House.

This government understands the importance of a curriculum for children. It understands the importance of coding. Coding is the future of children in Canada. Our kids are the first kids in Canada who have coding as part of the curriculum in Nova Scotia. I have to say that I am proud of that. I am proud of this government for doing that kind of work. It's creating that foundation.

So now I look at my child. She comes home, and we work on coding together, and she is over my head. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto has the floor.

MR. STROINK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand it's difficult for the NDP to understand this great success within the curriculum of Nova Scotia.

You know what I also find very rich in this discussion? You have the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River talking about early education. That government cut \$6 million out of the early education fund. We're investing \$6.6 million back into that. We go on and on about what this government is doing within education.

You know what they also asked, Mr. Speaker? They also asked the school boards to cut 22 per cent of their operating expenses. You know what the school boards said? No, we can't. We can't afford to do that because it's going to affect the kids. This government said no, we're not doing that. We're investing that \$65 million back into education. It's tough standing here and listening to them preaching to the choir about education, but you know what? We are doing the right things. We are taking the time to understand what our

children need for the future in Canada, in Nova Scotia, and around the world. Do you know what the other thing is? Our kids are going to be leaders in the coding industry of Canada. They will take these kids, these kids forward will show the world what we can do on coding.

You know what's interesting? In 2025 there will be over a million people-shortage in cyber security in the world - globally. So IT security coding is a huge part of the future. (Interruption) It's very interesting that the member over there is just struggling with the truth, and I know it's so difficult for him to accept that kind of truth that this government actually cares about the children of this province, not like over there that cut \$65 million and \$6 million from early education. Wow, it's rich, it's rich . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Thank you. The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto has the floor.

MR. STROINK: Man, if I had behaved like that in the classroom, I'm sure I'd be sent to the principal's office. Maybe he can learn something about that, or maybe he didn't spend enough time in the principal's office.

Anyway, moving forward is what this province is about, and what this government is about is moving forward. That's why I'm proud to be part of this team that's moving this province forward, and with those hard decisions we are moving forward. I cannot express the gratitude that it is to serve on this side of the floor, and the team that we've built around here to help guide this team. I do want to acknowledge one individual who is leaving us in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board - the Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, George McLellan.

George led this team and kept this team on the straight and narrow, to ensure that we could create a budget that was successful for Nova Scotia. I want to make sure that George understands our gratitude, I want to express our gratitude on this side of the floor. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I think we should do our best to let the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto finish.

MR. STROINK: I know, the truth hurts. I'd like again to go back to George. With his mandate to create this province in a financially stable situation and creating a balanced budget, and working hard towards that, my hat goes off to George and this team says thank you for everything that you have done for Nova Scotians.

So, with that - I've got two minutes left - I have to say that being around this room and hearing the frustrations from people on a day-to-day basis, they understand the predicament that this government is in, and they understand what we're doing to change the attitudes and change the direction of this province.

I met with an organization today that was asking for funding, and they were saying, we understand the government's predicament, we understand what has been done in the past by previous governments and previous leaderships. We understand the direction that you're going, and yes we understand that no is probably easier than yes, but we want to work with you because we're Nova Scotians, and we can think outside of the box to find those solutions, not like the other side who can just pick winners and losers and cut a paycheque. These people want to work with us; the business community wants to work with government for success. Business communities want to see success within Nova Scotia.

You know what? It's funny because I hear it every day, only the negative people hear the negative, and it's all about positive. It's about positively thinking about this province and moving us forward (Interruption) And it's about the yoga. Well, you know there is a lot about yoga that can help and maybe you might learn something with that yoga. So, you know . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto has the floor.

MR. STROINK: I guess when you are 13 years in here in this room, you don't understand how the world works and maybe his blinders are on and not our blinders, because we come from the private sector to run this government, to help with this government. When you are stuck in government for 13 years as an elected official, you cannot understand how government works and how business works. If you could understand that then you might be able to succeed.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[3:35 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Keith Irving in the Chair.]

[7:43 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and made considerable progress and begs leave to sit again.

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, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 176.

Bill No. 176 - Otter Lake Landfill Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MR. IAIN RANKIN: I move that Bill No. 176 be now read a second time. I could speak for several minutes on the topic of the Otter Lake landfill, but I'm just going to say a few words. I know it's getting late.

Obviously this bill supersedes the politics that we see sometimes in the House, and all levels of government. This is about commitments made to the communities that I serve, the affected host communities, surrounding the Otter Lake landfill.

This has been in place since 1998, and at the time with a community-led strategy which was developed in 1994 by HRM, a regional solid waste management project to develop a strategy, there was a community stakeholders committee that was developed to look at ways that they could find a host community to build the landfill and have some confidence in the people that were around the community. What was developed with the community members of HRM were a number of environmental safeguards, defined footprint, which was nine cells and the level of 112 metres above the sea level, which was measured by a balloon test which was roughly where the treeline was so it would not be visible and it would be set in place to minimize things like odour complaints, or litter that might blow off the cells.

A state-of-the-art front-end processing and a state-of-the-art waste stabilization facility that was put in place was not a cheap development, so it definitely had its costs, but the end result was higher. Environmental protections - indeed one of the highest environmental protections in the world when it was built, so we had people from all over the world come and tour the landfill to see what we are doing in Halifax, and it really put Nova Scotia on the map in terms of solid waste, how we were handling solid waste.

Since then there was development before I became an MLA, and through an exercise, a study, to look at cost savings there were a number of the components reviewed. They were costly, so things like the WSF and FEP were looked at and the cell height extension was looked at. And, obviously, the length of time that the landfill could be there, if that was extended that would be a huge cost saving for HRM because most people know

it is over \$100 million to site a landfill and roughly \$20 million to build a new cell. So this is a lot of money that we are talking about and a lot of weigh-in from the community when you source some of these, and actually Timberlea was not even on the map, was not even one of the considerations when the landfill was sited there.

The only reason why the people of Timberlea-Prospect accepted the landfill was based on the community-led strategy and based on the understanding that the landfill would be there for approximately 25 years, or the amount of time that it would take for waste to go into the number of cells that were defined, which was nine and the height that I mentioned.

This bill is about restoring some trust in government, and there is a term used a lot by the community, that is “verifiable trust.” After I have been watching over the last few years, there have been a lot of statements saying there will be no changes to the footprint. In fact, all political Parties in the House, I have to say, have supported that - and I thank them for that. I thank the current Minister of Environment and the former Minister of Environment under our government, but as well I have to thank the member for Queens-Shelburne who was the former Minister of Environment for also standing up and saying that we will not go back on the community commitments made by HRM, and the province for that matter.

Why do I bring this forward? We are at a point now where there is less volume going in; there is more source separation; the cells that we are going to develop now, cells seven, eight, and nine, are indeed larger - so, the timing that it is going to fill these cells will go beyond the 25 years. We understand that; the community understands that. There is nothing contractual to actually close the landfill down in 25 years, nor is it in the public interest to prematurely close the landfill when there is capacity left and the significant funding it cost to build new cells and to site a new landfill. What I think is fair in the balance of considerations is the certainty for people to know that when the landfill becomes full, that it is full, then that would be a full stop.

It is important to mention here when we are talking about proposed vertical expansion that when there was public consultation, two years ago, 80 per cent of the people who went to public consultation, all over HRM, not just the affected community, but 80 per cent of the respondents were opposed to vertical expansion. So, again, I am ingraining in legislation the inability for a permanent cell extension on any of the cells that will be built in Otter Lake.

I want to say I commend the Community Monitoring Committee, who have worked very hard to be the watchdog of this operation. They are actually ingrained in the industrial permit, so any of the various operational components that are at Otter Lake, they have their eyes on, and they are the body that communicates directly with the community. I expect any of the various components that are in place to remain in place unless they are proven not to have adverse impacts on the environment to the surrounding communities.

I want to commend HRM Council for developing a Community Integration Fund because of the extra years that will be added beyond the 25 years that I mentioned, which many expected to be the case.

I want to commend local community organizations, such as the Woodens River organization, who monitor the Bluff Trail. They wrote to HRM, and I believe to the province as well, to ensure that their position of not allowing vertical extension was on record.

