



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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

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

Second Session

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
Mr. L. Hines	1080
Mr. T. Houston.....	1081
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:	
Com. Serv. - Eradication of Poverty Strategy, Hon. J. Bernard	1082
Health & Wellness - Brain Injury Strategy, Hon. L. Glavine.....	1086
Status of Women - Marking Persons Day, Hon. J. Bernard	1090
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 292, Afghanistan: Fallen (N.S./Cdn.) - Honour, The Premier.....	1094
Vote - Affirmative.....	1095
Res. 293, Justice: Peace Officers - Importance Recognize, Hon. L. Diab (by Hon. M. Furey).....	1096
Vote - Affirmative.....	1096

Res. 294, Justice: Auxiliary Constables - Work Recognize, Hon. L. Diab	1097
Vote - Affirmative.....	1097
Res. 295, Natl. Teen Driver Safety Wk. (10/19/14): Safe Driving - Encourage, Hon. G. MacLellan	1098
Vote - Affirmative.....	1098
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 40, Oak Island Treasure Act and Special Places Protection Act, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1099
No. 41, Lyme Disease Strategy Act, Mr. T. Houston.....	1099
No. 42, Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Hon. M. MacDonald	1099
No. 43, Voluntary Blood Donations Act, Hon. David Wilson	1099
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 296, Credit Unions: Work - Recognize, Hon. J. Baillie	1099
Vote - Affirmative.....	1100
Res. 297, Intl. Day for Eradication of Poverty (10/17/14) - Recognize, Hon. M. MacDonald	1100
Vote - Affirmative.....	1100
Res. 298, Women: Contributions - Recognize, Ms. K. MacFarlane	1100
Vote - Affirmative.....	1101
Res. 299, Steeves, Shyla: Howard Dill Mem. Walk - Organizing Commend, Mr. C. Porter.....	1101
Vote - Affirmative.....	1102
Res. 300, Health & Wellness - Lyme Disease: Prov. Approach - Adopt, Mr. T. Houston	1102
Vote - Affirmative.....	1102
Res. 301, Nat. Res.: Firewood Suppliers - Min. Meet, Hon. S. Belliveau	1103
Res. 302, Poverty: Eradication - Commitment Show, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1103
Vote - Affirmative.....	1104
Res. 303, Barker, Eric & Linda/Highland Ford: Fundraising - Thank, Mr. T. Houston.....	1104
Vote - Affirmative.....	1105
Res. 304, Tearmann Soc.: Work - Thank, Ms. K. MacFarlane	1105
Vote - Affirmative.....	1105

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:

No. 121, Prem. - <i>Nova Star</i> : Funding - Plan Produce, Hon. J. Baillie	1106
No. 122, Prem. - Ebola: Gov't. Response - Satisfaction Confirm, Hon. David Wilson	1108
No. 123, Prem. - <i>Nova Star</i> : Executives - Salaries Table, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1109
No. 124, Com. Serv.: Income Assistance Rates - Freeze Explain, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1111
No. 125, Prem. - Hydraulic Fracturing: Ban - Details, Hon. J. Baillie	1112
No. 126, Nat. Res. - Oak Island: Archaeologist - Presence Ensure, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1114
No. 127, Health & Wellness - Lyme Disease: N.S. Testing - Action, Mr. T. Houston.....	1116
No. 128, Agric.: Homegrown Success - Update, Ms. L. Zann.....	1117
No. 129, Energy: Nat. Gas Services - Expansion, Mr. J. Lohr	1119
No. 130, Environ. - Trenton Power Plant: Fly Ash - Address, Hon. P. Dunn.....	1120
No. 131, Environ. - Boat Hbr.: Cleanup - Update, Mr. T. Houston.....	1122
No. 132, Nat. Res.: Shubenacadie River - Salt Dumping, Ms. L. Zann.....	1123

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:

ADDRESS IN REPLY:

Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1125
-----------------------	------

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 6, Petroleum Resources Act	
Mr. J. Lohr	1131
Hon. P. Dunn.....	1136
Ms. K. MacFarlane	1140
Mr. L. Harrison	1143
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1145
Adjourned debate	1148

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Mon., Oct. 20 th at 7:00 p.m.....	1149
---	------



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege today. In accordance with Rule 29(2), I had given you notice of my intention to rise on this question of privilege earlier today.

