



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I have a couple of quick announcements before we proceed with the daily routine.

There is no late debate today.

Also, I want to take a moment to advise the House of some news that we received - the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association passed away suddenly in London, England, earlier this week. Dr. William Shija served almost eight years as the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He was a respected parliamentarian from Tanzania.

I want to acknowledge that in our Assembly today so that it is a matter of public record, and hope that all our members join me in extending our condolences to his family.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share our plans to work with Nova Scotians to strengthen the university system across this province. We are privileged here in Nova Scotia to be home to 10 outstanding post-secondary institutions - institutions where ideas are formed, partnerships are created, and products are developed. Our Premier has been clear about the value our educational institutions provide here in Nova Scotia. I think everyone in the room would agree that we need a university system that trains our young people for the jobs of today and tomorrow, one that fosters research and innovation, and helps Nova Scotians start new businesses and create jobs.

The value of our universities is clear, but they, and we with them, face challenges. Businesses are looking for seasoned workers and more research and development. Taxpayers already invest almost \$500 million in post-secondary education each year. If things don't change, universities will need \$50 million more in funding in a few short years.

To meet these challenges we have to change; we have to do things differently. We cannot focus on any one piece of the puzzle alone. There are many moving parts in the post-secondary system and we need to get all of them moving in concert. As the *oneNS Commission* has said, our post-secondary institutions can model and be a catalyst for the kind of economic, social and cultural change needed in Nova Scotia. This is an example of how universities, students, business and government can take collaborative action toward the goals of the *oneNS Commission* and work together to build a stronger economy and create opportunities for youth.

We need to know - how can universities and businesses work together differently so business has better access to the research and development that helps them export more, grow, and create jobs? How do we best work together to make sure our young people are well prepared to fill these jobs and better yet, prepared to put their entrepreneurial skills to work and create their own? How do we foster an environment where international students who come to learn at our great universities stay because our businesses open their doors and provide great jobs or stay because they are creating their own businesses?

Earlier today I was at the Chamber luncheon and the guest speaker was Dalhousie President Richard Florizone. He introduced four students who started their own businesses right here in Nova Scotia. That's the kind of thing we are talking about. Ultimately we want

to know, how can our universities work more closely with the private sector to grow the economy and enable more young people to live and raise families here in Nova Scotia? That's our big-picture goal.

Over the next month we will be talking to Nova Scotians about the best way to do just that. Students, parents, businesses and the university community must be part of the conversation when it comes to making sure we have the university system Nova Scotia needs. In the next few days we will begin consulting with these groups about what they think can be done to ensure our university system remains sustainable in the long term so we can continue offering high-quality education to students now and well into the future.

What the university system looks like going forward is not a decision the government or I will make alone. Here in Nova Scotia we meet with our students more, and in more ways, than any other province in the country. This consultation, through focus groups and meetings, will give not only students but all who have a stake in the university system an additional chance to air their views. Their ideas and concerns are essential to form the way forward.

The health and sustainability of our university system is something that I am not only passionate about as a minister, but also as a mother. I have three children, ages 26, 24, and 18. One is preparing for university, another is taking university courses, and another just completed university. When I hear about the struggles that university students face and the ideas they have, it hits home, believe me. I hear many of the same stories around my kitchen table.

Maintaining access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education now and into the future is critical for our young people and for the future of our province. But are we spending the right way? Are these investments working? How can universities and businesses work together differently? How can we best prepare our young people to find and create jobs that will enable them to stay right here in Nova Scotia?

We want to include all Nova Scotians in the conversation. Students, including my own kids, have told me that supporting them while they are studying and after they graduate is key. That's why we've invested over \$200 million in bursaries, grants, interest-free loans, work placements, graduate scholarships, and programs that connect young people to jobs. That's why we've improved the student assistance program so that students have better access to the money and support they need for school. That's why the Premier announced the Sandbox Project. They are an excellent example of how the knowledge sector, business, and young people can come together to bring ideas to market - they work. Anybody who has ever played Guitar Hero or used a Kindle can attest to this model's success. There will be more exciting news on that front in the coming days as well, so please stay tuned.

We need to invest in programs that work and connect students to jobs, and that's what we're doing. Revamping the apprenticeship system is helping connect more young

people to jobs in the trades. The START program has helped over 600 Nova Scotians get good, high-paying jobs here at home. Additional co-ops have helped many young people make lasting connections with employers. I can't say enough about these programs. I always say that if it weren't for a co-op program, this English major might still be trying to find her way.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of those Nova Scotians who wants to see our young people stay here and build their lives and their careers at home, I have three very good reasons to do my best, as minister, to make that happen. But like my colleagues, I am not only doing this for my children. We are all doing this for all the young people in this province.

I'm looking forward to the consultations and to hearing from Nova Scotians in the next few weeks on how we can work side by side to address challenges and capitalize on the many opportunities a healthy and vibrant post-secondary system offers. It's worth repeating: we need a sustainable university system that helps businesses grow, export, and create jobs, and prepares young people to fill and create jobs themselves. This will help get us to what I believe is a common goal for all members of this House: a growing economy and more opportunities for more young people to work and raise their families here at home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for her ministerial statement that I received prior to this.

I must agree with the minister when she stated that we are privileged to have 10 outstanding post-secondary institutions, universities, in our province. Personally, I had the privilege of attending St. F.X. University. (Applause) I earned three degrees. I also studied at Saint Mary's University here in Halifax, in another master's program.

AN HON. MEMBER: Much better.

MR. DUNN: Well, I prefer the ring at St. F.X., as opposed to the - but anyway, it is critical for our province to invest in our universities, in programs that will provide employment opportunities here at home in Nova Scotia. At the present there appears to be a trend where a student's degree at times will not match any potential job opportunity here in the province.

We are also blessed with many young, brilliant minds in this province, and I believe it is our responsibility to help them in the challenges they face. Things have certainly changed with the challenges universities and students face today, compared to my school days back in the 1970s. Universities are often occupied with ways to secure their share of students and, of course, keep them, along with ever-increasing financial burdens.

Deciding where to go to a post-secondary institution will depend on an individual's unique needs, values and career options. Students will usually select a school that offers the appropriate program. Unfortunately, some students select programs where there appears to be a lack of opportunities to transition into the job market.

It's very important for young students, prior to making their final decision, to do a number of things. Talk to a graduate of the program they are interested in taking. Speak with potential employers about the training and the information that they will need to acquire. Talk and spend time with a mentor. Seek advice from professional groups and personnel with regard to the type of career you intend to pursue.

We certainly have to change the way we have been doing things. I believe that this should begin during a student's high school years. The regular visits to the school's guidance office where they are seeking information about possible career choices is certainly the beginning step. Our guidance offices should have the necessary information with regard to the ever-changing job market in order to help these students.

If we want to improve the economic and social life of our residents, many things will have to change. Addressing the many challenges that universities are facing is definitely one of them. Business and university must be totally connected and engaged in order to provide more job opportunities so we can retain and keep our bright minds in Nova Scotia.

We also would like to see more international students staying in Nova Scotia. This is another reason why the interaction between the business world and universities is so vital.

Although we have many stakeholders where the university system should head, I think students should play a major role in any form of discussion; in particular, recent grads who are presently looking for job opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, a university degree and a commitment to acquire a post-secondary degree is very expensive. I can certainly attest to that; I'm the father of six children, three boys and three girls, two of whom had the honour of meeting you yesterday. All of them have university degrees, some of them multiple degrees . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Perhaps that's why you're still here working.

MR. DUNN: Perhaps that's why I'm still working. Several of them are in the three-digit area as far as the amount of money that they owe, but again, there are no regrets. We certainly continue to have many conversations at home - in particular at Christmas, when they usually try to make their way home - with regard to universities, the challenges, the cost and so on.

We need to provide the support that is required for students to achieve. The payback for the province will be well worth it. Two things are essential: the support for students seeking post-secondary school and the connection to real job opportunities in Nova Scotia. If we succeed in the above, we will be well on our way to achieving a healthier and more prosperous Nova Scotia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first thank the honourable minister for providing a copy of her statement in advance of coming to the House. I think there's complete agreement, which doesn't happen every day in our Legislature. (Applause) There's complete agreement on the valuable asset that our province has in our post-secondary education, our universities. Without a doubt, I think we are all very proud of the universities that are here in the province, whether we attended them or not. I myself have been lucky enough to graduate from both St. F.X. and Dalhousie and am on the faculty at one of our universities.

We all understand our university system, especially the fact that we have so many excellent universities, is a competitive advantage for a small province like ours. But I have to say that if prosperity rested solely on the number of post-secondary institutions that a jurisdiction had, then our province should be very wealthy, shouldn't it? And it's not.

Mr. Speaker, this tells me that we need to make some changes, and we need to ask ourselves why we're not prosperous now with all of these great universities and all of the public investment in these universities, and how it is we can get that change. So I say to the minister, if this is the mission, then we will work with the government to see that change will occur, because we recognize the importance of change and having this asset become an asset that will build on the prosperity of the province.

This is not a new mission, though. Many people have looked at this issue, as recently as the O'Neill report two and a half years ago. We all know the challenges that our universities are facing today. The Province of Nova Scotia alone has - fewer than 30,000 young people have gone through our P-to-12 system in the last 10 years. The number of births in our province is down. This has an impact on the number of young people who are eventually going to populate both that university system and our community college system.

The capacity of universities and other post-secondary institutions in other provinces that used to be drawn to our institutions has changed. Ontario and the western provinces have a greater capacity to educate their own population, and we don't necessarily get - and we will not be getting - the same number of students from other parts of the country.

This presents a challenge for our province. As someone who studied 15 years ago in the U.K. as an international student, we are quite far behind the international trend of

post-secondary education to attract students from abroad. While it's important that we bring more international students in, I can tell you that that is the strategy and has been the strategy for universities throughout European countries and certainly members of the Commonwealth, as well as the American college system. The competition for international students is fierce, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that surprised me greatly when we were in government was to find out that the funding for post-secondary education in Nova Scotia had grown faster in the past six years prior to coming into government than the funding for the health care system. This is not a system that is underfunded; this is a system that a lot of money has gone into, but the transformation of that system hasn't necessarily occurred.

I want to say very clearly on behalf of the NDP caucus, not only to the government but to the university administration, that looking at increasing the tuition fees of young people studying in your institutions is not the answer to this problem. Young people are already carrying too high a burden for their education. We have a higher debt load for our young people than the national average. They carry a debt load that is a third higher than the national average, and we saw that yesterday in the report that was issued on the status of young people throughout our province.

Many things need to change. I'm somewhat concerned that this appears to be a government that is morphing into governing by focus group because, essentially, the announcement today is an announcement of focus groups around the province when there has been a significant study of this matter. I'm also disappointed that students will not be at the table, as they have in the past, under two previous administrations, when the MOU is being negotiated.

I also want to say that it's very important that we send a clear message to university administrations that not only are growing tuition fees not acceptable, but increasingly attempting to make our system sustainable by exploiting non-permanent members of faculty, those term and sessional people who are eminently qualified for tenure-track jobs but who make slightly more than the baristas in the coffee shops around the province, is not acceptable and is not the way to get us a sustainable university system.

These are all things that the government needs to be saying as they deal with the university administration and as they are looking for the transformation that we so desperately need out of such a valuable asset.

The final point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, is that this is a government that is constantly talking about the fact that more exciting news is coming. It's always coming, but yet it never gets here - I feel like we're *Waiting for Godot*, Mr. Speaker.

In the past year this province has seen 9,000 jobs lost to our province and many more people leave the job market looking for work. So, while we wait for some action out

of this government, we get focus groups and flowery words, and what we really require is action and results. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 22 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 8 of the Acts of 1993. The Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act. (Hon. Keith Colwell)

Bill No. 23 - Entitled an Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Regulations to Relieve Financial Hardship. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

Bill No. 24 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 70 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Civil Service Act. (Mr. Chuck Porter)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 112

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Liberal Government missed a huge opportunity to assist small-scale agricultural businesses in Nova Scotia when it began shutting down small turkey processors; and

Whereas family farms, children with 4-H projects, and others are scrambling now with turkeys ready for butchering, and there are no local processors; and

Whereas the Minister of Agriculture has upset rural Nova Scotians by further suggesting he may move to ban people from processing their own animals on their own property;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the Minister of Agriculture to stop this senseless attack on rural Nova Scotia and start being proactive to help find solutions for small businesses to thrive and create jobs.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 113

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

Whereas high taxes and higher power rates mean it is difficult for business people to create much-needed jobs in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas with a hasty political decision to ban shale gas development, the Liberals slammed the door on an important new way to create meaningful jobs in our province; and

Whereas the Liberal's shale gas development ban will force hundreds of talented, hard-working Nova Scotians to leave home to find meaningful work in other provinces;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly mark the one-year anniversary of Liberal incompetence by urging the government to take the "closed for business" sign off our province and follow the advice of the Wheeler commission.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

RESOLUTION NO. 114

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

Whereas Donald Syms - "Punch" to his friends - diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth, developed a passion for all sports and coached various sports teams in the Sackville area, including the men's and women's basketball and fastball teams; and

Whereas Mr. Syms' greatest pleasure was working with the Chebucto Track and Field Club and the athletes he met there, including several who have gained recognition in their respective sports; and

Whereas Mr. Syms, who was never one to back down from a challenge, passed away in March of this year, after a brief battle with cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Mr. Donald "Punch" Syms, who this year will be inducted into the Builders category of the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame.

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 member for Pictou Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 115

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

Whereas the Liberal Government has been in power for one year; and

Whereas during that year 9,000 jobs disappeared and thousands of Nova Scotians left the province in search of meaningful work; and

Whereas the second Liberal Speech from the Throne did not contain a comprehensive job plan;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly mark the one-year anniversary of the Liberal Government by urging them to finally get down to the business of rebuilding the economy and creating jobs.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 2:35 p.m. and end at 4:05 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - JOB LOSS/BACK TO WORK - CORRELATION EXPLAIN

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, may I just take a moment and congratulate all members of this House on the first anniversary of their election, or re-election, as the case may be. (Applause) Despite our occasional differences, it is a privilege that I know we all share together to be here today.

My question is for the Premier. Yesterday in this House, the Premier claimed that his government is keeping all its election promises. That same claim was made by former NDP Premier Darrell Dexter just a short time ago in this very place. In fact, I'll quote the former Premier, who said in this place, in the chair the now-Premier occupies, "Mr. Speaker . . . this government has kept every single commitment it made during the last election. That is the truth, every single commitment." I'll table those words from former Premier Dexter.