Obviously many of the members would know the Bluff Trail. It's a spot in Timberlea that has elevation, and they don't want to have the visual lines impacted. There are considerations above and beyond just the technical aspect from the environmental standpoint, but also the visual aspect. Above all, it's the moral contract that has been stated by Halifax Regional Municipality and by the province back in the early 1990s when they couldn't find any place to take the landfill.

I believe that with this legislation we will attain the verifiable trust that the community is seeking. I ask for the support of all the members in the House, and I look forward to bringing this to committee, in case the public wants to weigh in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 176, an Act to Maintain the Current Footprint and Certain Requirements of the Otter Lake Landfill. I don't have a lot to say. I want to congratulate the member for Timberlea-Prospect for introducing, I believe, his first bill. It's definitely one that we support.

I will just mention that I believe it was the PC caucus that actually first spoke on this. Back in April 2013, my colleague, the member for Inverness posed some questions with regard to it and then followed up by a resolution from my colleague, the member for Argyle-Barrington.

At the end of the day, it is basically just the right thing to do. Anything we can do to ensure that the residents of this constituency are receiving what they were promised in the past is something that we absolutely support. We look forward to Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise to speak on Bill No. 174. I think it's important to recognize that - Bill No. 176. My eyesight - maybe I need to get them checked. I don't wear glasses, but I might need to.

I think it's important to recognize that the provincial government does have a role to play in ensuring that landfills that are technically overseen by the municipality do the right thing, and ensuring that when the public is informed of their creation, of their operation, of the limits, and what is portrayed on what is going to happen, especially when a community has one of these sites in their community - the province does have a role to play.

I'm glad to see this piece of legislation come forward. We do support it. I think it's important that we listen to the public, and the province does, as I said, ultimately have a role in the approvals of these sites.

I would hope that maybe we can look at ensuring that not only do we recognize the work that has been done by the member for Timberlea-Prospect and others in the House to bring this issue forward, but there are a number of issues that have come up over the last number of years. One that is concerning to many in my community, the community I represent and the surrounding areas, is one of leachate, and that is produced from Otter Lake.

About a year and a half ago, maybe two years ago, the city's Environmental and Sustainability Standing Committee recommended actually trucking the leachate from the Otter Lake landfill back to the Sackville landfill. This is a landfill that's been closed for a number of years. When this was closed, the public and the community were told - the community hosted that landfill for well over 18 years - that it would be closed permanently.

I attended the public meeting that was held when this recommendation was put before council in the community of Upper Sackville. There were well over 200 members of that community there who couldn't believe they were having to stand up and come out to a meeting and talk against the possibility of the landfill in Sackville really reopening, in their eyes. They said loud and clear that closed means closed, and that's what the public and the community were promised. So I'm a bit concerned about the municipality and their ability to change the commitment that they made to the public.

We see in this piece of legislation that it's going to be a stronger commitment to the community. I would hope that we could possibly see the same issue with the leachate dealt with in the same way. We know that the issue isn't going to go away. We always need to address landfills and the runoffs that come from them.

But as I said, in our community, we hosted that landfill for so many years. I would not want to see the municipality change their commitment to the community. I wouldn't want to see the province approve that.

At the public meeting, of course, a lot of the anger and concern was directed toward the municipality, the council. I asked one question in that community meeting, and it was, does the province have to approve this change? The answer was yes. I know I questioned

the minister at the time, and he said, it's too early, there's no request yet to the province to approve this, so you don't need to worry about it.

If that's the case, why are we seeing this piece of legislation? I know the member for Timberlea-Prospect is concerned that potentially those changes could happen. I would hope that if the government is willing to pass this piece of legislation, the government will stand up and support the community of Sackville and say no to any kind of reopening of that facility, especially the leachate and the leachate that may be trucked into that.

We do support this piece of legislation, but I want to make sure that the government recognizes that if they're going to go this far and support this initiative around Otter Lake, they need to stand up and make sure that the municipality knows that the commitment made to the community of Sackville needs to be upheld and that we do not want to see leachate trucked into that closed site.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this bill.

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

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, before I do that, could I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. RANKIN: I just want to draw the members' attention to the west gallery, where we have with us, I just noticed, a member of the community monitoring committee, which I've mentioned before. He's the vice-chair, Scott Guthrie. Please stand up and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Thank you to my colleagues for their comments. I certainly appreciate the support. I definitely am sensitive to some of the concerns raised about the leachate and some of that stuff. Obviously it's a challenging, complex topic with solid waste.

Just to reiterate, the impetus with this particular legislation is because the Department of Environment, a lot of times, has to look at the nature of the technical aspects of an application. Obviously, we have to be careful where solid waste actually lands in each level of government. I always try to be very sensitive to different levels of government and not interfering in what is truly in their auspices, but as the member for Sackville-Cobequid says, it is the Nova Scotia Government's role to approve applications and therefore, they should be sensitive to commitments made to communities.

On that, I move that we close debate on second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 176. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill. No 174.

Bill. No 174 - Financial Measures (2016) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction before I begin.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. DELOREY: I'd like to direct members' attention to the east gallery, where we have Caroline Dobson with us. Caroline is actually the mother of our Page, Sarah here in the Legislature. We often recognize the family members and the support that each of us as members in the Legislature receive, but, I think also, certainly the parents of our Pages that support us here also deserve recognition of the House as well, for allowing and encouraging these young individuals to become involved and engaged with the legislative process. So, if we could give her the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 174 be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2016-17 does demonstrate what is possible when we stick to a plan and we work together to implement that plan. It shows that we can build a stronger Nova Scotia when we're working together. The Financial Measures Act is a piece of legislation that is designed to implement certain legislative requirements that are needed to enact, or to implement decisions made within the budget that was introduced on April 19th.

So, within the budget we know that we've invested in opportunities for growth in our education for youth and jobs training. We invest in our healthy people, our healthy economy, and of course, Mr. Speaker, we always remember that we have to invest in the people of Nova Scotia who need our support the most. We've been making difficult and strategic decisions over the past two and a half years, but we've been following our fiscal plan and putting together our path to fiscal sustainability, and we are going to continue to work to that end.

Now, Mr. Speaker, specifically in the Financial Measures (2016) Bill this year, we have a couple of items to highlight. The first item is there are provisions in the legislation with respect to the capital investment tax credit. We know that the private sector creates jobs and grows our economy. The Nova Scotia Government needs to work with our private sector to provide those opportunities for Nova Scotians to get the employment they need and to grow our economy. The capital investment tax credit provides an incentive for investment in large capital projects in the Province of Nova Scotia. The large businesses we have are key engines to economic growth and our exports.

The capital investment tax credit was first announced in October 2014, by the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism at that time, the current Minister of Energy. Mr. Speaker, the tax credit that was introduced through legislative changes does go into effect and began January 1, 2015, but regulations will be forthcoming to finalize the implementation of the capital tax credit, but we did need to make a couple of legislative changes in here. One in particular is to ensure that we have financial safeguard in place, provides the authority for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to implement a cap on the tax credit, to ensure that we respect the province's ability to pay when this credit goes into play and companies begin applying for it.

Mr. Speaker, this particular program is designed for large capital investments in the Province of Nova Scotia. It's a minimum investment of \$15 million and a tax credit of 15 per cent of that capital project.

Mr. Speaker, an item that was announced specifically in the 2016 budget, but which required changes to the Income Tax Act, was the Food Bank Tax Credit for Farmers. That credit is implemented in this legislation in its entirety. This is a new tax credit being introduced for the first time. This tax credit builds upon our commitment to deliver support to those Nova Scotians who need our support the most.

We recognize that the food banks in the Province of Nova Scotia provide important service to the people of Nova Scotia in need. The Food Bank Tax Credit for Farmers will help our food banks get much-needed agricultural products, healthy food for the people in Nova Scotia. For this tax credit farmers will get a 25 per cent tax credit on the fair market value of the donation. Generally speaking, these types of food bank tax credits are relatively new in the few jurisdictions in Canada that currently have them. We are going to focus initially on fresh produce this year but we continue to work with Feed Nova Scotia

and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture in order to again work out the final details of the regulations for the implementation of this.

What this legislation does is it provides the legislative framework for this tax credit to move forward. We again look forward to continued collaboration and work with Feed Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to ensure that the tax credit meets the needs of the people of Nova Scotia but also the farmers who are taking the time to make the donations, the contributions to this very worthy cause.