Yesterday, during Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers, the member for Halifax Needham quoted from a document which she indicated was obtained through a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy application. The quote was as follows: “This might suggest that GTC led to an improvement of about 55 persons per year while GRR led to an improvement of about 542 persons per year NOT leaving the province.”

This single sentence within the eight-page document was taken out of context by the member for Halifax Needham and was presented without reference to the entire body of evidence contained within. Indeed, it was used by the member in a way which is contrary to the facts, which are clearly outlined in this document.

The statements which immediately follow the one quoted by the member should help to give context: “However, looking at Newfoundland and Labrador (which has no such credit/retention in place), they experienced an even bigger drop in out-migration (-1,991) over that time. New Brunswick, whose credit was in place for a longer period, saw a similar drop (-603) in out-migration. The improvement in out-migration was likely a coincidence with the introduction of the GRR, driven by a recession in Alberta rather than by any tax credits.”

In fact, the analysis contained within the document directly contradicts the claims which the member made; specifically the claim that the departmental analysis concluded the Graduate Retention Rebate was successful in retaining graduates.

Further statements contained within, again, help to illustrate this: “Looking at patterns of movement among graduates claiming graduate credits, there is an insignificant difference in the proportion of graduates moving compared to the overall population.”

Another quote, Mr. Speaker: “. . . there has been very little change in student and graduate migration patterns across three recent periods in Nova Scotia with increasingly generous graduate retention policies. From 2003-2005 Nova Scotia had no graduate retention incentive, from 2006-2008 the Graduate Tax Credit was available, and from 2009 onwards the Graduate Retention Rebate has been available.”

Finally, and most importantly, the concluding statement in its complete and unedited form reads as follows: “These figures clearly show that there was no improvement in retention during the Graduate Tax Credit period (2006-2008). The figures suggest that there has actually been a decline in graduate retention rates during the Graduate Retention Rebate period (2009 onwards); however this decline is likely the result of incomplete tax data . . .” - which the member mentioned - “. . . incomplete tax data for 2011 and 2012. Nevertheless, the preliminary results for the GRR period do not suggest any improvement in retention rates resulting from the increased incentive.”

Therefore, there can be no question that the manner in which the member presented the material is misleading and stands in direct contrast to the actual substance and information presented in this document.

In its 1999 report, the United Kingdom Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege delineated a number of categories of conduct which, while not exhaustive, would constitute contempt of Parliament. This included: “deliberately attempting to mislead the House or a committee (by way of statement, evidence, or petition.” That comes from the U.K. Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege, First Report, 1999.

As recorded in O’Brien and Bosc, “. . . the following elements have to be established when it is alleged that a Member is in contempt for deliberately misleading the House: one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be

established that the Member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the Member intended to mislead the House.” That comes from O’Brien and Bosc, chapter 3, footnote 128.

One, on the first requirement, as shown above, there can be no question that the statements made by the member for Halifax Needham were indeed misleading. On the second, the member for Halifax Needham had access to the complete analysis at the time that she made these statements. And three, finally, the member used this information within her question in such a way as to mislead the House of Assembly.

The deliberate misrepresentation of information damages our ability to do our jobs correctly and properly. The Department of Finance and Treasury Board provided analysis and the member made it appear that the analysis was concluding something that it did not, and she did so deliberately.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the evidence I have presented supports a case of deliberately misleading the House. As such, I would ask that you put the question to the House.

Beauchesne states: “A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter and should be taken seriously by the House.” That comes from Beauchesne, Page 12. On the face of it, this matter would constitute a contempt of the House of Assembly.