Well, here we go again. Just a year ago the Liberals promised to "get Nova Scotia back to work." I'll table that for the benefit of the House. But after one year in office, Nova Scotia has lost another 9,000 jobs, so I'd like to ask the Premier, how does the loss of 9,000 jobs equate to getting Nova Scotians back to work?

THE PREMIER: I have been encouraged by the support that we've received from Nova Scotians, the fact that we have moved toward ensuring that we invest in the next generation of young Nova Scotians by reinvesting in our public education system. I've been encouraged by the support that I've received from Nova Scotians when they said, finally, a government that has stopped picking winners and losers as it has restructured the economic file in this province.

Equally as important is that, from one end of this province to the other, the private sector is finally recognizing that it is the private sector that will grow job opportunities in this province. It is the government who will set the table, but it will be the government in this Party that will actually ensure that we can afford the programs that Nova Scotians want.

MR. BAILLIE: I'm glad the Premier mentioned the private sector in his answer, because during the election campaign a year ago, the Liberals promised to make it easier for business to grow, prosper and create the jobs we need. But after one year, we're all still waiting.

I can't help but note that in New Brunswick, we have a new Liberal Government - or they do there - and after one day, they cut the small business tax rate by 0.5 per cent. Here, we've had one full year of Liberal Government and they're still studying the matter. But what we do have is a ban on one of the new ways to create jobs in this province. So I will ask the Premier, how does banning a whole new industry make it easier for businesses to create jobs?

THE PREMIER: I will ask the Minister of Energy to respond.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: I spent the past two days at a Core Conference where a number of oil and gas investors talked to us about how important it is to develop the social licence to do any project in petroleum anywhere in this country, or for that matter, anywhere in the world. The Wheeler commission talked about the fact that the social licence in this province does not exist at this point for high-volume hydraulic fracturing in shale formations.

Mr. Speaker, our legislation provides the certainty that everybody needs to know what the situation is. Moreover, investment in every single energy sector in this province is up, and Statistics Canada says that next year, as a result of energy investments, we will be the third-best performing province in this country, behind British Columbia and Alberta. (Applause)

We have \$1 billion in exploration projects offshore. We have three LNG projects which have moved along in the last 11 months, worth \$15 billion in combined investments. The tidal is estimated, in a number of years, to provide \$10 billion to \$50 billion of investment in this province. This government, in 11 months, has seen more investment in our resources by the private sector than any of the previous couple of governments.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that my question was for the Premier. I understand the answer that the minister gave, but it is cold comfort to the 9,000 people who are without work today who did have a job a year ago. He can take credit for the tides, he can take credit for the offshore, but he's banning the chance to create jobs onshore in Nova Scotia. That is the issue that he failed to answer on behalf of his boss, the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago the government promised to start investing in our people with a long-term plan, but what the minister just confirmed is the original plan, there's only more of the same. The debt got bigger, our taxes are still too high, and our finances are still a mess - but they do have a ban on one of the few new ways to create jobs in this province.

I'll ask the Premier, how long is the long-term that Nova Scotians are going to have to wait before the government takes action to encourage new jobs instead of banning them?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're a year well on our way.

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

PREM. - FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: IMPROVEMENTS - DETAILS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. The Premier has said, on more than one occasion, that he believes his government is the most open and transparent government in the history of all time. He claimed that one of the things he would do is improve transparency through the freedom of information process.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, what improvements has the Premier made to the freedom of information process, giving greater access to information in the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think I've ever said that we were the most open and transparent of all time; I just said we were more open and transparent than the last government.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, during last year's election campaign the Premier, then the Leader of the Liberal Party, stated in a questionnaire to the Centre for Law and Democracy, which I'll table, the following, "If elected Premier, I will expand the powers and mandate of the Review Officer, particularly through granting her order-making power . . . I will impose a binding timeline of 30 days, extendable once by a maximum of 30 days . . .", and in dealing with government lawyers, we ". . . will only claim solicitor-client privilege in cases where confidentiality is necessary to protect an impending court case or negotiation."

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is, if the system is working, why has the Premier not brought forward these changes he promised in the election campaign?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite or her Party has issues with getting information through freedom of information, bring the issue to the floor and we'll see what we can do for her.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a report where the Premier says that the system is working just fine. It's a year since the election and the government has not taken the steps that they committed to in writing, which promise more openness and more transparency, so I want to ask the Premier, why did the Premier say during his election night speech that he would deliver on his commitments, as promised, when it's clear he didn't mean to keep this commitment to Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting how the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party has forgotten the last four years that Nova Scotians suffered under that government. If anyone should not stand in this House and suggest that they've misled Nova Scotians in an election, it is a member who is representing the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, we are keeping every commitment that we have made to Nova Scotians in the election campaign, we will continue to do so, and we'll continue to move this province forward to create economic opportunities here in Nova Scotia, working with the private sector so that young Nova Scotians will see a future here at home.

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

PREM. - ONSHORE GAS DEV.: BAN - EXPLAIN

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Just yesterday the Liberal Government introduced new rules to further regulate our offshore oil and gas industry. These new rules allow for sustainable development of an important natural resource. Development of our natural resources enables Nova Scotians to live, and work, and prosper here at home in a safe, sustainable, regulated manner. I ask the Premier, why is the government banning onshore gas development when it has a good example of the benefits of resource development just off our coastline?

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Energy to respond.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the Leader of the Official Opposition is having trouble understanding. The reality is that all of the panelists of the Wheeler commission agreed that even if there is a resource, which they also noted as speculative, it is 10, 15, maybe more years off before the development. They pointed out that "a significant period of learning" is required. They outlined a number of steps that needed to be taken, including understanding the resource potential, which we announced the onshore atlas in the Spring.

They announced that we needed regulatory review and update regulations, which we are doing. They also said that communities need to understand the conflicts and first need to understand where the resources are. I just spent two days with companies down at the Core Conference who said, you know what, those are important for us to make

investment decisions. This gentleman stands there and talks about the fact - like the cash is going to come flowing out of the ground tomorrow when in fact we actually need to know where those things are. It's a really good thing we're over here and he's not because the reality is that we are planning for the future and he just wants to throw Nova Scotians under the bus.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if we have learned anything after one year of Liberal Government, it is that they have an inexhaustible list of excuses to do nothing. That is just the latest example because the Wheeler report actually says that this industry could create 1,700 jobs under a moderate scenario. A job is a job, Mr. Speaker. Waiting forever is not the answer and banning industry does not bring that job any closer, it puts it further away. That is what's wrong with banning the industry and perhaps that's why Ms. Valerie Roy, the CEO of the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce, wrote to the Premier this week and said, and I quote directly - by the way they represent 16,000 small businesses. "We are concerned that other jurisdictions . . . such as Alberta, now use our young people to develop their industry for their benefit." That is exactly the point. That's what all Nova Scotians are trying to tell this government. Our young people. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. BAILLIE: Yes, Mr. Speaker there is, and it's to the Premier, and I truly hope that this time he answers it himself. I would like him to explain to Ms. Roy, why is it okay to send our young people out West for their benefit but not okay to let them do the same job here at home?

THE PREMIER: The young Nova Scotians have more opportunity in this province since this government has taken power than ever in our history. We have provided more apprenticeship opportunities right here at home. We are the first government to invest in research opportunities so that we can give those young people opportunities here in Nova Scotia. We have provided more summer employment opportunities than ever in our history, quite frankly. For the life of me, I don't know why the Leader of the Official Opposition continues to focus on the fact that we have actually answered the call that Nova Scotians had. We are moving forward and we will continue to grow good opportunities for young people in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, they are not creating good opportunities for young people, they are banning good opportunities for young people. That is the whole problem. That is why the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce - 16,000 businesses - wrote to the Premier, and said, ". . . we cannot know the full benefits and costs where an industry is prohibited." That is a very good point, Mr. Speaker. She asked the Premier specifically to reconsider his decision to ban shale gas development and points out, "And we are certainly concerned with the fiscal situation and the "pass" government has taken on improving it . . ." Another very good point.

For all of those young people out West, for all of those families that have been split apart, for all of those people that would like a chance at a job here at home, will the Premier agree to Ms. Roy's plea and reconsider his ban on new jobs?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the work done by former Premier MacDonald when it came to investing in our offshore to ensure that we fully understood what was involved before we invested. We invested and we're actually seeing some of the benefits of that today.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy has made it very clear that we are going to invest in mapping onshore Nova Scotia, identify whether or not we actually have that resource in this province. We'll continue to move forward. Unlike the Leader of the Official Opposition, who believes he has the answer to every problem facing every single Nova Scotian out there, we're going to base the decisions on science and the best interest of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. - BUDGET BALANCING: PROGRESS - MIN. COMMENTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Building up to the 2013 election, the Liberal Party criticized the then government for having ". . . delivered deficit after deficit. . ." They told Nova Scotians they would be different. The Liberal Party promised ". . . to deliver a balanced budget quickly. . .", and I'll table that.

Yet under this government, we have increases in departmental spending. Just last month in the budget update, we saw that the government had to take new reactive action to try and rein in out-of-control spending that ran out of control after just one quarter of this year.

Mr. Speaker, after one year, Nova Scotians can see that their financial results are not very good. Close to a \$300 million deficit projected for this year. Nova Scotians can see what's going on, but I wonder how the minister feels the government is doing in its promise to balance the budget quickly.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I appreciate the question from the honourable member. It's always a pleasure for me to rise and to talk some about the challenges that our province is facing.

As all members of the House know, there have been successive deficits in this province, and certainly we have some very significant challenges to overcome. But Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that we have laid out a plan to eliminate the deficit and get to a surplus position. It will require a lot of control on spending.

In reference to the mid-year corrections, I think that that is something that was not only necessary, but also showed a lot of organization and a lot of foresight on behalf of government because, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, this is the first time in seven or eight years that any government had taken the step to rein in spending during the year, and we know it has been going on constantly.

MR. HOUSTON: We have seen a couple of plans already from this government about reducing departmental spending and cutting 1 per cent and cutting 5 per cent. Both have failed miserably, so I think it's cold comfort to Nova Scotians to hear about the response the government has made to try and correct its own mistakes and its own failure on its own early-stage plans.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians know that you cannot afford to live off of credit cards. Nova Scotians set priorities and make difficult decisions to balance their own budget, so they expect the same thing from their government. Yet in the first year of this mandate, this government has watched as our debt has increased to record levels, over \$15 billion now.

If you accept the government's numbers, if you accept the government's plan, then they will balance the budget in four years. I think they project a \$16 million surplus in the fourth year, and that's a number that will be familiar to Nova Scotians - they know what happened to the last \$16 million surplus that was projected.

Nova Scotians are paying the highest taxes and the government is failing to address spending and the debt is just another example of Liberal incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell Nova Scotians exactly how she is going to balance the budget when she hasn't shown a plan? Nova Scotians can see no plan for new jobs, no new sources of revenue, and no decrease of our high, job-killing taxes. That's what Nova Scotians get.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I thought that was going on at some length, but I think there was a question there at the end, and I appreciate that. Again, I do appreciate the opportunity to be able to answer a question in the House, but there are a number of absolutely incorrect things that the member opposite has said. One of them was he said there was a failure to address spending and that is exactly what the mid-year corrections were - they were an effort to directly address our spending issue and to control spending across departments.

I would have expected the minister - or the member opposite, and all members, to understand that that had not been a step taken by any previous government for almost seven or eight years, so it shows that this government is watching the accounts day by day and making adjustments when it's necessary, because nobody knows exactly which month is going to be overspent or which one is underspent. We're following it and we're making adjustments to stay within budget. That's what's required.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for gazing into her crystal ball and giving me a new title mid-speech there.

Mr. Speaker, one year ago Nova Scotians voted for change. Instead what they have is a Liberal Government that will deliver more of the same - deficit after deficit and out-of-control spending.

My question for the minister is, after one year of Liberal incompetence and increased debt, will the minister finally get down to the hard work of balancing the books and do it by the end of its second-year anniversary?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think what's really notable in the whole debate around budgets, and balanced budgets, is that this year's budget was an honest and frank assessment of the costs of government, and that was something we hadn't seen in four years here in Nova Scotia. That is important. If you don't have an honest assessment and laying out exactly where you start, you don't even know how you're going to get to the next step.

We acknowledged the costs that had been hidden by the previous government - costs like showing only 11 payments for social assistance rather than a full year of 12 payments - \$17 million difference in costs. That's just astounding that any government would do that. We corrected that, Mr. Speaker, and we corrected the prepayment to universities, which was tens of millions of dollars. Those kinds of adjustments show that we have gotten an honest assessment of where we are in this province, and from there we can make the kind of tough choices and changes that are necessary.

This first year's budget, without a doubt, was brought forward with that aim - to honestly show every cost of running the programs and services that are so important to Nova Scotians.

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

PREM. - BROKEN PROMISES: TRUST - EXPECTATIONS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Promising to make changes to the freedom of information process isn't the only promise that the Premier has broken - he has made dozens of promises and, quite frankly, he has come up short. He promised to reduce departmental spending by 1 per cent during the election, but then increased government spending by millions in the first budget. The Premier promised power rates would be reduced, but here we are no reduction in power rates - exactly one year after the election that hasn't happened.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is this, with the list of broken promises growing, how does he expect Nova Scotians to trust him now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will put my reputation against that member's any time when I go to the polls. (Applause)

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, a key issue in last year's election was the cost of energy, in particular electricity. The member for Annapolis claimed time after time that if he were elected he would "break Nova Scotia Power's monopoly." So far all we've seen is a toothless piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, how can the Premier truthfully stand in his place and claim he has kept his election promise to break Nova Scotia Power's monopoly?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, she doesn't have to take our word for it. All she has to do is go to the Utility and Review Board, which has recognized that renewable energy producers can sell directly to customers in this province. She also should understand, and fully understand, the good work by the Department of Energy and the Minister of Energy by putting together a separate efficiency company that is competing directly against Nova Scotia Power on the fuel side. She would have recognized that just about a month ago the Utility and Review Board accepted the fact that we're going to be driving down fuel costs, which affects every power bill directly related by the decision made by the Minister of Energy and his department, and furthermore, we will be removing the NDP efficiency tax off every power bill on January 1, 2015. Finally, power bills are going in the right direction.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why the Premier gets so angry. Perhaps it's because he hears from Nova Scotians who are wondering when he's going to deliver on that promise.