Mr. Speaker, there's an additional change in the piece introduced in the FMA (2016) - amending the Provincial Court Act. The amendment in the Provincial Court Act is tweaking the process by which judicial compensation - that is compensation for the judges in the Province of Nova Scotia - is managed. We recognize that the independence of the judiciary is very important. As you know, they represent the third branch of government in our democracy and the separation of duties we do respect is important.

We respect the work of the judges in the Province of Nova Scotia that they do on behalf of all Nova Scotians with respect to the integrity by which they conduct themselves on the bench and we respect the independence by which they fulfill their duties. But just as the judges of the Province of Nova Scotia are responsible for making and managing the judicial side of governing and the province, the legislative branch of government is responsible for the finances of the province.

The change that is being implemented here just provides a safeguard in the compensation process. Currently the process would see that it does have a tribunal set up to review, evaluate and make a recommendation for the compensation provided to judges in the Province of Nova Scotia.

The recommendation in its current form is binding on the government, which means the government which is responsible for public finances, does not have an option or decision to make when the decision is binding by that tribunal. Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is one of only two jurisdictions, Northwest Territories being the other, which has a fully-binding position of the tribunal, so our change here is just to remove the binding criteria. The recommendation, the tribunal's structure, format and directions will all be the same as it has been, as it is in other jurisdictions, and they will be making the recommendation but respecting the obligation, and the responsibility of the government for the public finances, provides the option for the Executive Council to accept, modify, or reject the recommendation from the tribunal. But in the event that the recommendation of the tribunal is not fully endorsed by Executive Council, there is a requirement to report back the reasons why the decision that differs from the tribunal is made.

There are a couple of other items, Mr. Speaker. I identified the three that I have mentioned so far, probably three of the largest. There are a couple of other items that would include a budget measure which authorizes and manages the increase to the tobacco taxes,

the 2 cents per cigarette that was announced in the budget - this legislation puts that into effect. We also have some housekeeping items around the Shared Services Act and Regulations. We have the dates by which the legislation goes into effect.

We have made a governance change to the superannuation of the Public Service Superannuation Plan; it is a positive governance change. Currently, the government has representatives on that plan, but they are obliged to vote as a block. That is, all government appointees to appointed trustees currently have to vote as a single unit, they have to come to consensus and vote as one voice on behalf of the government. I believe it is appropriate governance to allow those representatives who have a fiduciary responsibility to the plan that they are responsible for, as trustees, to exercise that authority as individuals. So we are allowing them one member, one vote.

A couple of other important governance changes - we are providing a provision around tax credits when a tax certificate is being issued. Currently, if an application is written in such a way that it meets the criteria, the minister essentially is required to issue the tax certificate for the tax credit - and this would go generally for any tax credits requiring a tax certificate. For proper governance, it would be appropriate because existing legislation provides provisions recognizing that an application or submission that comes forward may become aware that information may be misleading or inaccurate, and so the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board currently has the authority to revoke a tax certificate that was issued.

The gap that we identified was the fact that in the event the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board believed that there is misleading, inaccurate, or fraudulent information, they would not have the authority to not issue the tax certificate in the first place. So that is, again, just a housekeeping item to improve governance of tax credit administration.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is a change that brings testamentary trusts - that is, trust provisions that are created through estate planning at the time of death - in line with federal changes. That change, again, is being made to align ourselves with our federal partners.

With that, I do look forward to comments from my colleagues through the second reading. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this evening and speak to this bill. There are a number of things through this whole process that obviously warrant some discussion. Any time we think about the budget of the province, we should think of all the moving parts and the impact that the budget has on the people of the province. I think I mentioned on Budget Day one of the first things that jumped out was around the ferry and the convention centre - we will come to that, but something that immediately sprung out was roads and what we are doing with roads.

The whole aspect of roads, especially for the rural MLAs in this Chamber, they know how important getting some roadwork is to the people who live in the constituencies. I found it amazing over the last number of months how restricted the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is in its ability to do small projects. I have a number of situations around culverts at the edge of people's properties where it would certainly appear to any normal person that the problems with the culverts and such would be the responsibility of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

I'm thinking of a couple of cases where the shoulder of the road is eroding - it's falling away, it's coming out from under the road, it's impacting a person's driveway. Then the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal comes and says, no, I'm sorry, that's the landowner's responsibility. They'll point to something in some manual somewhere that they'll use to make that case.

You just know that the people who are there representing the department are not comfortable with having to do that, because it's not right to the residents.

Why is this happening? It's happening because there's no money in the budget for maintenance in Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal; there's no money in the budget for taking care of the things that the department should be taking care of. So when we look at this year's budget through that lens and when we think about the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal budget, we have to be concerned about the priorities of the government and how they will spend that budget.

We obviously have to talk about the Yarmouth ferry situation. Any way you look at it, no matter which side you're on, you have to acknowledge that that's a decision that the government has made. That's a priority to them, and that is where they will be investing significant amounts of money. Over the fullness of time, the amount of money that is being invested in that is so significant that the government won't even take a stab at calculating how much it might be, and instead are content to ridicule anyone who does try to make an informed forecast of what that cost might be.

Any time you have a government that says no, no, don't ask how much that might cost, it's not fair for you to ask that, it becomes laughable. So over the course of the arrangement it will be, in its totality, \$100 million. Personally, I think it would be much more than that; I think my Leader was conservative in his estimate on that.

We know from the beginning that the government is not comfortable with the amounts. We see that immediately. The only number that has been disclosed is the minimum amount that it will cost taxpayers over two years. That amount that has been disclosed as the minimum for two years is \$33 million.

When we look at the budget that is before us and we try to reconcile the statements by the government of \$33 million to the numbers they have presented - and it was a bit of

a process, with a bit of scratching and digging we determined that part of that - \$13 million, was actually put back in last year's budget. Remarkably, the contract was signed March 24th and funds were distributed before March 31st, which allowed them the flexibility to plunk a significant amount of money - \$13 million - into last year's budget.

I think \$13 million, and we had to scratch and claw to find that, Mr. Speaker, but there are lots of amounts in this budget that there's no scratching and clawing to find. You can find in the glossy pamphlet that they pass out with the budget, the very first line talks about a \$6 million move for high-speed Internet - which is a good thing.

I say that in the context of \$6 million in front-line billing - line one - but \$13 million hidden away in last year's numbers, not disclosed anywhere, just think about the message that sends. Clearly, it would certainly seem like the \$13 million wasn't front-line billing.

I'm sure they thought that maybe this was something that people wouldn't pick up on. We did pick up on it. The deal is like the gift that keeps on giving, when every day we learn something else about this deal, whether it's blackout dates, or whether it's paying for terminal upgrades in the State of Maine.

We haven't even gotten around to talking about the winter work for the vessel because the taxpayers of this province will pay the complete cash deficiency for the year. That cash deficiency, I would submit to you, gets larger every time they black out a day. When there will be nobody riding on that ferry, the cash deficiency just got a little higher. By the way, the City of Portland has the ability to institute more blackout dates. They just have to give 30 days' notice and they can put some more blackout days. How much will the cash deficiency be? Well, this government has estimated that over two years, it's going to be \$33 million. That's if they get 60,000 riders on the ferry per year - per year.

I'll do a little pool. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: I think people around the province could have a bit of fun with the little pool estimating how many riders that ferry service might see because guess what? If it's not 60,000, then the cost to the taxpayers just went up significantly. I know the Chase the Ace game has some popularity. Maybe there could be a little game around guessing the number of riders on the ferry.

This gives you a glimpse into the priorities of the government. That's what they've decided to do, so when I talk to people in my area and people around the province and they want to know, well, what about the roads? They will be informed, there was a decision made on where that budget went.

Our RIM budget, we know, \$16 million this year, is down 25 per cent from what it was just three or four years ago, I think my colleague would say. The status of the roads certainly hasn't gotten that much better that they require less spending. Roads are a very significant issue for sure, and who knows what will happen?

The minister has mentioned during Budget Estimates that he's looking for some ways to try to get some more money to roads. I hope he has some success in that because we deserve it. It's not in the budget. It's not in the capital budget, and it's not in this budget, so it won't be this year, folks. But maybe going forward, that will become a priority of theirs. It's not a priority of this government today, but maybe at some point it will be.