With the above explanation, if you, Mr. Speaker, find that I have raised a *prima facie* question of privilege, I shall move the following motion:

Be it resolved that the statements made by the member for Halifax Needham during Question Period on October 15, 2014, were misleading, that the member shall apologize to the House of Assembly and that her statements be stricken from the record.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank the minister for that point of privilege. I will take that under advisement and come back with a ruling at my earliest convenience.

The honourable Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to respond to the allegations, the serious allegations, that have been brought to this House of Assembly by the honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to state uncategorically that there was no intention at any time on my part to mislead this House. I could just as easily have used the documents I tabled yesterday to make a similar allegation if I had chosen to do so towards the Minister

of Finance and Treasury Board. That document clearly indicated that during a specific period of time, from 2009 until 2011, on an annual basis over 500 young graduates were retained in the Province of Nova Scotia. That would indicate that the Graduate Retention Rebate in fact saw, during the time it was implemented, an increase in 1,600 graduates being retained in the province. A number and a point that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board never once made reference to at any time when that government took \$50 million out of the pockets of young graduates in the province.

In addition to that, the document clearly stated that the tax information for the Province of Nova Scotia - not for Newfoundland and Labrador, not for any other province, but the province in which the Graduate Retention Rebate was being cut, this province - that that information was incomplete.

I don't know what kind of world the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board lives in with respect to making decisions, but in my world we would like to have complete information that would lead you to the decisions that you make when you make them.

I would conclude by saying, once again, there certainly was no intention on my part to mislead the House, and I await your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause, which provides the Department of Community Services Sheet Harbour office is slated to close, therefore the undersigned oppose the decision made by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services to close the Sheet Harbour office.

This petition contains 271 names, to which I have affixed my name.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I request that the honourable member read that petition again? I couldn't hear. Sorry.

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, the operative clause is: "The Department of Community Services Sheet Harbour office is slated to close. . . Therefore, I oppose the decision made by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services to close the Sheet Harbour office."

This petition contains 271 signatures, to which I have affixed my name.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition doesn't contain any ask of government.

MR. HINES: Okay, could I have another shot at it, Mr. Speaker?

“The Department of Community Services, Sheet Harbour office is slated to close. Although the services are planned to be centralized out of the Cole Harbour office, Sheet Harbour will no longer have a visible and consistent location in our area. As members of the area we recognize the hardships this will create as a result of losing another essential service. The closure will significantly impact not only service users and create additional challenges for them but will also affect the community as a whole.

Therefore, I oppose the decision made by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services to close the Sheet Harbour office.”

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is denied. It does not contain an ask.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you. Seated in the west gallery we have Chelsea Livingston and her family. Chelsea is a young lady who has had her life impacted by Lyme disease. In the Speaker’s Gallery we have Brenda Sterling-Goodwin, who is a well-known Lyme disease advocate. I ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a petition. The operative clause reads:

“Whereas blacklegged ticks are an issue in Nova Scotia and many Nova Scotia’s [sic] are suffering from Lyme disease;

Whereas the Government has a responsibility to ensure that health professionals are properly equipped with the resources they need to quickly and accurately diagnose Lyme disease;

Whereas All Nova Scotians deserve to know that if they are bitten by a tick and go to a doctor or emergency room they will receive an appropriate standard of diagnosis and care no matter how old or how young they are or where they live in the Province;

Therefore be it resolved that the undersigned urge the Legislature to pass Tim Houston's Bill 46 - a Lyme Disease Strategy Act."

This contains 1,702 signatures, and I have affixed my name to it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm just going to take that petition under advisement while we review the operative clause, and I'll get back to you.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a few moments today to talk about this government's work to reduce poverty in Nova Scotia as we mark International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in Nova Scotia tomorrow. We all share the goal of creating strong and resilient communities and providing a higher quality of life to all Nova Scotians. About 64,000, or 7 per cent of the population, live in poverty, according to the most recent statistics. That's far too many people struggling to feed their families and provide shelter for themselves and their loved ones. About 13,000 of these are children. This is not acceptable in a province like Nova Scotia. We must do better.