There is one promise that the Premier did keep, though, and that's that he wouldn't invest in jobs for Nova Scotians. The result is that Nova Scotia has lost over 9,000 jobs in the first year of this Liberal Government. My final question to the Premier is, since he has already broken so many other promises, why doesn't he break this one? At least Nova Scotians would get some benefit out of it.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I am hearing from Nova Scotians, and they're saying thank you for finally ending the NDP reign in Nova Scotia.

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

PREM. - LBR. RELATIONS: REGRESSION - EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, a year ago Nova Scotians voted for a new Liberal Government - or at least they thought it was a new government. So far, what Nova Scotians are seeing is reminiscent of Liberal Governments of the past, with draconian labour legislation and attacks on the rights of health care workers. I couldn't even count how many nurses and technologists and other presenters at Law Amendments Committee last week came and talked about Savage days and drew repeated comparisons to the current Liberal Government.

My question through you is to the Premier. Why has he chosen to take Nova Scotia back 20 years in labour relations in this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we've protected the collective bargaining process. We've protected the health care system in this province. Unlike the previous government, we've protected health care workers' right to strike, when they took it away from paramedics.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised many things a year ago, and sadly, very few of them have been followed through on. I'll table the Liberal Party platform, which promised a doctor for every Nova Scotian by the end of the first year, and we all know that hasn't happened. We know the Premier promised to invest an additional \$13 million into front-line health care, and now he admits that's not going to happen either. The Premier also promised to meet the national wait time of six months or less for hip and knee surgery, and according to the Department of Health and Wellness' own website, people in Dartmouth wait, on average, 380 days for a hip replacement surgery, so that's a promise that hasn't been kept either.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Premier is simple, why has he not kept these promises in his platform to the people of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to invest in front-line health care workers, we'll continue to work hard as a government to ensure that there is stability across the health care sector, and we'll continue to ensure that communities across this province will have access to front-line health care where and when they need it. This government is doing the right thing by ensuring that our health care system is sustainable in the long run.

Unlike the former government, we will accept the challenges that Nova Scotians have provided us, and that is governing this province and we'll continue to make the tough decisions regardless of how many people want to protest outside this building.

MS. MACDONALD: Those are fighting words from a Premier who needs to be healing the rift between his government and health care workers.

Mr. Speaker, another promise the Premier and the Liberal Party made in the Fall of 2013, in the platform I tabled, said that they would develop a plan to retain experienced nurses - to retain experienced nurses. I fear what they've done, and we've seen an example of this a moment ago, is the exact opposite.

My final question to the Premier is this, how is tackling the number of experienced nurses and keeping them in the profession here possible with the heavy-handed labour relations approach of this government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the member opposite actually talk to nurses instead of the union leaders. Nurses across this province are finally going to recognize that they have a government that is allowing labour mobility and a government that is investing in front-line health care. When the cries came out to the former government looking to support the front lines it fell on deaf ears, because every time a Cabinet decision was made they just went to the seventh floor and had it reversed by the unelected members of the New Democratic Party who are tied to the unions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC. - SMALL TURKEY PROCESSORS: SHUTDOWN - REASONS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone of many rural Nova Scotia communities and, as the minister knows, Goal 16 of the Ivany report calls for a doubling of value in agricultural products produced and consumed within the domestic market. All three Parties in this House have accepted the Ivany report recommendations.

My question for the minister is this, at a time when the Minister of Agriculture should be supporting rural agricultural businesses and finding ways to help them grow, why is he shutting down small turkey processors?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I appreciate the question, and we are not shutting down small processors. Number one, we don't have the authority to do that. There is an issue, under the Turkey Farmers of Nova Scotia they have the authority to do that for uninspected facilities, and it comes down to a food safety issue.

MR. LOHR: I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the minister's replies. Developing the skills of young Nova Scotians in the agricultural business is something the government should be supporting. The 4-H members in Nova Scotia raised turkeys as part of the club's turkey marketing program, which they auction off and have processed and have delivered to the buyers.

In a *Chronicle Herald* story recently 4-H leader Betty Lou Scott says: "This may be an historic auction because it may be the last one. Why would a kid sign up to do this project if they knew they were going to have to travel miles and miles to get their turkey slaughtered at the 'right spot.' This flies so totally in the face of this 'buy local' and 'reduce your carbon footprint' and everything." And I would table that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, at a time when the Minister of Agriculture should be supporting rural processors and young people interested in farming, why is he allowing this important 4-H program to be put in jeopardy?

MR. COLWELL: Indeed there was a report that I've seen there, but I also will read you a press release put out by the 4-H council, official one, on behalf of the council: "The

Nova Scotia 4-H Council and the Nova Scotia Market Steer, lamb, turkey committee wishes to assure the public that turkeys sold in the Market Turkey Auction - the one the 4-H had - at the Nova Scotia 4-H Show sent to processing by the committee, are being processed in a provincially inspected facility. The Nova Scotia 4-H council supports industry standards and works to ensure 4-H livestock projects are following approved on farm food safety and animal care practices.” Mr. Speaker, I’d like to table that and again, I would reiterate that this is a food safety issue.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. We know that some small turkey processors have been operating in rural Nova Scotia, providing a service for neighbours and 4-H participants for decades and local food is intrinsic to the Nova Scotia way of life. In a recent television interview the Minister of Agriculture said that he might be forced to ban people from processing their own meat on their own property, a practice that has been a normal part of farming for centuries.

Will the minister explain why he is launching an attack on an important part of rural Nova Scotia’s way of life, instead of finding solutions for people who grow their own food?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, sometimes the media - not the media that works here but some of the media - sometimes cuts and pastes answers and that was the case. I can assure the members of this House that there is no initiative, there is no way we’re going to stop anyone who grows produce on their own property, processes on their own property and does not sell that produce and does not give it away; it’s totally legal and it will stay legal in the Province of Nova Scotia.

I would also like to table the nine poultry processing facilities that are licensed under provincial legislation to do safe processing of turkeys in the Province of Nova Scotia, as well as chicken.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PTSD COMM. - MANDATE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is through you to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Currently in Nova Scotia there are paramedics, firefighters, police officers and other emergency responders suffering from PTSD who can’t always get the help they need, due to a lack of coverage under WCB.

A few days ago the minister indicated that he was going to strike a committee to improve PTSD coverage and support for emergency responders. For the record, Mr. Speaker, I do want to give the minister some credit for acknowledging the need to improve the situation and I’m happy to participate in that committee.

I do have some concerns and I would like to ask the minister if he could tell this House specifically what his PTSD committee will address and how long will this review take place?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health and Wellness, the main concerns I have been hearing around PTSD are the supports and the services that will provide immediate help for firefighters, paramedics, ground search and rescue people dealing with immediate trauma, and also, as people move along in their career, sometimes there are those moments when help is needed and to give clear direction of how that help, mental health support in particular, can be provided will be the main focus.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that. I would agree, there are a number of issues around PTSD and who gets some support, especially around volunteer fire departments, ground search and rescue. Those groups, for the majority of them, don't participate under the Workers' Compensation. What I'm concerned about are those workers in the province who are currently covered under Workers' Compensation and do get coverage on certain occasions, if it's immediately after a traumatic event.

The problem over the last number of years in our country is that there is not an option for those first responders, those emergency response personnel, to get coverage after they have had cumulative exposures to traumatic events. I think all would agree that over a year, or two, or three, or even five, these men and women see stuff that affects them deeply.

So I'd like to ask the minister - I know he's committed to moving forward, but would he look at acting immediately to increase the coverage of workmen's compensation for emergency responders who are diagnosed with PTSD because of a cumulative exposure to traumatic events?

MR. GLAVINE: I'm aware of some of the improvements that have been made under that Act, but I would refer to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education to give more details.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to thank the member for his question. The Workers' Compensation Board actually recently changed its psychological injury policy to ensure criteria to receive approval for benefits was expanded to be more reflective of the types of stress and situations workers are exposed to.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I think I continue to call workers "workmen," but workers' compensation.

I know that there has been a movement across the country and other jurisdictions. Just recently the director or the CEO of Workers' Compensation was in front of Public Accounts, and he acknowledged that they needed to look at expanding and ensuring that the best possible definition of PTSD is used, and that the scope of the coverage needs to change, but that it does take direction from the government on that.

So I would ask the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education if she would act immediately to ensure that those emergency responders - paramedics, firefighters, police officers, correctional service officers, nurses - can get coverage under the WCB if they're diagnosed with PTSD because of a cumulative exposure to the traumatic scenes that they see.

MS. REGAN: Thank you to the honourable member for the question. The Premier has committed to having a discussion with members of this House who are interested in this particular issue and how we can best support the mental health of first responders. I would be happy to participate in that conversation with the honourable member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. - YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: DECREASE - TIME FRAME

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question today is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Nova Scotia's youth are struggling, and life continues to become harder for them. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate has dropped in the last year. However, here in Nova Scotia, it has risen to 18.6 per cent, the highest in the country. I can table that.

While other jurisdictions have managed to improve youth employment, the situation here at home continues to deteriorate. Now the government would have you believe, would have Nova Scotians believe, that they have taken steps to address this, yet the rate continues to climb. So I'm curious as to when the minister thinks any steps she may have taken to address the issue will begin to take hold. How soon will the youth unemployment rate start to decrease in this province?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I think that all members of the House recognize the demographic challenge that we have. That ties back into every single activity of government. It ties back into the finances, the amount of people working, the amount of money that we have to address the deficit - which the member was just asking about. The bottom line for us across the board is that demographics are a challenge.

I can say that there has been a great deal done this year. The Minister of Immigration has changed the rules for people to stay in this province to contribute to our economy. She's doing all she can to bring more immigrants.

Other departments have taken steps. For example, our own Public Service Commission has changed the rules for entry-level jobs, so that we will no longer keep people out if they don't have two to five years of experience. We recognize that that was an impediment to bringing people into our own workforce, and we can't ask the private sector to change if we don't change our own rules. We've done it first, and we're showing leadership to the private sector. We are looking to them to help us create jobs.

I'm sure there's a follow-up question, so I'll save some.

MR. HOUSTON: I would hate to disappoint the minister. I will offer her two follow-ups, in order.

Thank you for that response. We do hear about lots of things that government is doing. I guess my question was: if and when are they going to start to show some results? What we have today is students graduating saddled by debt, among the highest debt in the country. The national average debt for a graduate across Canada is about \$13,000. Here in Nova Scotia, our students are graduating with almost \$17,000 in debt. It's 27 per cent higher.

Mr. Speaker, the government may not be too concerned about debt, but I can tell you Nova Scotians are, and particularly young Nova Scotians. My question for the minister today is, what is the government doing to make it easier for young Nova Scotians to pay down their debt?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, that was one of the points I was going to raise in my earlier answer, so now I get to tell the members of the House something very important. In this year's budget that was brought here in April, we forgave the interest on student loans for all students - not just ones that came out this year and forward, we went back to 2008 and forgave the interest on all of that. That's a direct impact on the debt that all of those young people will be carrying as they are trying to eliminate debt and start their work lives.

Mr. Speaker, there are other programs. The Graduate to Opportunities program, which was also a campaign commitment, is being unveiled very shortly, but we've talked about it. It's a program that redirects our efforts to help businesses create those first jobs that offer the students exactly what they need as they come out of school. They need to get their foot in the door into the workplace and get experience, and we'll have a program to address that.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister referring to the interest program, but do you know what else would have helped students pay down their debt? The Graduate Retention Rebate, but that's gone now. We've all heard the arguments to justify it, but I don't buy those arguments.

Now I want to address something that the minister just said here. This government claims to be supporting students by making it easier for them to enter the Public Service workforce but at the same time, they are instituting a hiring freeze. How is the minister going to (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, I know we like to change policy over there on the fly quite a bit, but we all know what's happening.

My question is very specific, and I'm sure every member in here will have a chance to answer it, maybe in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. How are you going to hire more young people when you've told the departments not to hire anyone else?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, once again that question is riddled with inaccuracies, and that concerns me, that the member hasn't read any of the information. This is slowing hiring, I don't deny that, but the program is in no way a freeze.

We understand that there are needs within our government offices and departments and the programs that have to be delivered, and a hiring freeze is not the way to be able to ensure that services are provided. But we do have vacancies in the departments and we do have a need to control our workforce, so if you hire one person for every two that are vacated or positions that are vacated, that allows us to still fill the most essential ones and to make sure that the work of government continues.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I would like to ask the member opposite to think, and all members to think, about the cost of running government, and bear in mind that 60 per cent of our costs are labour costs. The previous government tried to control the growth in our workforce through an attrition method, to just wait for people to leave. We're doing much the same in this instance; we are not hiring every single one back this year, but that's the only way we're going to get towards a balanced budget, which is what the member opposite has been demanding. Thank you.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER LEVY CONSULTATIONS - SCHEDULE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is through you to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. In my neck of the woods and in coastal communities across this province, the question a lot of people are asking is when this Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is going to hold consultation on his proposed 2-cent to 5-cent lobster levy.

Mr. Speaker, on March 27th and April 9th of this year, the minister promised in this House that he would hold consultations on his levy and other proposed changes the Maritime Lobster Panel recommended in the Fall of 2013. But hardly a day goes by when somebody doesn't stop and ask me if I know when and where this public consultation will take place.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, can he please provide this House with a full schedule of upcoming lobster levy consultations that I can share with the members of my communities across Nova Scotia?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, indeed we have been consulting with many of the buyers in the province regarding lobster and the cost of putting a levy in place,

or whatever you want to call it at the time. There's a real interest in them moving forward with that, and we will continue those consultations as we move forward.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, while most in the lobster industry have been left in the dark about the Liberal Government's proposed lobster tax, apparently there is one - there is one, I repeat - mystery group that is on the verge of signing an MOU to participate in a 5-cents-a-pound pilot project. Unfortunately, when asked what part of this province this mystery group represents, the minister, on August 20th, said in *The Chronicle Herald*, "You'll have to wait and see when we make the announcement."

The industry is upset with this government's secrecy around this issue. So my second question, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, when is he going to break his silence and tell the industry where this 5-cents-a-pound lobster levy will be imposed?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member has a short memory since the last question he asked in the House here, he asked the exact same question. I'll give him the exact same answer - the first time in history that we have gone to industry in a particular area. We have an agreement signed at the present time, which we will announce when the industry is ready, that is going to put the industry in charge of how we move forward in providing quality and marketing for one of the best products we have in the province. It's sold presently as a commodity rather than a treasured product that can dictate a far superior price than what it is now.