That's just on the transportation budget. The transportation budget will go towards things like the Yarmouth ferry. It will go towards things like *Bluenose II* and bridges and everything else - there are so many uses for that money. We'll see if any of it gets to the rural roads that help the people who travel those roads every day. It's a concern for sure for me.

I can hear some of the members opposite making light of it, and that's their prerogative, but I can tell you the people who travel the roads don't think it's that funny. We'll see how that works out.

That's transportation, and obviously when we look at the health budget, there are a lot of concerns around the status of health care in this province. We can go through some of them. The government's efforts to hold the health care budget to, I think, a 0.9 per cent increase are very admirable, but I have to say this government often does things that are admirable but their execution has proven to be very poor on a number of issues. Around the health care, the execution risk is very scary because if the objective to hold the health care budget will be met by a reduction in services, that's not a good thing. It no longer becomes admirable.

I can speak to my area, where I do see a reduction in services. We'll talk about some of the mental health support services that are disappearing from rural areas, that just aren't there to help those people who need it. We've all heard the terribly tragic stories about people self-identifying, realizing that they have an issue, looking for help and not being able to get it. In Pictou County, with the closure of our mental health unit, those problems have only been exacerbated. We hear stories about looking for help, and reporting to emergency, and one of the protocols would be now, if you feel like you are in danger of hurting yourself, or if you feel like you are a threat to other people, you should present at the emergency room.

Mr. Speaker, I could give you a long list of names of people who did just that and who were turned away from the emergency room, saying "you don't need help," or "we can't help you here," and sent home. That's certainly not something to make light of. That's a very serious issue. It's a very serious shortcoming of our mental health care system at

this point, and to try and save money on that, well, to quote my son, "that's not cool." That's not cool at all.

So around the mental health budget, the mental health budget is the same this year as it was last year. The problems, the issues, the gaps in service are worse. Much worse. People will have to judge for themselves, is that okay? Is that admirable? I don't think it is. I have serious issues with that in rural Nova Scotia - and not just in rural Nova Scotia. I hear from lots of people in HRM who are concerned about the doctor shortage.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was talking about the situation with the judges, and I'm going to come back to that, but first I'd like the opportunity to give a little perspective around that.

On this side of the House, when we talk about the doctor shortage, we'll often hear from back across the floor that there are more doctors per capita in Nova Scotia than anywhere else. That seems to be a justification from this government to say there's not a problem, there's nothing to see here, we don't know what you're talking about.

It's a false statistic, in the sense that it may very well be true mathematically, but it's not a real representation of what's happening in the province, because when you get into the rural areas, obviously, in the doctors per capita statistic you are going to include a lot of specialists. You are going to include a lot of doctors who are maybe doing research. You are going to include doctors who are maybe geographically condensed in HRM or something.

So while the statistic may be mathematically accurate, it's not morally accurate, is the way I would say that. Thank you to my colleague for my choice of words there.

There is a doctor shortage. It's very real, and it is something that you can't hide from people. People, if everything is going okay in their life - maybe they have a job, and things are going well - they might pick up the paper and they might read that the economy is great and everything is just hunky-dory. That may make sense to them from their world, but you can't fool somebody, you can't trick somebody who's looking for a doctor into believing that the health care system is functioning properly. You just can't make them believe that there's not a doctor shortage when they can't get a doctor.

I've had so many calls over the last few weeks and just before I came in here yesterday and again tonight, I was talking to a 90-year-old lady who had fallen and broken her leg just before Christmas. She is on some different medications and in rehab, she does not have a doctor. She has been trying to find one; she has been trying to work with the new Health Authority. The first thing the Health Authority said to her was, do your children have a family doctor - her grown children? Yes, they do. So the Health Authority said, there's your answer, get that doctor to accept you as a patient.

Well the problem is that doctor can't accept any new patients. That doctor is actually getting 30 calls a day from people who are looking for a doctor, so he just couldn't possibly accept any more patients. Imagine how he feels about that, he doesn't feel too good about that, Mr. Speaker.

The lady went back to the Health Authority and said look, that's not going to work, what shall I do? The next suggestion from the Health Authority was that she call her MLA because now that's the status of health care in this province, that MLAs are going to solve the doctor shortage on their own because the Health Authority is putting their hands up in the air, saying we don't know what to do; we can't find a doctor for you, go call somebody else. Then they'll stand in this House and say there are more doctors per capita. It's nonsense.

In this budget, the health care budget is going to stay flat because we're going to save money by not having doctors. That's not cool.

So let's look at where we are, why might that be the case? There will certainly be good people working on recruitment of doctors and there will be good people working on retaining doctors here. But they are working against the backdrop of a government that goes to war with doctors. Doctors haven't had a contract in over a year. Just before Christmas, I think it was before Christmas when the Premier came out in the news and disparaged doctors as greedy people who were looking for a 55 per cent increase. At the time doctors called me and said, why would the Premier do that? Even if they were, and they were in negotiations, why would he do that? It is called politics because there are only so many doctors in the province and there are many more people.

It might be acceptable to the general population to just look down at doctors, until they need one, of course. Doctors are greedy and good on the Premier for being tough with them. But the issue is that when you create that environment of animosity, it makes it hard for doctors to commit to working here. We saw in the paper doctors clearly saying, I can't, in good conscience, recommend to my colleagues that they should come to this province and work. We saw that right in the paper, doctors would say that. So here we have people working hard to recruit and retain and we have this happening; it just makes it hard.

Now there's lots of talk that the government - doctors obviously are not in a union, when they have a contract dispute they go to arbitration, binding arbitration is what they have and they have talk from this government that they'll take away binding arbitration. It was just talk, until we just saw what happened with the judges; I would say that doctors are probably next. So doctors are scared to commit to working in this province. That's the environment that has been created by this government and, as a result, 90-year-old people cannot find doctors, and the Health Authority is putting their hands up in the air saying call your MLA, maybe if you put enough pressure on the government they will actually try and move on the problem. That is where we are with health care in this province - and I think

that a history lesson would show that there were similar issues back in the 1980s under a Liberal Government.

We had severe doctor shortages, severe doctor shortages that we are starting to come back from. If you are going to have an efficient functioning health care system, you need doctors. Doctors are not meant to be low-hanging fruit that you can alienate and pick on and then assume that they are going to come to work in the province. That is just talk, it is not productive. We will see what happens there, but I certainly hope that we can find some good news on doctors. I do not know that the Department of Health and Wellness - they were allegedly taken by surprise by a few doctors who retired. The Premier said, how could we know? The doctors are 70 years old, and they are practising long hours because they are trying to serve the patients - and, yet, the government is surprised when they retire.

So I hope that the department is looking at the demographics of the doctors we do have here, and maybe preparing themselves so that we Nova Scotians do not have to suffer from the lack of planning and the lack of understanding of this Liberal Government on a number of issues.

In terms of mental health, there is so much that this government could be doing, should be doing, and we do not see that in the budget and people are suffering. We need to get to a place where people who have mental health issues can get the help they need and be productive members of society, functioning at their full capability, paying more tax, and just contributing to their communities. It is obvious the benefits that that would have, but I worry that we have a government that looks too much at that as an expense item - it says this is the cost of that and we cannot afford that cost. That is maybe how they look at it in their boardroom - we cannot afford that cost. But they are naive enough to believe that if they do not pay that cost there will not be any repercussions, and they are repercussions to many, many of these decisions.

We have issues with a number of things on the expense side. The convention centre discussion is not done for sure - not done for sure by a long way in just the ways, again, the presentation of that money and the spin around what really happened there. People see through that; people see through that for sure. A number of people reached out to me and said yes, that is silly quite frankly. So, that is a concern when you see those types of presentations in financial statements - they make you wonder about a lot of things when you see those types of things between the ferry, the issue with the \$13 million, and the convention centre stuff.

Then you look at the revenue projections and think to yourself well, how are those going to materialize? It will not take much of a miss on the revenue projections to this budget - and I forget how the minister described it, but I think he said something about his plan is working, but it will not take much for the plan to be obviously derailed. If the actual numbers start to come in, we will see how it looks. You know, at the end of the day it is a \$10 billion spend and there will be good things in there. There will be good expenditures

in there and there will be other stuff that we could debate all day and night, and many times we have. We were obviously pleased to see the food bank stuff come to fruition, that's a tip of the hat to my colleague, the member for Inverness on that who has been bringing that to this floor since 2011, I believe.