Mr. Speaker, I have lived the experience myself, both personally and professionally, so I understand the need to take this issue on head-on. It has been said many times, but it is true: the measure of a society is based on how it cares for its most vulnerable, and by the steps we take as a province to close the gap between those who have and those who have not.

This government is not content to only continue treating the symptoms of poverty. We need to address the root causes. Making real change means investing wisely in programs that will continue for a lasting change. It doesn't mean investing in programs that trap people in poverty. We have to sweep aside the socio-economic barriers so those who are marginalized or disadvantaged have every opportunity to make themselves a better life. We must give people the tools to be self-reliant and independent.

We all know that to be healthy, full contributors to our community means being able to control our own lives, being able to choose where we live, to have the opportunity to work and to get an education. These are all priorities for this government.

We cannot look at poverty in isolation, but instead look at the root of many other social problems. We all know that poverty puts individuals and families at risk. Poor

educational outcomes, poor health, addiction, crime, and mental health issues are often linked to poverty.

That's why this government has been working hard on a number of fronts to help break that cycle of poverty in the province by addressing the root causes. It means:

- Staying focused on building an economy that will produce good job opportunities;
- Reviewing our education system to ensure every child is prepared for the future, which my colleague the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is currently doing;
- Developing legislation to address barriers which many Nova Scotians with disabilities currently face in the workforce, the built environment, housing, and transportation;
- Providing and supporting housing that is affordable, which we are doing through a housing strategy - and Mr. Speaker, I hope to announce significant progress on that front very shortly;
- Building a reliable transportation system; and
- Developing communities with a capacity to provide social supports to those in needs.

These actions are working. Perhaps not all as fast as we would like, perhaps not in the areas of investment that advocates would suggest, but there is progress.

At Community Services, we are directing our efforts towards transforming our core programs and working across departments. We are transforming services for persons with disabilities, which means a more accessible, person-centred approach with increased supports in the community. We reinvested \$500,000 this year to expand the income threshold to the Nova Scotia Child Benefit so that 1,300 more children in low-income families could qualify for benefits.

The income assistance program is also under review to improve access to training, education and employment and to support greater social inclusion for persons with disability. We are also looking at simplifying the benefit system, which will offer improved access to service, reduce paternalism, improve self-sufficiency and allow us to help more of our clients get off IA and into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, those last two points are noteworthy. The path to economic and social inclusion is greatly helped by having a job. Building impence and self-reliance so that

people can provide for their family is crucial. Self-reliant people make for a stronger, economically healthy province, something that benefits us all.

Earlier this month, we announced a new \$400,000-per-year workplace attendance support program that will help more Nova Scotians with disabilities enter and succeed in the workforce. This is an example of knocking down barriers and supporting vulnerable people to take their rightful place in our communities.

The Department of Community Services is also moving forward with a number of initiatives to strengthen the capacity of our communities to help those in need. We invested \$2.8 million to support women and children who find themselves in sometimes desperate circumstances by strengthening family resource centres, transition houses, women's centres and second-stage housing.

We improved access to senior assistance programs so that seniors can afford expensive household repairs and live in their homes. We're also supporting seniors and families to manage through the winter heating season.

The cost of home heating oil and electricity is a significant pressure for all low-income Nova Scotians, including those who receive income assistance. In 2014, Nova Scotia's residential increase was about 3 per cent on average. Electricity rates have increased by 18 per cent, and oil has increased by 46 per cent between 2009 and 2012. Seniors and families living in public housing do not pay for heat and hot water. We also support energy rebate programs available to low-income Nova Scotians, such as the Salvation Army Good Neighbour Energy Fund and others.

Government remains committed to supporting Nova Scotia's Affordable Living Tax Credit and Poverty Reduction Credit, which help reduce poverty and help low-income Nova Scotians make ends meet. Past governments have taken important steps over the years, and I congratulate them on their work to improve our lives. Our government is building on that progress.