We're well on the way of developing that process and when we have that finalized and the industry is happy - it's going to be industry-led - we will make that announcement.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, through you, I just want to assure the members opposite that my memory is very intact. I know that in this House, this minister promised consultation on two occasions - in March and in April - so I just want to remind him of that.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, when the lobster panel was first assembled, the previous government committed that all recommendations would be subject to approval of the industry. I should know; I was there. My question to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, why is he not allowing industry members to vote on this lobster levy to ensure he has a proper mandate?

MR. COLWELL: Well again, the honourable member has a short memory. He called this levy a Liberal tax; actually, it was a tax proposed by himself as minister. It makes you wonder why he's even asking this question.

But at the end of the day, we will be consulting with industry. We've already started that process. There is a lot of opposition, as you very well know, in the industry for a levy of any kind in this province. It's something that you initiated, something you put forward, something you pushed for and something . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to remind the honourable minister not to refer directly to the members opposite.

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I correct myself, the honourable member. The truth is, it's something that the honourable member pushed for and committed to, and at the same time I'm going to ask him where he is in helping us sell this to the industry.

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

ENERGY - NAT. GAS SUPPLIES: SOURCE - DETAILS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, speaking at the Core Conference yesterday, Chris Huskison of Emera was quoted as saying, "We have to start to think about how we are going to supply natural gas to the region in the future." I'll table a couple of those documents as we go along here.

We know that natural gas production is expected to decline as the Sable offshore project heads towards decommissioning. With hydraulic fracturing off the table and the offshore in decline, we have a problem. My question to the Minister of Energy is, will he clarify where our natural gas supplies will come from as local demand increases above local supply?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a shame the honourable member wasn't able to go to the conference and be there to hear exactly what was said because he went on to say that that's a problem a number of decades out and at that point we anticipate having a number of different options. I'll table one example that will just show the fallacy of the Official Opposition's arguments. Just published, actually today, in fact, is a map showing the onshore estimated potential in Nova Scotia and almost all of it is in coalbed methane - which is not actually prohibited in this - of 3.9 trillion cubic feet. That is just the onshore potential - and that is only in one area.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Also at the Core Conference, New Brunswick Power President, Gaëtan Thomas, suggested that a local source of natural gas would be (Interruption) I'm not moving on, I'm still sticking on the same one, so, if you want to listen a little bit there. Okay. I think the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is a little sensitive today because he got all those questions yesterday and he hasn't gotten one yet today. So, maybe later, I'll ask one later if you want.

MR. SPEAKER: Time is a ticking here, do have a question?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: That a local source of natural gas will be 20 to 25 per cent cheaper for utilities in imported gas. It's clear that by developing our indigenous natural gas supply, the government has the opportunity to reduce the cost of generating electricity. Chris Huskison was also quoted as saying that the closer we are to the source of natural gas the better off we are. So, my question to the minister is, will this government act and

develop our natural gas resources, potentially reducing the electricity costs to all Nova Scotians?

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, to start with, we have one natural gas generation plant in this province, so in terms of the impact on electricity, it's very minimal, and in fact Nova Scotia Power has stated they have no plans to build future natural gas plants. So let's just start with that. The second issue is - and maybe I'll table this again, because I guess he missed it - the majority of the reserves, the vast majority by many, many times 3.9 trillion cubic feet - and this is just onshore - are coalbed methane projects. The only projects underway in this province at the moment, in terms of flaring or so forth, are coalbed methane projects, which are local projects. So, we'll try this very slowly: coalbed methane, natural gas, local supply, close, the majority that is here in Nova Scotia. Thank you very much.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Also in that document, he forgot to mention that onshore, undiscovered resource potential in shale gas is 650 billion cubic feet. So, that's nothing to sneeze at so why aren't we looking at it? What's baffling is that this government finds it acceptable to import more expensive natural gas from the United States rather than using supplies from here in Nova Scotia. Instead of providing economic opportunities for Nova Scotians by responsibly developing our local shale gas resources, the minister sits on his hands and bans the industry. So, my final question is why is the minister satisfied with passing up on economic opportunities and importing gas obtained from hydraulic fracturing in the U.S., rather than responsibly developing the industry here?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, I understand the supplementaries are often written before you get the answers and that can make it very complicated and very confusing when you can't think on your feet. The problem is, we currently - he talks about importing - in fact, we produce at peak (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable Minister of Energy has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, 500 million cubic feet a day, on peak, is produced in Nova Scotia. We use 300. The Alton Storage Project is allowing us to store that. He talks about local (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Energy has the floor.

MR. YOUNGER: There is \$6 million being spent on the project down in Stellarton. There are 80 companies working on that project.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Kings North got up just a few moments ago and talked about the Ivany report and the importance of focusing on agriculture. The Wheeler report pointed out the fact that there will likely be reductions in revenue to the agricultural sector as a result of hydraulic fracturing in shale. So on the one hand, we have the member in the

back talking about, please ensure we do this, yet the member in the front is telling us that we should not take the time to ensure that we have the conflicts resolved, that we understand the potential.

Mr. Speaker, I will say again, the coalbed methane projects are going ahead, we are working on the supply for natural gas and, in fact, there are number of projects the member is well aware of because we have briefed him on them a number of times.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - S. SHORE REG. HEALTH AUTHORITY:
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERV. - CUTS**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. On September 9th of this year, low-income seniors living with disabilities received a letter from the South Shore District Health Authority - and I will table that letter - informing them that funding through independent living services for activities like snow removal, food preparation, lawn mowing and transportation to medical appointments was being capped at \$500 per year.

Mr. Speaker, this letter came as a shock to the recipients, who were previously told they were eligible for up to \$500 a month. My question for the minister is, given his government's commitment to help seniors stay in their homes longer, why is the funding for this program suddenly being capped?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this is a program that is serving Nova Scotia seniors very well at the moment and I can assure the member opposite that it will be kept in place.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not what I asked. I asked about why it was capped. So I'll go forward.

Mr. Speaker, Helena Teal-Facey is a 77-year-old lady and she lives on a fixed income. Helena suffers from a heart condition and she cares for her husband who is a double amputee. When Helena received the letter, through no fault of her own, she had already spent her entire allowance. As a result, she now must choose between paying for needed household services or buying food.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, can the minister tell this House what other options are available to Ms. Facey and others like her to overcome this sudden loss of financial support?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I know that at the department, we have not received correspondence explaining what has taken place. I know this is a program that is valued by seniors and we will keep it in place.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that he will receive letters from seniors about what has taken place in their lives so he can address them.

Mr. Speaker, because of a loss of funding, Helena literally doesn't know how she's going to keep her husband's wheelchair ramp clear of snow this winter. I actually found out today that her husband, who used to use this also for medical transportation, tried to get to an appointment and fell out of his wheelchair.

To say the least, this sudden policy change has pulled the rug out from under seniors already struggling to make ends meet. My question to the minister is, will he direct his department to ensure these seniors living along the South Shore of Nova Scotia can receive the funding that they were promised so they can get through this winter?

MR. GLAVINE: What I can assure the member opposite is that we will look into this program, sometimes it's a case of oversubscribing and there is a set amount of money that would be distributed among seniors - but I am prepared to take a look at why this particular family has been hit by this notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: RURAL COMMUNITIES - PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

When this government came to power about a year ago, well exactly one year ago, they promised there would be a doctor for every Nova Scotian. In this House of Assembly on December 14, 2011, the member for Kings West, the current Minister of Health and Wellness, said "There are rural communities such as Yarmouth and towns in the Valley that have been experiencing shortage of physician services which is impacting emergency care and consistent primary care." And the Liberal platform said "Far too many Nova Scotians don't have access to a family physician, leaving many without care and putting added strain on our emergency rooms."

So my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, will the minister elaborate on the broken Liberal election promise of providing a family doctor for every Nova Scotian?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we had a number of recommendations brought forward that we'll be getting out to the public from the recruitment and retention committee that we set up, in fact within the first 100 days of our government, and that report will be coming out. The major thrust, however, of the program is our election commitment that we will pay the tuition for 25 doctors for the next four years, and that is

going to make a considerable difference in our rural communities, because in fact it will be a return of service to those communities that have had difficulties recruiting and maintaining doctors.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the government promised that every Nova Scotian would have a family doctor in the first year, as government said it would cost \$3 million. Now let's fast-forward a year to now, emergency rooms are being forced to close, the problem is not getting any better - as a matter of fact it's getting worse. Just this morning there was another crisis revealed with the ER closures at Roseway Hospital, and I'll table a document about that. Fraser Mooney, communications director for South West Health, said of ". . .the closures were due to shortage of staff including a physician and or a registered nurse." Shelburne area residents requiring emergency services should visit the nearest open emergency department.

My question to the minister is, can the minister tell the people of Shelburne County, and all Nova Scotians, why in one year the doctor shortage in Nova Scotia has not improved, but has actually gotten worse?

MR. GLAVINE: What I can tell the member opposite, the former Health Minister, he knows that in terms of recruitment and retaining it is a very challenging process, but what I can tell Nova Scotians today, Mr. Speaker, is that 94 per cent of Nova Scotians do have a family doctor.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, I don't know, Mr. Speaker, I know of a retirement that is happening pretty soon in my neck of the woods, so there is going to probably be 6,000 people looking for a new family doctor in a very short period of time. It might be the percentage is high, but there are thousands of people right now who are working really hard to try to find a doctor - and to no avail.

Year one has slipped by with no action from this government on the recruitment of physicians in this province, promise broken, Mr. Speaker, and I just mentioned Shelburne, but we have been raising this as a persistent problem in Cape Breton. Presently Nova Scotia is looking for 44 family doctors and 41.5 specialists - and I will table that document from the Department of Health and Wellness website indicating the shortage of physicians.

My question to the minister is, how much longer will Nova Scotians without a family doctor have to wait for this government to deliver on its pre-election promise?

MR. GLAVINE: We know that this recruitment tool of paying for the tuition of 25 family doctors over the next four years will make a difference. The forms and applications will be available shortly as we reveal the details of that program but just in medical schools across the country, and with Nova Scotians who are doing residencies in other provinces and in the United States, the interest has peaked in our program and I think we will see a change coming about as early as the next fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ENVIRON.: REVISING OUR PATH FORWARD - STATUS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Environment. Earlier this year the Liberal Government introduced a discussion paper entitled *Revising Our Path Forward*. The paper proposed several new pieces of red tape for small-business owners, including an unclear proposal around extended producer responsibility.

Since public comments on the discussion paper closed in August, there has been little public discussion from the government. Can the minister please explain the current status of the government's plans as laid out in the discussion paper?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I am very pleased to provide an update to the member and the whole House on that particular proposal. While the public consultation process did conclude in the August time frame, we provided extensions for our consultation to some of our key stakeholders, in particular municipalities, so consultation actually just concluded at the end of September. Municipalities felt they wanted a little more time to review and prepare their responses for us, so we did just finish receiving input in the process at the end of last month.

We have had over 250 submissions, Mr. Speaker. We are just beginning the process of working through those inputs in the initial draft. Thank you.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the proposals represent a significant increase in red tape for businesses and costs of living for all Nova Scotians. CFIB stated in a release that the extended producer responsibility program is one that small businesses simply cannot afford. I will table that. Will the minister pledge to not increase the regulatory burden and red tape on small-business owners in Nova Scotia?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess first and foremost, with respect to the suggestion that this is some form of red tape, a burden, a problem, I think is a little bit inaccurate in the presentation of what is being proposed. With respect to concerns, we've had meetings, as recently as a couple of weeks ago, with representatives from organizations, industry representatives who have no issues or concerns with this. In fact, the one key thing that they were proposing in those meetings was the notion of allowing them to run it. So if we move forward with this, the concerns with EPR are not with EPR itself, extended producer responsibility; in fact, much of industry is quite supportive of this.

With respect to the impact on small business, Mr. Speaker, we're not suggesting that this program move forward. We have learned from other jurisdictions that have already implemented this type of program across the country and one of the key tenets of

this type of program across the country is to recognize the potential implications, in particular on the small-business sector.

We can rest assured - the member opposite and certainly the small businesses across Nova Scotia - that neither the intent nor the outcome of this process will be to affect them in a negative way.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing a little bit differently from business owners. Jennifer English of CFIB is quoted as telling *The Chronicle Herald*, "Nova Scotia is already an expensive place to do business." Increasing red tape for small businesses in the province will only lead to further job losses. As we all know, Nova Scotia cannot afford to lose any more jobs, something that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is well aware of.

I'm just wondering if the Minister of ERDT has been made aware of the proposed changes and has he voiced his opposition to the red tape that will hurt economic growth in this province?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again I thank you for the opportunity to make some clarification here to the proposal. Nova Scotia is a leader in solid waste and waste management across this country and, in fact, across the world. Not that long ago I was at meetings in Prince Edward Island for the CCME - the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment - and several of my colleagues from provinces across the country have indicated to me that they want to reach out to us to learn how to effectively implement an improved solid waste management system for their regions. So I have pride in the work the department has done, our partners, such as municipalities and other entrepreneurs. In fact, since the first time this solid waste strategy was implemented back in the 1990s, it has led to significant job growth and opportunities.

We have, by taking a leadership position in being innovative with waste management, introducing bans - things like paint. Recycling opportunities in Nova Scotia provide recycling jobs and processing waste paint for the entire Maritime region here in Nova Scotia. We get these jobs because we take a leadership position and implement these things, which is the direction of the strategy from across the country. Nova Scotia is a leader and will continue to be a leader, and we will be creating jobs and opportunities, not red tape.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - HANTS COMMUN. HOSP.:
SATELLITE DIALYSIS - STATUS**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. It should come as no surprise that I would ask the minister a question regarding dialysis, given that we have 40 or more families and individuals travelling from my constituency to the Valley, to Berwick, or here to Halifax to receive

treatment three times a week. I know he's very familiar with that, and many others are. I have asked many questions in this House regarding the satellite dialysis potential for the Hants Community Hospital to ever happen, so I'll follow up today, knowing full well that in recent months there was a survey completed through some of the individuals who are travelling, and/or their families. I would ask the minister for a status report on where that lies today.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member for Hants West, I do commend him for championing this cause. He has asked me a number of questions around dialysis and its possibilities in Windsor. Of course, this is a provincial program that has a very specific design as to how it will be rolled out in the coming years. A good part of that program has been implemented, but there are more sites that are now in the process of being developed. One of them in Kentville will come relatively shortly, which I know will have great benefit to residents of his area.