I remember chatting with him one time about why he did that at that time and he gave full credit to a gentleman called Larry Evans. (Interruption) Yes, Larry Evans was the chair of the food bank in Port Hawkesbury and he has been championing that for five years or more, and my colleague brought it to the floor of the Legislature.

As oftentimes happens in politics, it actually winds its way through under a repackaged and rebranded thing, but the good thing is that it's done. That's the good thing and that's what's important here. It's done now and it's in here.

I don't have too much more to add at this stage, Mr. Speaker, other than to say there are things in this budget that are interesting, there are things in this budget that are pleasing, and there are things in this budget that are certainly concerning. I will say that at the end of the year when the actuals are said and done and the projections have become reality, I sincerely hope that this province is in a surplus. That would be a wonderful thing, it will be a wonderful thing if it is not at the expense of Nova Scotians through the health care system, and it will be a wonderful thing if it is not at the expense of jobs and a growing economy.

There's a lot of risk in here around the ferry so we'll see what happens there. There's a lot of risk in here around the delivery of services. I wish the government well in fulfilling the promises they are making in this document. They've bitten off a lot here to chew and we'll see how they do in the execution of it.

With those few words, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: "Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive!" That quote has been attributed . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Dartmouth South that it is unparliamentary to infer that any member of this House is attempting to deceive anybody.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South has the floor.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, thank you. What we have here is a tale, when we look at the Financial Measures (2016) Bill and the incorporation or the presentation of this budget. I think it is important to recognize that this government is attempting to weave its

own narrative and, in so doing, it has been presenting Nova Scotians with financial figures that fit that narrative.

The government has an austerity agenda and it has had that from day one. To further this agenda, it has been telling Nova Scotians that the province is in poor (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth South has the floor.

MS. MANCINI: The government has been telling Nova Scotians that the province is in poor financial shape. Pushing this agenda, the government has trampled labour rights, cut funding to many community groups and organizations, dismantled the film and television industry, and neglected to make much-needed investment in public infrastructure. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth South has the floor.

MS. MANCINI: Just a few short months ago, in December, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister continued this doom and gloom narrative: revenue was tanking, expenses were over budget; for a government seeking a wage freeze for public sectors, these financial estimates suited things just fine. Now, we are being told that this is a balanced budget. Really? I have a feeling I'm not the only Nova Scotian who has trouble believing this government, when it comes to financial projections.

Mr. Speaker, final estimates for last year demonstrate that the government's narrative takes priority over the needs of Nova Scotians. For example, let's look at housing. Last year the housing strategy was underspent by \$1.1 million dollars. Two years ago it was underspent by \$2.4 million dollars. Last year housing subsidies were underspent by \$3.5 million and the renovation budget was underspent by \$1.5 million. If underspending on housing was due to the fact that there was more money budgeted than there was need, that would be fine, but that is not the case. Should we consider underspending in this area, while there are many Nova Scotians in desperate need of affordable housing, to be a balanced approach?

Mr. Speaker, let's consider the Health and Wellness budget. In Halifax conditions at the VG and Centennial Buildings have been deplorable. In Shelburne citizens are waiting and waiting on a new clinic. In Cape Breton there were thousands of hours of ER closures last year. Yet, the government underspent on its hospital infrastructure budget by \$26.8 million. It underspent on its ER budget by almost \$1 million. Again, if this money was underspent because of a lack of need that would be great, but the need is there. Can we consider (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth South has the floor.

MS. MANCINI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can we consider this to be a balanced approach to addressing health care needs in this province?

Mr. Speaker, the budget for this year is just a continuation of the government's narrative. As we get closer to an election, we are now being told a different story, a different story than we were told in December. Can we believe this? Can we believe the projection that personal income tax revenue will rise by over \$100 million this year? Can we believe that the government will even spend the money budgeted? Can Nova Scotians depend on this government to put the needs of the province ahead of its own austerity agenda?

Speaking at the briefing for this bill, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister continued to try to highlight the financial prudence of this government, by pointing to the \$110 million in so-called revenue the government received from the municipal and federal government contributions to the Nova Centre, which the government will now use to "create fiscal capacity." This money was always intended for paying down the debt associated with that project. Why did the minister not mention this \$110 million in so-called revenue back in December, when he was telling Nova Scotians of the revenue problems of this province?

It is clear that the Budget Estimates for this province is a PR exercise and it's used to try to solidify its narrative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to say a few words on the Financial Measures (2016) Bill, and the budget. I know that we have all spent the better part of the week discussing the budget, and certainly there have been a number of issues addressed in estimates. There are some pretty big questions around the budget. I realize it represents a year's worth of work for the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, and it is probably the singularly most important act of the government. Disbursing the funds of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia is a very serious duty on our part and on the part of the government. It's a very important moment in the yearly cycle of this institution.

I don't want to start to criticize without first saying something positive. I'm very pleased to see that the Food Bank Tax Credit for Farmers is there and surprised to see it retroactive to January 2015; that's also positive. It goes back a year, and I think it was just last year we were talking about that bill, so I'm very pleased that that bill is retroactive - kind of surprised that it's retroactive, but very pleased.

I don't want to spend too much time talking about food, but in the world of food that I came from, the vegetable industry is one that's very able to donate. Some of my

vegetable farmer friends will be very pleased to see this tax credit here, given that the kind of food we produce does tend to be what the food banks want, and we're able to donate. I think I've talked in this House before about how oftentimes when you're producing a crop - I know some of you may have noticed in France, they've gone to ugly food. Sometimes things are just ugly and misshapen. It's certainly all very good for the food bank and very good food, and is also finding a market. But this food bank tax credit, a bill that we introduced last year, a bill that I know members on the opposite side of the House have introduced in the past - I believe the now-Minister of Health and Wellness introduced that bill a number of years ago - it's good to see it coming to fruition, so I'm very pleased about that.

I'm just looking through some of the things that don't make the numbers in particular. I guess I'm a little bit surprised and a little bit concerned about the increase in tobacco taxes. Not because I don't agree with an increase in tobacco taxes, but it's just that I question if we haven't reached the point where it's a zero sum game. When we increase the tax on tobacco, we just drive a certain amount of that industry to the illegal market. I know that in talking to some of the industry associations involved with selling tobacco products, they believe that the contraband tobacco issue is a larger issue than the government thinks and that every penny increased in taxes is a penny lost because it's going to the contraband issue.

I know that members on the other side of the House are well aware of this - particularly the Minister of Business, as we've had this conversation too. Will it result in increased revenue, or will it simply drive more tobacco consumption to the contraband market? That is a big question in my mind about that sort of thing.

As far as the budget itself goes, there are many questions about the budget. We've addressed a number of those questions, I know, in Supply and estimates. Obviously the big question, which we have talked about before at length is whether it's really a surplus. I know the numbers say it's a surplus. I can tell you that as a farmer, if I put a \$13 million hit in the books on March 31st because my year-end was April 1st to March 31st - if I put that in last year's books, I didn't have any more money in my pocket this year. So whether it was in one year or the other, the costs are real. In reality, there's some question about the accounting practices going on here in these books, in my opinion. I'm not an accountant, but what I do understand about accounting practices is, you can't pick and choose when you apply the rules. The document needs to have a coherency to it, and where things are booked is the same for one department or the other. I think that's quite important.

One of the big issues with this, and I hope to hear the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board address this at some point, is with some of the assumptions. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was asked in this House a while ago when this document first came out why the whopping \$108 million increase in personal tax revenue and how is that justified. In fact we can do the math and show that if there's no personal income tax increase and wages are relatively flat, that would take 20,000 new people working in Nova

Scotia to achieve that number, or some combination of those - some of those 20,000 earn an increase in wages or a growth in the - so those - does that seem likely? To be frank with you, we would like it to be true, certainly we hope that it's true, but it's not clear that it is. I don't know what a job creation budget would look like precisely, but it's not clear that it is a big job creation budget.

Some of the big spending, the big ticket items we're holding the line on some of the things in the budget. It's a budget designed to produce a surplus and usually, as far as I know, that isn't one that is spending money on big ticket items and job increases. Certainly some of the things that have been done in the past will lead to that.