I also want to thank the advocates who work tirelessly on behalf of Nova Scotians in poverty, who give voice to those who struggle to find a voice and who bring issues and ideas forward. I want them to know I am listening. We all want the same thing. We all agree there is so much more that needs to be done. Government cannot do it alone. We are all partners in building a better, caring society. My commitment is that we will continue to work to improve the lives of vulnerable and low-income Nova Scotians to keep it a priority not just for one day, but every day of the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin with thanking the minister for providing us with a copy of her statement earlier today. Tomorrow is the International Day

for the Eradication of Poverty. It's a day when all of us must take a hard look at our province, it's a day when it's impossible to push aside the reality that 64,000 of our fellow Nova Scotians live in poverty, and it's a day when we must examine exactly what living in poverty means.

For 64,000 Nova Scotians, 13,000 of them children, it could mean homelessness or hunger. It could mean watching your children suffer because you can't afford medicine or a warm coat. One Ontario analysis showed that poverty shortens lives and we in this place know too well that poverty can place a burden on the economy in extra health care, social supports and assistance.

The minister is correct when she says that all of us want Nova Scotia to be a province of strong and resilient communities and to do what we can to reduce poverty. Poverty is a complex issue; there is no simple solution.

I firmly believe that growing an economy that is adding jobs instead of losing them would help many Nova Scotians who are now living in poverty become self-reliant and independent. But there's a cycle to be broken. Poverty, especially for children, leads to poor education and limited opportunities when they reach the age of maturity. Stable, meaningful employment will help people take control of their own lives; it gives people choices - where to live and what to feed their children.

Unfortunately, in the last year, Nova Scotia shed 8,700 jobs - a statistic that can only make poverty statistics worse - and the government has yet to unveil a comprehensive job plan. I know the minister is sincere in her concern for all Nova Scotians living in poverty and that many programs, often in her department, provide important supports for our most vulnerable citizens. I want to thank her for the work she did before being elected and the passion she brings to this portfolio. I also want to thank the many advocates and volunteers who give so much of themselves to improve the lives of Nova Scotians who struggle with poverty, and work so hard to keep this issue in the forefront.

The minister is correct - we all want the same thing. There's a lot to do and I agree that we must not turn our attention to one day in a year, but every day. Thank you very much.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to begin by thanking the minister for providing a copy of her statement and thank her for making a statement today, the day before the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

My colleague in the Opposition just indicated that poverty is a complex issue and indeed it is, and far too many people in our province live in poverty. It's hard to believe that

people can actually work full time and live in poverty; it's hard to believe that people can have two, sometimes three jobs and live in poverty; and it's really hard to believe that that's the situation in 2014 after so many battles have been fought to get living wages for families and adequate social security in our country. And we really have seen a deterioration of the standard of living of many, many people, and particularly those at the bottom of the income ladder, over the last 20 years.

There's lots of information out there about why that has occurred. This race to the bottom is ongoing and it's not over and we need to be not only mindful of that, but we need to be constantly vigilant in looking for ways to reverse that process. The minister mentioned many, many good initiatives that are underway with this government - and initiatives of previous governments, the NDP Government and the Progressive Conservative Government. This is an issue that cuts across Party lines and it's an issue that we are all very concerned about. I would venture to say that as MLAs we probably see more people living in poverty on a weekly basis than any other professional group, maybe with the exception of health care providers and social service workers.

This is something that if we don't have an awareness of it, then there really is no hope for our future because the evidence is in front of us every, every day. I look forward to more statements from the government, maybe new statements with some new initiatives that this government will be taking on their own to address this very, very pervasive issue in our province. Too many people live in poverty, people in our income assistance program in particular, in the minister's department, this year will see no increase in their income assistance rates for the first time in probably a decade.