He's absolutely right. The survey is indicating that a place like Windsor has a number of residents who would like to get a service closer to home.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the survey perhaps has been completed, but I'm not sure of that. I would ask the minister to maybe clarify when he rises following my question.

I also had been told that people from my area, approximately four, had received the survey, but again I'm not specifically 100 per cent sure if that is correct. I wonder if the minister could enlighten us or tell me so I could pass it on, and all constituents, how many people from the Hants West area, of that approximately 40 or so that are receiving dialysis each week, were surveyed? Thank you.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I will provide the member opposite with is some results of that survey. We know that there are always a number of people on dialysis that can be educated, can be supported for home dialysis. Some move into that kind of treatment, but as far as the additional four, as to what category and if they need to be coming into Halifax to the renal program here or can get treatment at home, I'm sure the survey has those kinds of details, and I will provide that to the member.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for the answer, and I look forward to seeing some of that data. I'm sure some of the others who are patients receiving dialysis will also look forward to seeing the end result of that. At this point, I guess I would say, given that this is an ongoing issue, that it will continue to be an ongoing issue. We will continue to lobby for the good folks of Hants West and surrounding areas, who would greatly benefit from satellite dialysis at the Hants Community Hospital. Thank you.

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

ENVIRON.: NAT. GAS STORAGE FACILITY (COL. CO.) - STATUS

MS. LENORE ZANN: My question today is for the Minister of Agriculture. Commercial fishermen are adding their voices to the concerns of the Mi'kmaq and other concerned citizens over a natural gas storage facility proposed for Colchester County. Alton Gas plans to flush out salt caverns with water from the Shubenacadie River, and the brine would then be piped back into the river.

In a *Chronicle Herald* article, which I will table, Dick Stewart of the Full Bay Scallop Association says, "The scallop larvae is very sensitive to changes in salinity. When you pump 173,000 cubic metres of salt, which they plan to do, into that river it will flow out into the Minas Basin and Bay of Fundy."

According to the Department of Environment, in a *Truro Daily News* article, which I will also table, "... before Alton Gas can begin operating the brine storage pond ..." they will need an authorization from the Agriculture Department.

So my question for the minister is, can the Minister of Agriculture please give us a status update on this authorization and any meetings that he has had with the Full Bay Scallop Association and the Mi'kmaq on the proposal to dump salt brine into the Shubenacadie River?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much. I would refer that to the Minister of Environment, as it is his responsibility.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: With respect, the member opposite referenced some information from my department. I'd just like to clarify the concerns being raised around the salinity and where the parameters around that get established.

In fact, the authorization and the reports of the assessment around the release of the brine solution into the Shubenacadie River is something that's assessed and reviewed by our federal counterparts in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They're the ones that actually assess and look at the impacts on fish habitat, marine life and so on. They're the experts in that area, and the Department of Environment looks to them for guidance on the appropriate way to do it with the least effect on the environment. Thank you.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in the article I just tabled, the Department of Environment said that, in fact, an authorization would be needed from the Agriculture Department as well in order to go ahead with the dumping of the salt.

My first supplementary is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Just today, the president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association said that members of the Mi'kmaq community will drop eel traps at the site of the proposed Alton Gas salt brine dump, which she has said will make the Alton Gas proposal a question of Aboriginal fishing rights on Mi'kmaq territory. I will table that article.

Again, according to the Department of Environment, before Alton Gas can begin operating the brine storage ponds, they will actually need a coastal permit from the Department of Natural Resources. So my question for the Minister of Natural Resources is, what effect will the question of Aboriginal fishing rights on Mi'kmaq territory have on the Department of Natural Resources' review of the Alton Gas salt brine disposal?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you. I'm very happy to coordinate with my colleague, the honourable Minister of Environment, on this file to ensure that we're addressing all the concerns that are out there in the community.

MS. ZANN: Well, I would hate to suggest that somebody hasn't followed the file, but that wasn't exactly an answer that I would appreciate. I'd like a little bit more information. Perhaps the minister could let me know at a later time.

Mr. Speaker, my second supplementary is for the Minister of the Environment, the only one who seems to be aware of this particular issue. According to the Department of Environment, the original approval for the Alton Gas salt brine project was given in 2007, but this was before striped bass, which spawn and are fished in the Shubenacadie River, were added to the endangered species list, which occurred in 2012. Alton Gas will be seeking an industrial approval from the Department of Environment in order to begin operating the brine storage pond.

My question for the minister is, could he please give an update on science showing that salt brine will not adversely affect the striped bass spawning grounds?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the opportunity to respond. Based on the first couple of questions, I would just like to clarify - with respect to the approvals looking at other departments, it might have gotten a little bit mixed up there in the preamble leading up to the questions to my colleagues.

The suggestions were that the approvals from those departments were related to environmental types of issues. That's not the case. With respect to the approvals from Agriculture, for example, what you're looking at is approvals for work being done on a dike, I believe, in that area. It's not explicitly relating to environmental issues. The environmental approvals clearly fall under the purview of my department, the Department of Environment.

The member is correct that for this project, there was an environmental assessment conducted back in 2007. All of the documentation and reports associated with that approval are available on our website and available for review and assessment. That environmental assessment process included opportunity for public consultation and that information is, again, available on our website. The public comments can be viewed by coming into our department.

I would also like to indicate that through this process, there was also an approval from the Department of Environment that wasn't provided under the previous government in 2013. It's nice to see that they have some concerns about this file that they're bringing forward now that they didn't bring forward while they were in government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

ENVIRON. - BOTTLE FEES: INCREASES - PLANS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Environment. Nova Scotians are all too familiar with the continued increases to the cost of living. I received an email from a concerned citizen over another increase to the cost of living, this time over an increase to bottle fees. I will table that email.

Perry Wallace wrote that he is concerned about the government's plan to restructure the bottle deposit system to allow for increases. So I'll ask Mr. Wallace's question directly to the minister, will the government give the average Nova Scotian worker a break on this?

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable member for Kings North that it's not proper to bring forth a question from a member of the public. Could you rephrase it in your own words for a matter of record?

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware of that. I'll ask the Minister of Environment the question through you, will he inform this House of his plans regarding this increase in bottle fees?

HON. RANDY DELORY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question. This actually carries on to an earlier request from the member for Pictou West, as it refers to and where this information about proposed changes - I would like to highlight - proposed changes to the (Interruptions) As a matter of fact, it is on the website. Talking about transparency, you don't have to FOIPOP to get answers to many of these questions. You can just visit our website, and I encourage the members of the public, as well as the members across the floor there, to come visit our website to get that information.

With respect to the proposed changes to the bottle fees, I would like to clarify for the members - actually, members from the NDP have publicly raised these questions and suggestions when we initially released that draft back in the Spring suggesting that there was actually a proposal to increase bottle fees. I encourage all these members to read through that. There is absolutely no suggestion that bottle fees will be increased through this process.

What we've indicated in that document is to separate and break out the current 10-cent fee so that it's more clear and transparent to all consumers so they can see the 5-cent refund, but also the cost of the recycling itself, which right now is about 4.8, 4.9 cents, and we have 5 cents that we collect to cover that.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today in Question Period the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture suggested that I am losing my memory. (Interruptions) The members opposite may find that humorous, I don't.

There are many issues around mental illness, the struggles of mental health. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review the comments and I look forward to your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take it under advisement, thank you very much.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 11.

Bill No. 11 - Workers' Compensation Act.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand today and talk about Bill No. 11. I was contemplating with our caucus, when we were trying to figure out which bills to bring forward - I know part of me is saying, well maybe I shouldn't bring it forward because on Opposition Day, a majority of the time the government will talk out the time and not allow a vote on this bill. But I felt compelled with the correspondence that I've received over the last week and a half, the attention that's around this issue, that I felt I was okay with that. If the government will talk out the time, that's fine, it doesn't mean that I can't call it back again at another sitting.

I felt compelled that it was important to continue to bring awareness around an issue that we need to act on, that government needs to act on, and that is around recognizing that PTSD affects so many men and women, not only in our own province but across the country. It's no secret that my background is as a paramedic and I often draw from that, Mr. Speaker, what I bring forward as an MLA when it comes to legislation, but this piece of legislation is just right. It's the right thing to do; it's the right thing to act on. I hope the government, if they choose not to support this today, really makes an attempt at improving the conditions and the support that is given to our men and women here in Nova Scotia who are emergency responders.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just about paramedics; this is about firefighters, dispatchers, police officers, registered nurses. This is about correctional service officers and social workers who work in Children and Family Services.

The reason I ensured that all these workers were covered under this piece of legislation is because each and every one of them are exposed to events and experiences that most Nova Scotians don't see in their career in their daily lives, stuff that most Nova Scotians wouldn't want to see. I think you do, at times, need to be quite frank around this issue and around the situation about PTSD.

These workers see, on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker - take firefighters who go to motor vehicle accidents - they see traumatic injuries. They go to house fires and they see burn victims who survive with severe burns and they see people who are deceased. You see police officers who respond to the same calls. They see gunshots, they see assaults; they see things that most Nova Scotians would tell you that they couldn't handle.

Mr. Speaker, this illness is something that I think, over the last number of months, and maybe over the last couple of years, has been getting more and more attention. PTSD is something that we need to take seriously; we need to look at ensuring that people who need the support of government and government programs receive it.

I want to recognize the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, and the Premier who came up to me after I introduced this legislation last week and said thank you for bringing that forward; it's an important issue. The Minister of Health and Wellness has asked me to sit on a committee to try to move things forward and I'm very happy to do that, Mr. Speaker. I'll commit right now that my political affiliation, my political hat will be left at the door. I want to make sure that whatever goes on into the future on the changes that support our men and women who are on call every day and every hour and every minute, get the support they need.

It was until this summer, Mr. Speaker, I assumed, like many, workers in this province were covered under Workers' Compensation around PTSD - and they are but it's limited. I was given some information from a gentleman named Vince Savoia who is with a national organization called TEMA and they are working to bring awareness around PTSD and I know that they have some close relationships with some advocates here in Nova Scotia, firefighters, for example, who have been working with that organization. I know the firefighters in Halifax have a support unit that they try to support their fellow colleagues when they find themselves in difficult times, not only with PTSD but others.

It took me to look at what we do and what we cover here and I realized pretty quickly that we do cover workers under Workers' Compensation if they find themselves diagnosed with PTSD after a traumatic event. That's the problem - "after a traumatic event", Mr. Speaker. WCB is really set up that if you have an injury you make note of it and then you're covered down the road if you have any complications of it. So if you fall down on the job, you hurt your knee, you do a Workers' Compensation form, and six months, a

year later, you need surgery, you can say okay that was caused by the fall and then you go on.

The problem with the definition of PTSD and a traumatic event is that many of these men and women in the professions that I just announced see on a daily basis, on a weekly basis, on a monthly basis, accumulative traumatic events. They go to call after call after call, over weeks, over months, over years, and it may not be evident after a single event that someone can't cope with it, Mr. Speaker, it may be years down the road where they attend maybe even a minor event that triggers the symptoms of PTSD - and they're not easy to deal with.

The sad part about all this is that many - and I know them personally, Mr. Speaker - many men and women who find themselves in the position where they're struggling to cope with this choose to turn to alcohol, for example. That is one thing that happens. Myself, personally, you know we had platoon parties every month or so where the platoon got out and we went to a local establishment and had a few drinks, talked about the crazy stuff that we'd seen in the last month and that helped. I'm not saying that it doesn't help, but it doesn't help in every case. Often these men and women are choosing to turn to prescription drugs or illegal drugs to try to cope with what they're dealing with.

But far too many, Mr. Speaker, far too many turn to suicide and they take their own lives. In the last six months - just six months, Mr. Speaker - in Canada over 23 emergency responders have taken their own lives, and that number reflects Nova Scotians. We might feel we're a small province and it doesn't happen here, but it does. At least a half-dozen individuals I have known and worked with over the last - well it would have been almost 20 years I'd be in the business as a medic if I didn't get into being an elected official, over a half-dozen medics that I know have taken that choice and that way out to deal with this.

That's something that we need to address, we need to talk about it, we need to ensure that people who are struggling don't have to worry about where their next pay is - these people, these men and women I mention who are providing the care for Nova Scotians, they're not getting rich doing it. Many of them live paycheque to paycheque and part of the struggle when someone is trying to decide if they need to go get some help or take some time off is I can't do that, I need to have a pay - and if they're not able to gain access to Workers' Compensation then I know they stay on the job, they continue to put themselves in an environment that is hurting them, and that's what we need to change - and I'm asking the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, I'm asking the government to immediately look at this. Make that change - make that one change right now. We can continue to look at where the gaps are when we're dealing with who is able to gain access to Workers' Compensation. I know volunteer fire departments usually aren't able to gain access because they don't pay into Workers' Compensation. Search and rescue individuals - that's a separate issue, it's an important issue.

But I know right now, the government could immediately improve the ability for the men and women who unfortunately are diagnosed with PTSD to at least take that one

worry off their plate - where will my next pay come from - and then go and seek the help they need. That is where I know we need to do a lot of work.

There is a huge stigma to PTSD, huge stigma to it. My training back in the early 1990s, there was nothing about PTSD. I don't believe there was really anything about coping with what I was about to see when I graduated. I can tell you today - I said this this morning on the Global Morning News - I had the opportunity to talk on that this morning. I said this - I think I said it for the first time - I said, I'm one of the fortunate ones, where I've had a break. I was a paramedic almost nine years and I saw a lot of stuff in just that short nine years. I said, I can't imagine - I've had a break. I've been 11 years off the trucks, been a registered paramedic for a number of years after that, but pretty much 11 years where I've been able to say I've had a break from this.

Some of my colleagues, some of my friends, haven't had that. Some of them, it would be 20 years exposed to the calls. It's not a sign of weakness if they choose that they need a break, they need to take some time off. All I'm asking for is that the government recognize that, that they see that these men and women are human. TEMA has a saying now - there's a campaign going on that I think says it as simply as it can be, that our heroes are human too. We often think of those men and women; those firefighters, police officers, dispatchers, nurses, correctional services, social workers, who deal with stuff that most people don't want to deal with, are heroes. They make a difference in people's lives. They treat people every day and what we need to do is make sure we can treat them, that they can go and get the treatment that they need.