It's a very rosy assumption, that \$108 million assumption. I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board when asked about that, said that number, that assumption, came from Ottawa. So it's very easy to give when you make a rosy assumption to say it was somebody else's number, but in fact I think there's enough staff in the minister's office that he has to own that number, that's his assumption, that's his staff's assumption. I think it's a very questionable assumption and it starts to sort of erode into \$108 million excess in personal income tax. If that's not all there, even if it's 10 per cent off, that's pretty well a big part of the budget surplus.

Those types of things are very important, I believe, in the way that this budget is put together. Certainly I do want to talk a little bit about some of the things that I uncovered in estimates - I know I'll probably get the Minister of Business on his feet when I start talking about this, but I can tell you that on the very top line of the Business Budget, when I looked at Senior Management, 2015-16 estimate of \$3,346,000, the actual of 2015-16, \$2,676,000, the estimate for this coming year of \$3,610,000, and when I asked the minister to explain that number I thought that would just take a second, all he's going to say is that this was FTEs and they are approaching what would be maybe considered sort of a natural growth when they had been down a little bit the year before.

The answer was that the number was largely a \$1.1 million amortization on the Halifax Convention Centre - so scratch your head on that. How does a \$1.1 million amortization on the Halifax Convention Centre enter into the senior management line of that? You can look it up in Hansard, I think we spent the better part of half an hour figuring that out - and I'm not sure that we did figure that out.

It causes me to doubt, and it sort of in a way casts doubt on - and maybe it's because I'm not an accountant that I never quite understood that, but yet just down below there's Crown Corporations, and there's a \$76 million number for Crown Corporations. If you flip to the Crown Corporations book there's the Halifax Trade and Convention Centre, there's amortization, there's depreciation there. Those numbers rightly belong in that line, so it causes one to wonder about what's - I know that in accounting there's a term called GAAP, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and I'm not aware and maybe some other

colleague in the House can enlighten me if amortization is normally included in the line for senior management when it clearly belongs in a Crown Corporation line.

My opinion is that that's not really an accepted practice. Certainly it's kind of a head-scratching one, why is it there. We were able to establish that in fact, as is true with all amortization or depreciation, and the way that I can understand it is on the farm if we have an amortization or depreciation it is when we recognize an asset, say a tractor that was worth \$20,000 is only worth \$18,000 this year, it declines in value. So in reality, it's a non-cash figure, just a recognition of the decline in the value of the item. (Interruption) It's not finished yet, as my colleague says. This is a non-cash item.

In fact, that \$1.1 million represents the estimate of February and March 2017, two months of depreciation of \$550,000. I will be very interested to see if next year's senior management line includes some \$7 million amortization figure. If that accounting practice continues, we would expect to see a jump up in that line item for the remaining amortization of 12 months' worth of amortization instead of two. We would expect to see a \$7 million amortization line on senior management.

Obviously, that is not really making a lot of sense from an accounting point of view, I think, and it belongs in the Crown Corporation line. It casts some doubt on the numbers, and unfortunately, sometimes small things give you a little bit of a sense of unease about the overall document. I doubt that was the intent of that, but it is just the reality of what happens.

Another accounting puzzler was in the Crown Corporation, which is the Nova Scotia Business Inc. numbers, where we saw the Film Tax Credit, the commitment for this past year - again, it says here, Nova Scotia Film and TV Production Incentive Fund. The budget for 2015-16 shows \$0; the actual for 2015-16, \$0; the budget for 2016-17, \$10 million.

At issue is the fact that there were some \$3 million-plus committed in the past year to a certain number of - and I should have the number on the top of my head, but I am not quite sure - but the certain number of television and film productions. (Interruption) Two, my colleague says. So the question is, that money was committed last year but not spent, so it is not showing. Is it part of this year's commitment? Does that mean that the \$10 million fund this year is actually a \$7 million fund? If that is the case, that is sort of a hit to the film and TV industry, and is very disappointing.

As everyone is well aware, the film industry and the cutting of the Film Tax Credit last year at this time has been a highly controversial issue. This is not a small matter, that this be shown this way. The fact that the \$10 million is not \$10 million, possibly, or possibly it is \$10 million - the minister was - it was not totally clear. (Interruption) So \$6.7 million, because I know the number is 3-something, presumably \$3.3 million. So this is a very serious issue in this document.

I know that if you have an expense, sometimes in accounting, it is appropriate to say, well, we know we're going to have that expense next year, so we'll put it in the books next year. The thing is, in a financial statement you don't pick and choose when you do that. If you're going to do it one way, you have to do it that way the whole time. You can't just pick and choose when you apply statement rules. You have to be consistent.

The issue becomes the Yarmouth ferry. We have a certain amount of money that was booked on March 31st that is going to be spent in the coming year. If we are going to do that, on the one hand, the Department of Business and the Nova Scotia Business Inc. statements are saying that money was not spent this year; it is going to be spent next year, so we are going to show it next year.

On the other hand, with the ferry, we know that was \$13-some million expense booked in on the last day of the fiscal year, March 31, 2016. Some of that money apparently was spent. There was \$4 million or \$5 million of it, as I understand. I don't have the exact number in my head, but that wasn't spent - that's going to be spent.

We have a situation where we have a set of books here employing two different financial accounting rules, applying the rule one way when it suits them and another way when it suits them. In my experience, my auditor in Kentville wouldn't let me do that. I would have to take my pick, do it one way or the other and next year I'd have to do it the same way I did it last year. This is not something in business that is normally done. This is something that, if you're going to book it, you've got to book it this year, you can't just pick and choose. We see it in the statements here and it is highly disconcerting that this is the case, especially when we're talking about two issues that are not minor issues, these are highly controversial, and have been the subject of much debate in the House.

Certainly the film industry - I know that, at the same time that these statements - that we've gotten the budget, we have the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. I can tell you - you may not want to hear this - but I can tell you that out in rural Nova Scotia, PricewaterhouseCoopers carries weight. People believe in that company. That business has credibility, and if they said that the film industry was paying its way, that the actual taxes coming in were covering the \$24 million, the public believes that study. They know that that's a very reputable accounting firm and that's the reaction I'm getting from ordinary Nova Scotians.

We're very disappointed in the way that the film industry has been dealt with here, and continues to be dealt with. The way that this financial statement for Nova Scotia Business Inc. presents these numbers, is in effect, chopping off at the knees this film tax credit for 2016-17. Maybe it's a moot point, maybe they'll only be another \$3 million uptake on it, because clearly the program is not working. At the time when we have a low Canadian dollar and the film industry is exploding across the country, we have a situation where we only had 33 per cent uptake of the program.

With all the talent and all the ability we have here in Nova Scotia to engage the film industry and what we did have going on, it has been a huge hit to our economy. I can tell you that - and you may not want to hear this - but people in rural Nova Scotia have noticed this. This is a serious issue and I think I remember hearing from the government side, about a year ago when this was being discussed that, if the changes to the film tax credit didn't work out, the government would make an adjustment. I think I heard that at one point from someone on that side. I'm just saying, at what point do we have to say let's review this, and let's take a look at it?

We've got this PricewaterhouseCoopers' report that tells us how big an impact the film industry made in the province. We have ordinary Nova Scotians in every one of our constituencies who worked in the film industry. I venture to say almost everybody knows somebody who worked in the film industry, or benefited somehow from the film industry. To people like my friend Ken Bezanson in Port Williams who was renting out antiques to the film industry, and there are other people I know who were doing the same things, people in my constituency who were directors and sound stage people, and all of this. This industry has been chopped off at the knees in the past year and this budget is further disturbing evidence that this is not changing. I asked the question when and at what level do you have to - what has to take place for you to say, yes that wasn't the right thing to do; we made a mistake, let's shift gears.

I think at some point there has to be a review of what's happening with the film industry vis à vis the rest of Canada, vis à vis this film and TV production fund and where is this going? Is there \$10 million there or is there \$6.7 million there? This has got to be answered. I know the minister said, and I heard him say in estimates, if the fund is tapped out they'll look at it. What does that mean? What will happen there? I think it's incumbent upon the minister to seriously go through the process of engaging the industry and see where it is, take a serious look at that PricewaterhouseCoopers report, and to ask yourselves, is this really where you wanted to see this industry going, an industry that brings in young people, that there was actually an enormous amount of pride associated with that industry among rural Nova Scotians that I know of. I don't know about the city, but when they saw their own community on TV, they were really proud.