I know, Mr. Speaker, if you add the possibility of people getting into or accessing Workers' Compensation, that there is a cost to that. I understand that. But I don't think it's a huge cost. If they're able to get it now, there are not going to be floodgates, I can tell you. The pride thing is there still. There are not going to be floodgates that we're going to see thousands of emergency workers all of a sudden saying, get me on workers' compensation. We're not going to see that. We might see that one or two additional woman or man who will finally say, you know what? After 20 years of seeing this, I am a bit frazzled by the things that I've seen. I do need to get some support. At least now I can go and not have one thing to worry about and that is the pay that goes along with that.

I hope that the government recognizes that. We need to work towards ensuring that these men and women who give so much and are on duty today in every part of this province that we need to be there for them. That's really the essence of this bill. It's not politically motivated. It's just the right thing to do. I think I've said this before: we need to protect those who protect us. I hope the government will consider this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, this government values the important, difficult and sometimes heartbreaking work that our first responders do every day. Their dedication to protecting the health, safety and dignity of Nova Scotians is greatly

appreciated, and I want to thank the member for his personal service to this province as a first responder. (Applause)

When first responders become stressed or ill because of their work, there are supports and benefits available. The Workers' Compensation Board has a psychological injury policy to ensure the criteria to receive approval for benefits was expanded to be more reflective of the types of stress and situations workers are exposed to.

I want to thank the member for putting forward this bill, but I want to be clear, it would be irresponsible for government to move forward on this bill without a full and thorough understanding of its implications. This is a complex issue and we want to fully understand the best way to support these workers.

The Premier has committed to having a discussion with members of the House on how we can best support the mental health of first responders and I would be happy to participate in that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this important bill. I want to thank the member for Sackville-Cobequid for bringing this bill and this issue to the Legislature. I know the bill is a very sincere effort to try to help and comfort those in Nova Scotia who do this very important work. These are caring professionals. These are people who choose this profession, and you know that they have huge hearts and a very huge capacity for empathy.

These jobs are very essential and they are also very stressful. First responders, whether they are police, firefighters, paramedics, and others, are always there when we need them. I know the volunteer fire department in my hometown in Brookfield is second to none. These folks go out on all kinds of calls and I get to hear about them afterwards. Sometimes it is a matter of doing some debriefing.

Mr. Speaker, the sad stats that my friend in the NDP brought forward show us that our dedicated first responders really do need us to respond to this. As he said, it could be 23, 24, I'm not sure what the number is, have taken their own lives in the last six months in Canada. That is a huge number of people.

Yesterday a lifelong friend of Corporal Ronald Francis pled for help for police officers and other first responders who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Yesterday Assistant Commissioner Roger Brown, the RCMP's Commanding Officer for J Division in New Brunswick, said the issue of PTSD for first responders is very real. He said that mental illness, this kind of emotional activity in someone, is unfortunately a stigma. It is important as a society that we continue to talk about this very real issue and we work to find ways to address it.

With this bill, the member for Sackville-Cobequid is doing just that and I want to commend him for that and for his work and also the work of my co-worker. I was very pleased to see that the Minister of Health and Wellness was looking for concrete ways to provide support for the police officers, the paramedics, and other emergency responders suffering from this, and they understand the minister intends to strike a committee to examine ways to provide support. I'm very thankful that I'm going to be part of that.

Our caucus will participate in this committee. I do ask the minister to act quickly because real people and their families are suffering and for them, every single day takes a toll on them. When we look across Canada, Alberta and British Columbia have legislation that allows for this to be looked at on a regular basis. With this bill we will bring first responders and give them the assistance they need to heal and get back on the job.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative caucus supports this bill and we look forward to the Minister of Health and Wellness' committee beginning its work and providing our first responders with the support they need and the support they deserve. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill No. 11, and I want to thank the members of the NDP and the member from New Waterford for giving me the opportunity. It is something a bit uncommon in this House that a member in my position, as an Independent in this House, would have a chance to rise on Opposition Day and speak to a bill. I do really appreciate that opportunity.

As many would know in this House, probably all at this point, I too worked for many years as a paramedic in this province. I was also a member of a local fire department in Windsor for a number of years, as I know the member for Sackville-Cobequid was. I think we probably met initially on a call where he was with the fire service, at that time, doing first response. I am not sure if he remembers that or not, but I sure do - on a cold winter night.

This is a bill worth debating in this House and I would certainly like to see a lot more input from other members as well. I am not sure how that would work today; I know we are always on time, and there are so many speakers and when you're done, you're done, and I guess it moves on. Whether it is this bill that would ever come before this House to be voted on and/or passed, or another bill, it doesn't really matter to me, and I think, in general, it probably doesn't matter to anyone. It's the fact that we are bringing awareness to it. We know the need. We know it exists, not only in first response, in many areas.

First response is key, of course. It is the topic of the bill today, with regard to firefighters and paramedics. There are some who would be covered through workers' compensation or other health plans, perhaps. Where I came from, we had a health plan through Blue Cross as we were administered by Medavie, as most would know. So there were opportunities. But I can tell you, not until very late in life as a paramedic did those

opportunities present themselves. I remember the days of arsenals, ambulances and calls that were done and incidents that you would go to that would affect you, but you would just go on to the next one. There was no recognition of any issues; there were no opportunities to seek any treatment that might exist.

That didn't come along - I think the first time might have been 1997 or 1998, in those days, with EMC coming along early and starting to recognize some of that. But it had been very obvious to those of us who worked in the industry, not only as paramedics, but we saw it in our colleagues out there on the street who were doing emergency response by way of paid firefighters and volunteer firefighters and police officers.

We have also seen the end result in some of those cases - not pleasant, and we see it around the country. Again, as my honourable colleague had mentioned a few minutes ago, as recently as yesterday in New Brunswick.

If anyone thinks that these issues aren't real, they are sadly mistaken. They are real. They affect families. They are sometimes resolved through other means. Those who don't seek treatment through psychological services that might be made available, or their local ministerial, which I'm sure my colleague would have gone through over the years and still likely provides to those that he spoke of, by way of those firefighters, when there are issues.

Widely counted on, the ministerial. Father O'Neill, who was with the Halifax police, who I remember as being one of our first opportunities to actually go through a debrief many years ago. We didn't really know what that was like. We never had that opportunity. So you can look around and you can think about all the people in that sort of industry, that emergency service industry, who are affected every day, some by big things, some by small things, anything that you can imagine affects an individual or a family in a traumatic nature - and it doesn't necessarily have to be a death but oftentimes it's associated with that or multiple deaths in a situation. Not a pleasant thing to talk about, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you.

For emergency first responders like the fire service, who are out there, a lot of times in advance, maybe, of an ambulance, and then the paramedics who arrive as well, and then the police who arrive as well, it can be multiple casualties, young and old. The more you do it, the more difficult it gets. You might think it gets easier; it doesn't get any easier, let me assure you. It does not get any easier. It becomes very difficult to go and do your work. And I'm sure that those who we have seen in media, recently, were hugely affected by something. Not necessarily the same thing that would set you off, for lack of a better term, or would have a devastating effect on you, as an individual, Madam Speaker.

There are many reasons why such dramatic events could occur. And they are not all necessarily things that we might think of. It's very broad. So when we think about a bill or trying to capture this - is it a workers' compensation issue, a Department of Labour issue? Is it something that needs to be done a different way? I'm not sure.

I know that the minister has mentioned publicly now as well, and I think the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid also mentioned in his remarks, the opportunity for a legislative committee to review this very issue of post-traumatic stress disorder. I think that's a great idea, and I certainly look forward to having some input on that if given the opportunity.

As I said, it's not just myself. There's another paramedic who's in this Chamber - a former paramedic - but there are also others. I know that there's a police officer across the way for many years, who would also know a little something about this, and others who have taken part in things like the fire services volunteers. I don't think that there are any paid firefighters in the room, but I can tell you that they too, as volunteers, would've experienced that.

I also was thinking more about this bill last night, knowing that I may have an opportunity to speak to it today, and I thought about other workplace incidents. You think about coal mining disasters in this province and the men and women, perhaps, who went down in the mines and did rescues, and how that must have been. They too would have undergone significant stress and post-traumatic stress. I knew some of those people who had done that in the past, and you have to be affected when you are doing that kind of work. And not only that kind of work - there are all different kinds.

There are issues in a variety of workplaces where traumatic events do happen. We know it. Unfortunately, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education will be able to quote you verbatim the number of workplace incidents where lives are lost, and how unfortunate that is. What does that do to the coal workers, to the family members, and to others who are there?

Those who are responding are certainly playing a huge role, and in early years we played a very huge role, because not only did we respond to these issues, we waited around and looked after family while we were there, and then we would do the removal as well. So you spent a lot of time at a scene, where today you don't do that. I'm very pleased to say that we don't do that as a rule today, unless there's an unusual circumstance. That is the role for other professionals who are doing that, not the paramedics on scene and having to stand around for two and three and four hours waiting to get an "E" form signed. That was a big part of getting paid in the day.

I'm sure my honourable colleague, the member for Sackville-Cobequid would remember being told, make sure you stay around and make sure you get the "A" or the "E" form signed, because that was how we got paid. That was a big deal way back - and I say way back, but when you think about it, it hasn't been that many years ago, in all honesty. Not too many years ago at all.

Anything that we can do to bring awareness to this issue, and I know that the minister is working on it through his talks around the legislative committee, that my colleague, the member for Sackville-Cobequid is bringing this bill forward, and as he said,

perhaps it gets talked out today and gets brought up again. That's fine. We'll talk to it as many times as we get the opportunity in here to seek out something that will help assist any Nova Scotian in this circumstance. I know that sometimes things like this get tied down in the bureaucracy of how to get it all done in one bill or the regulations around that, and the policies. I appreciate that very much, more than you know, but at the same time, that should be the small piece of getting it done. People should have a willingness, and if you understand it and if you've been part of it, or you've witnessed it in a colleague or in your workplace, you will understand clearly.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to be talking about this today. Anyone who has worked in that industry who would tell you they've never been affected by it, I can tell you right now, would be telling you a fib, because everyone is affected by it. You cannot go and do the work that these people are doing, that we're talking about today - you cannot go and do that. As cold-hearted as some might think we may have been in the day when we tried to put it off a certain way, you cannot not be affected by it. You are.

We've seen the effects through drugs, through alcohol, the long-term abuse. Families have fallen apart. We've seen this. This is a real issue for us here in Nova Scotia and around the country. This has already been mentioned, so I really hope - and I could talk in a lot more detail, but I won't, because I don't think I could.

I know that there are other speakers, but I know that this bill should move forward in some way, whether it be amended or used as a stepping stone to get to where we might end up. It's an important piece today, and so with those few words, I will take my place and again thank my friends from the NDP caucus for giving me the opportunity to rise today and speak to this very important bill. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, just a little bit of housekeeping before I get into this. Whenever I take my seat there is not the intention of our caucus to have a vote today so there will be no need to run the clock to assure the government.

I have listened intently to the interveners today and the mover of the bill, particularly the member for Sackville-Cobequid and the member for Hants West who are both former paramedics and first responders, from that perspective. It is also important to note that people have talked today and said, well, there is policy at the board to deal with this, but there is a big difference between policy and legislation, and we do need legislation, and that is why this bill is here today.

We appreciate the olive branch that has been offered by the government and we are certainly willing to accept that and see what form that takes. I think this bill is here for debate today to shine a bit more light on the problem of PTSD right across the spectrum of the workforce. I know that there are people - Nick Antoft is in the gallery today, Madam

Speaker. He is a firefighter and he knows first-hand the perils of PTSD and how that can affect your life and the life of co-workers.

PTSD affects a whole list of employees across the province. I am glad this bill has shined the light on what it does to our first responders. I think of our women and men who work in the fisheries. There is a chap in my constituency; I'm handling a WCB file for him. This was some almost 30 years ago when he was involved in a shipwreck, about this time of year, probably a little closer to November. He is suffering from PTSD because of what transpired. He and his brother were the only survivors in a crew of, I think 11, around that number. He has led a very precarious life, to say the least.

Also a former neighbour of mine who was wounded, shot, during a holdup at a convenience store, not really a job that you think in a small community - and that's where a lot of us come from, small communities - where you are preparing to defend yourself against an armed robber with a gun. You are probably picking up part-time hours, doing decent work and probably you think your biggest problem on that day is maybe some teenagers who may be lippy to you. That may be the biggest thing - or someone complaining that the price of milk is too high.

This woman, in the course of her duty, was shot. Thank goodness it wasn't fatal, but she has not worked a day since. I come from a profession where some people probably wouldn't think it is prevalent - the broadcasting sector - but I can tell you that there are people - because oftentimes you are called out to cover a story - I can list tragic stories, whether it was the McDonald's murders in Sydney River, whether it was the mine disaster that eventually closed No. 26 mine, other instances like that, coming upon car accidents and others that were straight out murder and having to see victims, so there is another industry.

I guess years ago, when people, men particularly, returned from the Second World War, we used to refer to them as being shell-shocked. Everyone was shell-shocked. Right? Or, you know, we kind of snickered behind their back. I think we all have got to have some atonement over that, but we'll be judged by a greater power over that stuff.

Madam Speaker, this issue is growing and how we handle it is extremely important. I'll agree this much with the government - you've got to get it right. Now getting it right and elongating it come at odds from time to time. I want to get it right, but I don't think we should let this go too long. I don't know if this is a good analogy to use, but strike while the iron is hot right now. We understand this.

Another person in the gallery is Joshua Fournier. He's a correctional officer. What they have to put up with today - I mean, again, I come from a time when you simply locked up the bad guys. They are released and you hear - and I'm sure the Minister of Justice gets reports after reports after reports of what goes on in some of the institutions and some of the stuff that is literally thrown and put in the faces of these workers.

Now, they're obviously not guarding these people because they didn't look both ways before they crossed the road. These are some pretty bad cats. But the other side of it is the type of pressure these people are under, and as speakers before me have said, sadly enough, the people - as the country song would go - turn to the bottle and bury these things, and the cost to productivity.

The reason I would like to see this enshrined in legislation as opposed to just a policy is because I've been fortunate enough to do work in my last 16-plus years around Workers' Compensation. Although there are certain groups in this province who malign those employees, there are some very good employees - a vast majority are very good employees.