I know we had one shot in our neighbourhood - Call Me Fitz shot in New Minas and people would see that show and be super proud that they could see New Minas on television. Amelia Earhart was shot in Blomidon - parts of it - and people were just super proud. I know people on the South Shore are the same way, that they are very proud of the fact that scenery from Nova Scotia - they are very proud of the film industry and how successful it has been; The Book of Negroes, for example. This is just a tragedy here in the documents, and the tragedy continues. At what point does the government say, well, let's do a study and see what the impact has been and how we are going to fix this. I just really question that.

Today I was asking the Minister of Health and Wellness questions about the books, health questions. It's not my critic role but I was shocked when I looked at this Health Infrastructure Fund in the numbers here and I really question what's going on here. In the 2015-16 estimate, there was budgeted \$42,347,000 for hospital infrastructure. I know that most of you will have been in most of our hospitals one or the other but if you have been in the Centennial Building you know that there are some pretty big demands on hospital infrastructure. Yet, for whatever the reason, the actual spending on hospital infrastructure last year was \$15,459,000.

I had only about 20 minutes to ask the minister questions and I didn't have time to drill down into that number the way I would have liked to - I wanted to get on to some other issues more pertinent to Kings County, more local - but I was astonished to read that there was nearly \$30 million budgeted for hospital infrastructure that was not spent last year. Now it wasn't quite \$30 million, to be fair, doing quick math - \$27 million or \$28 million in hospital infrastructure not spent. Now, I asked the minister to explain that; I think he explained it. He said some stuff but I didn't understand the explanation, frankly.

I just ask myself, how is that possible? How is it possible that with the state of some of our hospitals, this government could choose to not spend budgeted money? Was there no demand for that? Was there nobody asking for that? I'm kind of amazed at that number, that there would be that much.

I can tell you that one of the contexts, what drew me - and this is literally the only number I look at in this whole hospital section of Health and Wellness, in the whole Health and Wellness budget, that's the only line I looked at - to that line was the fact that in the Annapolis Valley - and I have a good friend in this situation who needs dialysis. He's not a candidate for a transplant, unfortunately, and he has to travel to Halifax three times a week. He cannot travel alone because I think he is not allowed to drive back alone. It is an hour and a quarter drive in, and a four, five, six hour dialysis session and then a drive back. Dialysis is quite hard on you.

It would be terrific if we had dialysis in Kentville. There's a press release - I believe its dated December 2013 - where the Minister of Health and Wellness indicated that dialysis is coming to the Valley Regional Hospital, to Kentville. Terrific. We're told in December 2013 we're getting dialysis in the Valley, but I can tell you that right now, as of this week, Peter is in the Valley, and he doesn't live more than a kilometre from the hospital, but he's coming down to Halifax. We still don't have dialysis in the Valley.

I asked the minister if there were any concrete plans; I didn't really get a real clear answer. Then I pointed out to the minister that the capital plan for 2016-17 shows dialysis coming to the Valley, but I didn't really get a definitive statement. I said, show me the number, and he drew me to this one line in this book. If there was some \$27million, \$28 million in this budget for capital infrastructure, couldn't we have had dialysis in the Valley

last year? Like, if that was really there waiting to be spent, I guess I should have brought it to his attention a little earlier - I feel like I lost an opportunity there.

We have, in the Valley, a hospice, fundraising for a hospice that has been completed for two years now. The community raised \$8 million, it was based on an agreement with the then district health authority, which now no longer exists, of course. So, this is an MOU with an organization that no longer exists, but this was intended, I believe, to be matched funding. I understand from what the minister has told me there are some issues with operational funding, and some things to work out. I understand that, this was done two years ago. The fundraising was completed two years ago, and we're still waiting for the hospice. If there was \$28 million in the budget to be spent on hospital infrastructure, wouldn't it have been good to have, wouldn't it have been good to have that money spent?

I question those numbers. I was flabbergasted this afternoon when I saw those numbers. I hadn't really realized those numbers were there and I was shocked. And I realize that as you go through a year, I know as a farmer we make plans to do certain things and sometimes it just doesn't work out; you don't get it done for one reason or another. But I have to believe that a \$10 billion enterprise has to have more integrity of purpose. In other words, if it's in the plan, if it's in the budget, it has to be done, and if it isn't done there has to be a good reason. We just can't be putting things down and then changing our minds, and this is one of the things I have a problem with, with this budget. How confident can I be that if it's \$34 million in this year's estimate, that we won't be spending \$10 million and being some \$20 million off this year?

This kind of stuff just makes you really kind of scratch your head - and it brings up another issue which, I believe, is highly pertinent to the budget too, and that is the Auditor General's Report, and I've mentioned this already in the House. There were a number of recommendations in the Auditor General's Report about financial management, and the Auditor General's Report lists those from 2012-2013 as not complete. This is a report published in April, April 20th I believe is the date that this report was published, just a few days ago, just last month. I know I've heard the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board say that this, in some cases, some of these things are done now, because this represents - the Auditor General obviously couldn't have just finished looking at this in April.

It takes time to get a report finished, I understand that, but there are some pretty big issues in this Auditor General's Report that relate to finances and accounting, and I have just laid out a few of these issues that I see, as a non-expert, in this document and to me some of this just goes right back to what the Auditor General was recommending, and things that are listed as not complete.

I can tell you that I am really kind of shocked at the fact that the Auditor General's Reports, especially the ones that relate to financial accounting and so on, have not been done. Some of them, I don't know if - I know some of you will be familiar that if I say ISO 9001, ISO 9000, stuff like that, this is stuff that has gone through the business world, where

there are sort of verification programs, quality assurance programs that involve documentation of procedures and they kind of establish quality control process.

To me, when I read the Auditor General's report, it reads like an ISO 9001-type of document, where a lot of the recommendations the Auditor General has given relate to quality control and the quality of management. A lot of them would relate directly to these statements. This is stuff that the business world has adapted to. How come government can't address these issues? Why are these things incomplete?

It first came up for me, and I know I've asked the Minister of Business in the House about this - the Department of Business has a 3 per cent compliance rate with Auditor General reports, 3 per cent. That is a shockingly low rate of compliance. When I asked the Minister of Business about this, he said that it was that low because they had a disagreement with the Auditor General. In other words, the Minister of Business disagreed with the Auditor General about some of the recommendations.

To be fair to the Minister of Business, there are some that I can read, and I can say yes, I can see your point. Some of the recommendations relate to ERDT and the Jobs Fund. The Jobs Fund, of course, is no longer - and that's another topic that I don't want to forget to talk about. The Jobs Fund is the last government's business development fund, and it's quite clear that some of the recommendations that relate to applications to the Jobs Fund are no longer applicable. But when I read the Auditor General's Report, in every place where it says it is not complete, it says, the Auditor General does not agree with this assessment.

As I said, a lot of this stuff relates to quality control, in my opinion, of process and quality control of just ensuring that the documentation is in place. This is pretty standard stuff in industry.

In the world that I come from, I can give you an example of a pretty big business. I was involved in an insurance company, Kings Mutual Insurance in Berwick, which was a very well-run company. After the Enron scandal, the financially regulated companies of our country started to adopt new policies and procedures to address some of those issues. To me, this reads very similarly to the types of things that have gone through the financial industry and financially regulated institutions like our banks and our insurance companies, where we need to have a very high level of confidence in the quality of the books and in the quality of the security there. If you're investing money in a bank, you want to know that that money is secure. These institutions and businesses have dealt with stuff like this and addressed it.

I can tell you that if we in that business had received recommendations in 2012-13, we would have made sure that they were done in 2014, as expeditiously as possible and in a way that didn't simply rubber-stamp it but that truly addressed the heart of the matter while taking into account the realities of the operation.

There are a number of recommendations in this Auditor General's Report related to ERDT and the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, which have not been done and in reality when you read them, some of them relate to how financial projections are made. When we go back to the \$108 million financial projection, would it have made any difference if the Auditor General's Report had been adopted and there had been a little bit more quality control on that projection? I don't know that, but if the Auditor General thinks there's an issue with the way the Department of Finance and Treasury Board is making its projections and it could be improved, I would like to think that if we are here spending time talking about this budget, it should have been done. It should have been addressed.

I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said some of these things have been addressed already. I hope that one has been, but the Auditor General's report shows that it has not been done yet.

In the Department of Business with ERDT, the Department of Business is responsible for that Jobs Fund. When you look at the jobs fund numbers, there's a pretty big swing in - I will get that page and just read you that. Last year, the estimate for the cost of the Jobs Fund was \$37,523,000; that was the estimate of how much money the province would put out to - I believe it is over 100 companies that during the NDP Government had received a commitment. As a government, I believe of course, we have to honour our commitments - a commitment had qualified for this Jobs Fund. The Jobs Fund will go on for another 28 years. Management of this Jobs Fund is going to be something that 27 years from now, whoever is in this House is still going to be talking about it and they are probably going to be going this is the last year, thank goodness.

I do not want to throw all those companies under the bus in that. They are just reacting to a government program. I trust that some of them will - most of them I hope - will give us a fair, good return for the money and I am sure that if there are some truly successful ones in that, my NDP colleagues will let us know. But this is what this is.

Now, in the Auditor General's Report, there are a number of recommendations from 2012-2013 relating to the Jobs Fund through to ERDT and obviously, some of them are about applications. Some of them are about ensuring that the process of controlling the outflow of money - did they meet all the program guidelines? Was there a third-party evaluation of the Jobs Fund? We projected that we were going to put out \$37 million. I hope that on a \$37 million expenditure, there would be third-party audits, and that is one of the recommendations which was not done. I would hope that there would be management of this.

What is shocking to me is on last year's numbers, \$37 million worth of estimate, the actual was \$44 million. That is a \$7 million swing on the Jobs Fund last year. How does the Jobs Fund - we have got some pretty good bureaucrats I assume - how do we get a \$7 million swing on a number like that? How come we do not know what that number is? That should be predictable; we should know approximately what those numbers are to within

plus or minus 5 per cent. But we are talking about I would say is close to a 20 per cent swing there. I would have to do the math on that, but there is a pretty big jump.

I kind of scratch my head at that and say how is it possible that the actual expenditure in the Jobs Fund is \$7 million more than the estimate? The answer lies in two pretty high-profile bankruptcies and, to be fair, maybe bankruptcies are tough to know if they're going to happen. I know if a company is going bankrupt, the last thing they want anybody to know is that they are actually going bankrupt, so they are probably hiding that a little bit until it actually happens. I can appreciate that, to be fair.

On the other hand, the Auditor General calls for third-party on-site visits and third-party audits of this. That is what the Auditor General calls for in the report for ERDT, which the new Department of Business now bears the responsibility for. When I ask the Minister of Business this question, how come we can do this, he said this was being done by NSBI. Maybe it is, but in the books, it shows it is the responsibility of the Department of Business. In the books, it shows the Department of Business bears this responsibility - this number does not show up in NSBI.

When I read the financial statements, and maybe to be fair to the minister, maybe NSBI is doing it, maybe all the things have been addressed - well then, there is a problem in the books. I already addressed a couple of accounting problems I feel that are in the books and, maybe, there are more. I don't know, I'm not enough of an accountant but to me, if that is what the Auditor General's Report says, then that's what should have been done and I think that's a big issue.

Mr. Speaker, I can certainly keep going but right now I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 174.

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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, in the category of further surprises, that concludes the government's business for today.

We will meet again tomorrow between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., at which time we will call Government Business, Committee of the Whole on Supply and, if time permits, Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 174 - the continuation of that debate. As well, Public Bills for Third Reading: Bill Nos. 149, 152, 154, 156, 157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 165, 168, and such other business as may arise.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.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.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, May 6th, at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 9:31 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 3508**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on March 14, 2016, Geneva Cunningham celebrated her 80th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 80 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Geneva Cunningham on reaching this milestone in her life and wish her many more happy birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 3509

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Vanessa O'Connell, nominated by the Rosalin Nickerson Care Fund Society for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Vanessa O'Connell on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3510

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Valerie Shand, nominated by the Chapel Hill Historical Society for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Valerie Shand on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3511

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Neal Smith, nominated by the Tri-County Pregnancy Care Centre for his devotion of time and many contributions to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Neal Smith on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank him for his dedication to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3512

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Melanie MacKinnon, nominated by the Clark's Harbour Elementary School for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Melanie MacKinnon on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3513

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Marjorie Weeks, nominated by the Cape Sable Historical Society for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Marjorie Weeks on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3514

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Marjorie Ross, nominated by the Shelburne County Senior Safety and Services Society for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Marjorie Ross on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3515

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Lurla Atwood, nominated by the Barrington Area Lionettes for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Lurla Atwood on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3516

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was John Joyce, nominated by the Barrington Regional Curling Club for his devotion of time and many contributions to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating John Joyce on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank him for his dedication to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3517

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers honoured were John and Sandra Shaar, nominated by the Woods Harbour Wesleyan Church for their devotion of time and many contributions to their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating John and Sandra Shaar on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank them for their dedication to their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3518

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Jerry Atwood, nominated by the Shelburne County Senior Safety and Services Society for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jerry Atwood on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank her for her dedication to her community.'

RESOLUTION NO. 3519

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Jennifer Sears, nominated by the Shelburne County Minor Hockey Association for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jennifer Sears on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3520

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Jennifer Bell, nominated by Forrest Ridge Academy for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jennifer Bell on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3521

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual Volunteer Banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Jeff Gregory, nominated by the Barrington Ground Search and Rescue for his devotion of time and many contributions to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jeff Gregory on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington, and thank him for his dedication to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3522

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Greg Waybret, nominated by the Barrington Area Lions Club for his devotion of time and many contributions to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Greg Waybret on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank him for his dedication to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3523

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Evan Crowell, nominated by the Barrington Municipal High School for his devotion of time and many contributions to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Evan Crowell on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank him for his dedication to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3524

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Darlene Stanley, nominated by the Barrington Area Soccer Association for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Darlene Stanley on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3525

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Crissy Richardson, nominated by Forest Ridge Academy for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Crissy Richardson on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3526

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities, who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured were Christine and Troy Quinlan, nominated by the Woodland Multi-Use Trail Association for their devotion of time and many contributions to their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Christine and Troy Quinlan on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank them for their dedication to their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3527

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Cathy Stoddard, nominated by the Wood's Harbour Community Centre for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cathy Stoddard on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3528

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteers are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's communities who generously give their time and talents while expecting nothing in return; and

Whereas on April 11, 2016, the Clark's Harbour Legion hosted the annual volunteer banquet for the Municipality of Barrington and Town of Clark's Harbour; and

Whereas among the volunteers to be honoured was Cassie Smith, nominated by the Barrington Municipal High School for her devotion of time and many contributions to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Cassie Smith on being honoured by the Municipality of Barrington and thank her for her dedication to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3529

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas I organized a writing contest asking elementary school students in Halifax Armdale to write an essay or poem that offered their best advice on welcoming Syrian newcomers to their communities; and

Whereas Olivia Molloy, a student at École Chebucto Heights School, participated in my 2016 MLA Writing Contest; and

Whereas I received many inspiring entries, and I am proud to be the provincial representative of such sincere and insightful students whose warm words showcase the contributions of Nova Scotia's welcoming efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank and congratulate Olivia Molloy and wish her the best as she completes her school year.

RESOLUTION NO. 3530

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas I organized a writing contest asking elementary school students in Halifax Armdale to write an essay or poem that offered their best advice on welcoming Syrian newcomers to their communities; and

Whereas Clara Easley, a student at École Chebucto Heights School, participated in my 2016 MLA Writing Contest; and

Whereas I received many inspiring entries, and I am proud to be the provincial representative of such sincere and insightful students whose warm words showcase the contributions of Nova Scotia's welcoming efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank and congratulate Clara Easley and wish her the best as she completes her school year.

RESOLUTION NO. 3531

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas I organized a writing contest asking elementary school students in Halifax Armdale to write an essay or poem that offered their best advice on welcoming Syrian newcomers to their communities; and

Whereas Kailyn Rae, a student at École Chebucto Heights School, participated in my 2016 MLA Writing Contest; and

Whereas I received many inspiring entries, and I am proud to be the provincial representative of such sincere and insightful students whose warm words showcase the contributions of Nova Scotia's welcoming efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank and congratulate Kailyn Rae and wish her the best as she completes her school year and enters junior high in September.