What we've got to strive to do is to try as best we can to make these workers whole again. There is no cheque that can come in the mail that can make things right. Certainly you need it to survive; I'm not naive. But what we need is an understanding of this situation. We need an understanding that this cannot go on forever, that these people need the help.

We don't need to cover it up. Whether it's PTSD or something else, we, for some reason, in this province - and I shouldn't just say this province - in this country and probably throughout North America, we have an awful hard time grappling with mental illness. I often tell people that if this weekend, if each one of us went home this weekend and we were to go to some kind of fundraiser for someone who had a terrible disease like cancer or whatever, everyone in the community - all of our small communities are very good to get the Legion or the fire hall to put on a fundraiser and help the family. But if we say Frank is mentally ill, people - oh no, you know, gee, it's too bad. But it's not that same reaction.

We've got to get past that. That's why this bill goes a long way, I think, Madam Speaker, to address an issue of mental illness. It's time that we as legislators come together, all 51 of us, to understand that this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that all Nova Scotians should be very supportive of, and that is helping to eradicate mental illness, whether it's from PTSD or whether it's from a variety of other angles.

That's why I stand in my place today in support of Bill No. 11, in support of the member for Sackville-Cobequid, and those that came to the gallery to hear us today and tell us and for us to say that we will not shunt PTSD aside, nor will we shunt mental illness aside. We have to be leaders on this. Thank you.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I know times have changed somewhat. Each member will still be allowed their 13 minutes, and then we'll turn business back over to the Government House Leader or his designee.

Madam Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Motions Other Than Government Motions.

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 51.

Res. No. 51, Liberal Party Leader - Workers' Rights: Commitment - notice given Oct. 3/14 - (Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure for me that I have the right to stand in this House and speak about Resolution No. 51. As we all know, it has been a tough week and a half for those who work in the health care system.

We've talked about many of the particular issues surrounding this, and today I want to focus more on the human cost of the recent harsh decision and treatment from our Liberal Government of the health care workers in this province. What I've seen over the last week and a half and through the media is that the Liberal spin doctors have been focusing on the unions and talking about unions as if they're the big bad unions, with the hope that the general public will not understand the complexities in terms of those who are part of a union are ordinary, average, everyday people within our own communities who are working very hard in the health care system.

They're not big bad union members. Many of the people who spoke at the Law Amendments Committee didn't talk about all the activities in their unions and pound the table about unions. What they were talking about is how the decision of not being able to have a choice in our province was affecting them negatively in the workplace and personally. That is the part that seems to be missing in all this, and that's the part that, unfortunately and sadly, has also seemed to be missing within the media.

There's a responsibility to tell the whole story and not just focus on the union aspect of this story. It's true, the unions did come together as one and had the opportunity - I know that individuals at the Law Amendments Committee stated how hard they worked all over the summer because they were asked to do so, and I don't think the Minister of Health and Wellness expected they would come together as a unit and provide a solid solution to the issue at hand with respect to amalgamation and amalgamating unions. So they did have something that was substantial to offer, and it was very baffling to them and many that our

government would not accept that - at least for some conversation - and go down that path, instead of the path of chaos.

But as I said, I'm going to put aside the union discussion. I want to discuss the human cost today. We heard from many people, and we have to also realize that these individuals did not take their time to protest at their House - it's not our House, it's their House, the people of Nova Scotia - to try to get their voices heard about how this does affect them. That's the part that I have to tell you I am very concerned about, and I have found this extremely disturbing, because of the fact that it hasn't come down to the discussion of the human costs that are involved here.

I know myself, a user of the health care system, I don't think there is anybody in our province who doesn't have to use the health care system. We do from the time we are born until the time we pass away. When we use the system and have it available to us - which is absolutely incredible and amazing that we live in a country that allows us to have public health care - what that means is something that we can stand very proud and be proud about.

It is very difficult to understand why that compassion hasn't been seen in terms of those who work in the health care system. They go to work each and every day with commitment and dedication. It must be awfully difficult for them to hear people from the government side standing up and saying how much they appreciate their work and their dedication but yet they are not seeing the support there at the support level that they have expressed to the government that they need.

There were health care workers who were talking in Law Amendments Committee about the fact that they can't get vacation time at all, and who shouldn't deserve it, especially in that type of profession? We're always telling people and advising people to look after themselves and then we are not providing that same support for those who look after the very ill in our province. I find that really baffling. I don't understand where the compassion has gone with respect to our health care workers in the province.

These same individuals talked about stories, Madam Speaker, about how they would go to work and there wouldn't be a replacement for them, so they would have to work a double shift. That might have been after a double shift when they have a family at home. We know what it is like, being members of the Legislature, being away from our family members and dedicating ourselves to our work but we don't know it nearly as much, on a regular basis, as those health care workers experience. For us, when we're in the House, it's a shorter period of time. They do it each and every day. A lot of them are working way over what the standard should be for the amount of hours they put in.

I guess there were many examples given and people were very emotional. They wouldn't go to Law Amendments Committee and express themselves in that nature if it wasn't something they really believed in. It's very difficult for people who are not public speakers to come forward, and many of them said that. They said, this is the first time I've

ever spoken in public, and that takes a lot of effort. So, Madam Speaker, it meant a great deal to them. That's the part that I really - you know we're all human beings here. We may have different philosophies in terms of the political side, but I'm sure we don't have different philosophies when it comes to how we appreciate health care workers and what they mean to us.

We know there is a way to be able to reduce health care costs without creating chaos. We did that as a government. We were able to take the administrative costs in health care from above average in Canada to below average. That does take time but we succeeded in that, and there was no chaos in the system over that because there was a great deal of respect that was taking place. That's the road we should be on; we should be on the path of going towards sustainability in the health care system, not attacking those who actually work in the health care system, those who are the foundation of the health care system.

I know we are all going to experience, if we haven't already, a time in our life when someone, a loved one, if not ourselves, is very ill and we will be encapsulated in that world. Our world will become a part of the health care system for that time in our life. If you have already experienced it, you've seen how dedicated the health care workers are and how impressive they are and what they do too, Madam Speaker, is that they're like the foundation that supports the rest of the House in terms of, with good and committed health care workers that are happy, that there is good morale in their workplace.

They're the ones who are supporting our specialists, they're the ones who are supporting our doctors, and they're the ones who are going into seniors' homes and providing them with gentle, loving health care. They're the ones who are sitting by the bedside of a senior who is in palliative care, or a young person in palliative care, and we have all experienced that.

I have to say that I really find it quite upsetting, the fact that we're not respecting them. We can't stand in this House and say that we're respecting them when we aren't listening to them, because what goes with respect is listening and what goes with listening is to turn around and show action to those people who have expressed a concern, and to show that you will make things different in order to support them.

That's that part in all this, and the political part aside, that I find very difficult to deal with as a Nova Scotian, and I know a lot of the health care workers are finding it the same way. They are scratching their heads and just cannot understand why they have been the chosen ones to bear the brunt of the anger of a government that is not supportive of unions. I think what has been forgotten here is those very people - and as much as members of the government want to put in their mind to comfort themselves that these are big bad unions, well they're not big bad unions, it's all about people, they're people, that's the part we cannot forget and that's the part that I would like to see the media do some stories on the health care workers and what effect it has on them, that they feel they do not have the right of choice.

One of the points that they made many times over was the fact that it was the choice of what their union offers them. I know that the Premier brings up, over and over again, that their earned benefits are not going to be taken away from them, and we know that it's an earned benefit, Madam Speaker, it's if you work in a place for 20 years you'll still have that seniority, but what they're talking about is the benefit of that particular union.

In wrapping up, Madam Speaker, I really wanted to have the opportunity to just express the need to come back to the human part of this whole story, because that's what we're here for. We're here to represent people, and as I said again, people who are humans, who have feelings and emotions and go to work to help others, they're the ones we really, really should be supporting instead of attacking them and disseminating what they have as a workplace. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to address Resolution No. 51 and the ongoing concerns that have been put forward by the members across the aisle here. I have a few notes so bear with me, but I want to be clear with the member for Chester-St. Margaret's - we have never referred to unions as big or bad, this is the type of misinformation that sends people into a panic. Words do hurt and this may be political theatre to some, but for most people this is real life. (Applause)

I wanted to say to all the mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, sisters, and brothers of Nova Scotia, we have not forgotten the labour movement or the struggles and the fight. Some of us have stood side by side with you, so let me say this loud and clear - we will not, and I repeat, for the Party and the members across from us - we will not take away our valued health care workers' hard-earned benefits, wages, or seniority. This bill is about streamlining a fractured structure within our health care system and our labour structure. This is about the long-term sustainability of our health care system: a health care system that does not favour male over female, a system that does not favour the rich over the poor. It is a system that is uniquely Canadian, and one that we are all proud of, and we are proud of every single individual who contributes to our beautiful health care system.

This is about making sure that our health care system is sustainable for our children and our children's children. So let me clear up a few things. A mediator, which the unions have the opportunity to choose - a mediator, not the government - along with the unions, they will decide what classes of employees will be in each of the four bargaining units. I would also like to remind the members opposite here that it was with conciliation with the unions that these four units were decided.

In closing, I hope that I've cleared up some of the misinformation that is out there and that now the well-informed members opposite can go back to their constituents and confidently say that Resolution 51 is not reflective of the legislation, and that this

government, their government, will continue to protect and respect the health care system and all its workers. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand for a few moments and to speak to this bill as well.

I was caught a little off guard, you know - we're all given time to debate these bills, and we take our jobs very seriously and use the time that's allotted to us during this Opposition Day, so I'm kind of wondering why the Liberal Party doesn't want to speak to either one of those. It was a very short response on the first bill, and it was a very short response on the second bill. I know the member for Halifax Atlantic. He was making a really good point there, and I thought he would go on a little longer, but unfortunately, he didn't.

I know he has been speaking on it for a week, but it's not so much. It's not political theatre at all. I mean, this isn't my resolution, but I want to take my opportunity to speak to it, as we all should take that opportunity in this House of Assembly.

I find it interesting that today is the anniversary of the 2013 election, and I want to congratulate everybody in this room, as we did before, for a one-year anniversary. Congratulations to everybody who's here.

What we learn here over time, as we get to know one another - because, you know, there's a lot of people here that I'd never met before. There are some, of course, that I've worked with before, and I'm enjoying that mix of people as we understand their lives, where they're from - especially the member for Fairview-Clayton Park. I don't know, at some point someone's going to ask a question about that one. We all have differing views in some cases, and we have the same views in others, and how this House works, in a lot of cases, there can be compromise in what is the final product. I think what the member for Chester-St. Margaret's brought forward is that there didn't seem to be any compromise with the bill that was brought forward in this House.

We tried to look at this bill in a very different light. There were two very different components to this bill, as it was brought forward. There was of course the amalgamation piece, which is the one that really looks at our health care system, looks at a way to make it more efficient because we do have a very complicated system.

We ran on pretty much the same platform that you guys did when it came to the amalgamation of those health boards, to get rid of - not get rid of - but at least to minimize the number of vice presidents and CEOs and try to find some savings within that group.

What caught us off guard, and I think what caught a lot off guard, was the strong hand of the union piece. It was just the way it was put in that it seemed like the unions were

there working with government, and they said that on a number of occasions, whether it was the Nurses' Union or whether it was NSGEU, they have said that they have been working on bargaining units and trying to find a middle ground between what they thought the government wanted and where they figured they could get their membership to go.

Far be it from me to talk on behalf of unions, but I think, reasonably in the end, had there been some kind of compromise, the loudness of last week could have been minimized. The long-lasting effect of any labour unrest, not only is impacted in that week that there is a protest here at the Legislature, but in a longer term, as people talk about it, as people mull it over, as people debate it.

I don't believe for a minute that as people are looking at which union they are in or which one they are not in, they will make a decision on whether they are staying in the province or not, but I do understand the unrest that it does create. As it rolled down, we heard hundreds of people come before Law Amendments Committee and echo the same thing - you know, I am just discouraged that we didn't get listened to. I think that is our number one job here, as MLAs and legislators, to listen to the constituents we represent and those people who came and presented are all of our constituents, whether they came from Yarmouth or they came from Halifax Atlantic or whether they came from Dartmouth South, they are all the same folks that we meet with on a daily basis in our constituency.

The problem with how it continued on, it's the kind of politics, and I've been here long enough now, I've seen the different ways that different Parties and different people look at policies and how bills should be run but I think in being so hard-handed and so - I wouldn't say ramming a bill through, but really shortening the process of start and finish, it throws cynicism upon us again, that cast of cynicism towards politicians and politics. It's that they really don't care what we thought about; they really didn't care what we said because they went and did exactly what we told them not to do.

We are supposed to be people who listen to our constituents and I think that is what I try to do in my time here, what I will continue to do into the future. All I can say is that I hope that these good MLAs in this province - we have a really great set of MLAs sitting on all three sides of this House - that I think we should have stepped that one up just a little bit more. Maybe there should have been a different way of doing it and I hope that in the future we will be able to find a better way to move some of these bills forward in a more comprehensive manner, rather than just rushing the clock, talking it out, and not listening to anybody. That's the kind of thing that I want to see here.

Going to the consolidation of district health authorities for just a few moments, what got lost in this discussion, because there was so much debate on the labour side, was the issue of local control, or at least local input in our district health authorities. I was able to live through a couple of different formats in my 16 years here, because I worked as an executive assistant for the first few years of the Hamm Government, and that was the change of five regions into nine districts.

The thing that we continued to hear in Yarmouth, for the most part, is that they couldn't get a decision made in Yarmouth that would affect Yarmouth. What would end up happening is that they would have to call Kentville for a decision about whatever or call Bridgewater for a decision about whatever and never get the information they need. So the local doctors and managers who were in the hospital never could seem to get beyond that distance.

What we asked about I think a couple of times during that debate is exactly how that connection is going to continue to happen with the community. We hear the community health boards will have a piece to say within it. I always wonder when a manager is going to want something in Yarmouth, knowing that it's either the replacement of a piece of equipment, whether it's a piece of upgrade to the building, whether it's further services in whatever it is, that they're going to be able, in a timely fashion, to get the service that is required. That's the kind of question that we didn't get answered during this debate, because there was so much going on on the labour front.

The minister has assured us that over the next number of months they're going to be working on that process, working on that chart of who is responsible for what, where the things are going to happen. But we're voting on a bill that puts some of these things into motion and there are no real answers to exactly what it's going to be.

That makes it very difficult for us. We said the way rural Nova Scotia is treated is different than the way that metro should be treated because of the difference of those systems. In Guysborough the health needs and the health services are different than those here in metro Halifax. We have a very special system here - we have a tertiary system that is the catchall for all the things they can't deal with in the rural areas; we have a teaching hospital; and we have the children's hospital. We have those kinds of things that the sickest of the sick end up coming here.

There's no appreciation to what happens in the rural areas, which is what one of our suggestions originally was - why isn't there a third DHA? I understand you are adding a little bit of management on there, but we still think that would have been a reasonable thing to do, and have that head office somewhere in rural Nova Scotia, whether it be Truro - I really don't care where it would have been located as long as it wasn't here, so close to the ivory tower that is the Department of Health and Wellness.

Madam Speaker, again I will just sort of sum up, that the unions themselves have gone away and are working to come up with that mediator. I know with the minister that it probably would have been preferable to them that there might have been some kind of vote or some kind of democratic system adhered to within it. I think that today they are working as one as best they can in order to meet the deadlines and the timelines that are going to be required. All we can say to the government is that we will be watching it closely and we're hoping to hear positive information. If we hear negative information, of course we'll be asking a question on it during Question Period and bringing it to the attention of the minister when that time comes.

Ultimately there are still a lot of building blocks that need to be put in place for that bill, and I do worry about how labour relations are going to continue in this province when such a heavy-handed way of running a bill through the House was put forward.

With those short comments, I thank you for the opportunity to stand and speak today. Merci beaucoup.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, I'm going to rise to my feet today to speak to Resolution No. 51. There are several parts to the resolution which my colleague introduced to the House the other day:

“Whereas the Leader of the Liberal Party used paid advertisements during the 2013 election campaign to clarify his position about labour relations in the Province of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas in that paid advertisement it stated ‘we respect and will continue to respect your hard-earned rights and collective agreements;’”

First of all, I'd like to address that, Madam Speaker. I know that since this bill has been introduced, members on the other side of the House have spoken and said that, in fact, he was telling the truth when he said this. But we were all here and experienced all of the workers that showed up - up to 700 of them at one point in time - to use their democratic right to speak out and say that they are concerned about this bill and that this bill, they feel, takes away those hard-earned rights. They're concerned that their future will be changed now. They're afraid; they feel that this government is not listening to them. As we've said over and over and over again, many of them - 80 per cent of that workforce - are women.

As we know, women do not make as much as men overall in the first place, so for them to feel that their rights are now being dictated to them about what union they have to belong to, they feel that their right to association, which is a human right, is being challenged. They will take it to the courts, and we will find out what the courts have to say in the long term.

My concern is about these workers, Madam Speaker. I've heard from so many of them in my riding who are nurses and continuing care workers, and a lot of them do not make a whole lot of money, much to the surprise of many people. A lot of the younger ones are telling me they actually have to have two or three jobs just to be able to get by. A lot of them have debts that they're paying down, and as we've just found out from the newest research that's just come out about young people in Nova Scotia, they come out of university with some of the highest debt of any students in Canada.

One young woman told me she had about \$20,000 worth of debt, and she has just started work. She managed to get about \$2,500 from our Graduate Retention Rebate program, and then it was cut. So now she's looking at trying to pay down that debt and she won't be able to have the \$15,000 that was going to help her pay it down quickly. She's now thinking about moving out West - and that seems to be a refrain that we're hearing over and over and over again.

Also, many of the older nurses are going to be taking early retirement. They say they've already worked and given their blood to this province - literally in some cases - and for the people of this province, and they feel, they just feel disappointed and really disgusted by these actions, and many of them are saying "Savage days are here again." Like the song - "Savage days are here again."

So some of them are telling me that they're not going to let this lie. They are going to be back to the Legislature. They are going to be telling their families and their fellow workers, and their children what is going on, and I have a feeling that we haven't seen the end of this yet.

For the fact that this is the one-year anniversary of this government coming into power, I would say that it's a bittersweet day. I do want to congratulate every member in the House for getting their seat as MLAs. We know it's an honour and I know that people go into this, not lightly. They go into it for many different reasons, but hopefully the main reason is they want to help people. They want to make this province a better place. And they care about the human beings that make up and live in the Province of Nova Scotia, many of whom are struggling, many of whom were promised when we were kids that life would get better.

Madam Speaker, when I was a child, when I was a teenager in the 1970s, people always said, oh, by the time we're older it's going to be so much easier. We're going to have all these machines doing everything for us. There'd be more leisure time. We'll be looked after, and we're all going to be making more money.

Well, I have to say that the opposite has, in fact, happened. More people are doing more jobs for less pay, and more people are struggling today and slipping, watching their life savings disappear in financial crashes. They are watching their earnings, dollars, get smaller and smaller. And women, as they get older, let's face it, it is tough to find a job. I mean, it was tough enough as an actor, but imagine a lot of these women who have been out there pounding the pavement, looking at Career Beacon, trying to find jobs, and it's not easy.

One of the workers in my office, actually my constituency assistant, had been looking for a job for 14 months before she got the job as my constituency assistant. She is a couple of years older than I am and she said it is very debilitating. Many of the nurses who are coming in and talking to us, and the home care workers and the long-term care workers, say that they don't make as much money, sometimes, as the people who are collecting

garbage in their areas - and that is a very worthwhile job too - but the thing is, here are these people giving care to our seniors, to our sick, and yet they feel like they are being treated like second-class citizens.

Many of the nurses also told me that when they were in nursing training they were told that they were part of the team; they were all on an equal footing. Many of them have said in their wide experience that they have found that is not the case. They feel like they are the hired hands and that they need to know that a government believes in what they are doing.

I was not around during the Savage years, myself, but I've heard lots about it. My mother was a teacher at that time and she was one of the teachers who came and walked around the Legislature and I think they even stormed the Legislature at one point and took over. Perhaps that is why the police presence was beefed up around the Legislature this last time; perhaps they were expecting the workers to come in and storm the Legislature.

Nurses are very kind and compassionate people and to have all those almost SWAT teams around and 12, 13, 14 police poised to make sure the Premier got through these angry, dangerous nurses seemed a little odd to me, especially since the worst they really did was to call out, "shame", and hold up their placards and call out words behind their megaphones outside. I'm not particularly concerned about the fact that the Premier felt he needed to have that much of a police presence here, but the nurses noticed and the nurses have written to me saying they don't understand why their government is afraid of them.

I think that a good government shows they are listening to the people, that if there is so much concern from a particular sector, they need to listen to them. I agree that every government should do the same thing. Sometimes governments will promise one thing and then they will do another thing. I have to say, that's what this boils down to - respecting and continuing to respect your hard-earned rights and collective agreements is not what is going on right now.

The rest of this resolution says: "Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House ask the Leader of the Liberal Party to follow through on his commitment to respect Nova Scotia's health care workers, their right to strike, and their hard-earned collective agreements."

Well, their right to strike has already been taken away and now their hard-earned collective agreements are in question and the four union leaders actually got together and came up with a solution, a "made in Nova Scotia" solution, and they offered that to this government and it was denied. I still, to this day, don't really understand why they were denied. I think it was a very incredibly smart solution and it would have paved the way for smooth sailing for labour relations for this government for the rest of their tenure. But they chose to pick a fight instead.

I know that it's about ideology. Some Parties believe in workers' rights and in collective agreements and we support unions representing workers' rights and fighting for the workers. Others don't care so much about those things and that's pretty clear from the decision and who voted yes and who voted no for this latest bill, Bill No. 1. Sometimes I wonder if it's a personal thing that people have against unions. I know, for instance, that the Premier was on Steve Murphy the other night and when he was asked, does he have any experience with unions he said no. Well, of course not, he was a private business operator and he was not a unionized workforce and he's never been in a union, whereas some people on the other side have been in unions and they should understand the importance of a union and how that union will fight for their rights and for them to have a better life than if they weren't in a union.

I, too, am a member of a union, as I've said. In fact, I'm a member of four unions and I'm a very proud union member. I still pay my dues, Madam Speaker, because I believe in what they are doing on behalf of workers everywhere.

Then I have to say that the member for Cape Breton-Richmond, the minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, one time when we were sitting here while we were in government, he was speaking about his days as a young boy and his father apparently belonged to some union, I can't remember which one, and he mentioned that for some reason he felt that the union let his father down when he was a kid. I can't remember exactly what the case was but he said something happened and he felt that his father's union let him down and was not there for him. He said he has never forgotten that.

I wonder, Madam Speaker, if that is partly to do with why this bill and these anti-union, anti-worker bills are being rammed so quickly through this House. So on a personal note, again I wish everybody congratulations on their one-year anniversary . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It is unparliamentary and improper to impute motives for why people do things so I would ask that you retract that statement.

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

MS. ZANN: Madam Speaker, I retract that statement. As I was saying, I would like to wish everybody congratulations again for their one year in this House of Assembly and I would certainly hope that we all work very hard for our people in our communities and for the working people of this province, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker - short speech and the great, good-looking member for Glace Bay - if we had a decent health care system I'd get rid of my cataracts. That concludes our business for the day and I hand it over to the honourable House Leader for business tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I move that the House now rise to sit again tomorrow between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. At that time we will call Government Business, Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 6, 18, 22 and, if time permits, Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and Government Motions.

I move that the House do now rise, to sit again tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to sit again tomorrow at 2:00 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 rose at 5:29 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)

RESOLUTION NO. 116

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas on September 23rd the Pictou County Bar held a retirement dinner for Associate Chief Judge James Wilson of the Nova Scotia Family Court; and

Whereas Associate Chief Judge Wilson was called to the bar in 1972, appointed a judge in the Family Court and Provincial Court in 1988 and 1898 respectively, before being appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Family Court in 2011; and

Whereas Associate Chief Judge Wilson has been a fixture in Pictou County legal life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Associate Chief Judge Wilson on his retirement and acknowledge the significant contribution he has made in the areas of family and youth criminal justice in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 117

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas on September 18th the Department of Justice paid special recognition to 57 staff for their 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of commitment to the Government of Nova Scotia during a Long Service Awards luncheon; and

Whereas these civil servants serve Nova Scotians every day on the frontlines, answering calls, responding to emails, working with our citizens, and delivering Nova Scotians the services they need; and

Whereas their work is not always easy but it is essential and it helps Nova Scotians feel safe and supported in their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize their hard work and commitment and congratulate each and every one of them on their wonderful achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 118

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Ms. Irene Swindells is the Administrator of Melville Heights Retirement Residence and a tireless volunteer, leader, and advocate for our community; and

Whereas Ms. Swindells' remarkable skills have brought people from all walks of life together to build and improve the community as a whole; and

Whereas Irene Swindells was presented the 2014 Jason Doherty Memorial Business Person of the Year award at the Spryfield and District Business Commission Annual General Meeting on June 5, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Irene Swindells on receiving the 2014 Jason Doherty Memorial Business Person of the Year award and wish her continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 119

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Beatrice Duncan celebrated her 100th birthday on May 4, 2014; and

Whereas a celebration in her honour was held at the St. James Anglican Church on Joseph Howe Drive; and

Whereas Beatrice was surrounded by family and friends who took part in celebrating her extraordinary milestone;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish Beatrice Duncan a happy 100th birthday and wish her continued good health and happiness in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 120

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Mel and Thelma Boutilier celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on August 16, 2014; and

Whereas a beautiful celebration was held in their home with all of their close friends and family by their side; and

Whereas Mel and Thelma are models of love, generosity, and community support in Halifax Armdale and the rest of the Halifax Regional Municipality;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mel and Thelma Boutilier on celebrating their 60th Wedding Anniversary and wish them many more years of love, happiness, and joy together.

RESOLUTION NO. 121

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas His Holiness Pope Tawadros II was enthroned as the 118th Pope of Alexandria on November 19, 2012, at the Cathedral of St. Reweiss in Abbassiya, Cairo; and

Whereas on Tuesday, September 24, 2014, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II made his pastoral visit to Saint Mena Coptic Orthodox Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas I was delighted to have joined in the consecration of the Holy Altar and the Divine Liturgy with all members of the community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Saint Mena Coptic Orthodox Church, Rev. Father Daniel Rizg, and the board of Deacons on the occasion of the visit of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 122

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the 1st Armdale Scouting has been active in the Armdale area since the 1930s, and for the past 17 years in their latest incarnation; and

Whereas the 1st Armdale Scouting kicked off their scouting year by participating in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup on September 20, 2014, at Horseshoe Island Park, Halifax; and

Whereas I was delighted to have participated with the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers in the cleanup;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate all members of the 1st Armdale Scouting and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 123

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas my constituents Joel and Cathy Jacobson were the recipients of the 2014 Family Values Award at a ceremony held in Halifax on May 24, 2014; and

Whereas Joel and Cathy are well known for their commitment to the community and the wonderful work they do to help preserve family values and morals; and

Whereas the Family Values Award originated in 1991 and recognizes outstanding contributions and efforts to defend family values and advance standards that support the family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Joel and Cathy Jacobson on receiving the 2014 Family Values Award and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 124

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas IPOANS recognizes members who have a strong community presence and have established themselves as leaders within their individual communities; and

Whereas this year's IPOANS Pillars of the Community Award was presented to Cousins Realty Group at a ceremony held on May 22, 2014; and

Whereas the award was graciously received by brothers John, George, William, and Peter Kanellakos;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Cousins Realty Group and John, George, William, and Peter Kanellakos and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 125

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Elizabeth Sutherland School hosted their Spring fair on 2014; and

Whereas students, parents, teachers, and community supporters came out to enjoy some exciting kids' games; and

Whereas multiple students, parents, and staff volunteered their time to make this wonderful event happen;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish Elizabeth Sutherland School many more Spring fairs in the years to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 126

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia celebrated their 30 year Anniversary of multifest on June 20, 2014; and

Whereas I was the original president of the multicultural youth at the first multifest, held in June 1985; and

Whereas the Multicultural Association and all the volunteers have continued to promote and preserve the diverse cultures and nationalities here in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia many more years of success.

RESOLUTION NO. 127

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Springvale Elementary School hosted their Spring fair on May 3, 2014;
and

Whereas students, parents, teachers, and community supporters came out to participate in their silent auction, with lots of fun and exciting games; and

Whereas Principal John Dobrowski volunteered to be dunked into water in the dunk tank, along with other staff;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish Springvale Elementary School many more Spring fairs in the future.