We all know the minister laid out the growing, the increasing cost of electricity and transportation and housing and all of these basic necessities of life. We are not talking about luxury items here; we are talking about things that people need for daily survival and yet this government has decided, in their first budget, in addition to taking the \$50 million out of the Graduate Retention Rebate for new graduates, they also have frozen social assistance rates.

There is a great deal of work to be done and there is a great deal of reflection to be done on what choices governments make when they have the levers of power. Thank you.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that 2,760 people in Nova Scotia suffered from newly acquired brain injuries each year. At any given moment about 50,000 to 60,000 Nova Scotians are living with the long-term impact of an acquired brain injury. Acquired brain injury refers to an injury of the central nervous system and results in a large proportion of deaths and impairment leading to permanent disability. Acquired brain injury is a term that encompasses a wide spectrum of brain injuries that may be caused traumatically or related to a medical problem or disease which damages the brain.

This is an important piece of the 2006 Continuing Care Strategy that has not yet been adequately addressed. This is why I'm so pleased to rise in the House today to announce that we will be moving forward on the development of an acquired brain injury strategy in 2015-16. There is a need for a coordinated and streamlined approach for individuals who have an acquired brain injury. This strategy will aim to address the health and social support services required to better meet the needs of people with an acquired brain injury and their families and caregivers.

There are several initiatives already underway to address the gaps in programs and services for people with acquired brain injuries and their families. One of these initiatives is a review of existing home care and community-based care policies to see how we can make these programs more accessible and suitable for people with an acquired brain injury so they can live independently in their community.

We know we need to do more to support those with an acquired brain injury and their families. The commitment is the result of the collaboration of many partners including those living with an acquired brain injury, their families, the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia, the Disabled Persons Commission, and of course the Departments of Health and Wellness and Community Services.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge some special guests who are in the west gallery today who have joined us for this announcement. We have Leona Burkey, Ryan Blood, Joe Lively, Patrick McConnell, Don Sullivan and Mary Hendricks from the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia; Jane Warren, an acquired brain injury survivor and the disabled persons commissioner from the Annapolis Valley; Jake MacDonald, an advocate and recipient of the 2013 Nova Scotia Human Rights Award for his work on behalf of the brain injury survivors; Richard Braha, Program Manager for Acquired Brain Injury at Capital Health; Anne MacRae, Executive Director of the Disabled Persons Commission; Brian Tapper, Chair of the Disabled Persons Commission and a vocational councillor at Capital Health; Craig MacKinnon, research officer at the Disabled Persons Commission. If I could interrupt my speech to have them rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

I know that this group has been patiently awaiting this news, and I look forward to working with them as we move forward with this important work. Mr. Speaker, an advisory committee will be named in the coming weeks to provide direction and advice on the strategy's content and recommendations and to help craft the implementation plan. This strategy will serve as an important roadmap to determine what needs to be addressed and what the outcomes we expect to see are and how we get there.

Mr. Speaker, this work will begin in the Spring, and while it will take time to develop, build, and implement correctly, it is our goal to enhance the health and social supports of those living with an acquired brain injury and their families. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his comments, and also thank him for his announcement here today. I'd also like to welcome our visitors in the gallery today. It's good to see all of you, and I'm sure you are very impressed and very happy with the announcement that the minister has made today.

I am encouraged to see that the government has taken an initiative on such an important issue. Not only are brain injuries devastating for the individual and their families but they are extraordinarily costly to our health care system. We want to be able to protect people the best we can and provide the best possible care when they need it.

I'm sure all members of this House of Assembly know someone in their community who, as the result of a car accident or an ATV accident, industrial accident or whatever, is left with a serious brain injury or other disability. My colleague, the member for Northside-Westmount has helped rehabilitate many people with acquired brain injuries over the years, and I know he would reiterate just how important it is to take the necessary precautions to protect yourself.

I have been fortunate to visit Peter's Place on more than one occasion. Peter's Place is a long-term care facility located on the South Shore. They deal specifically with people who have acquired brain injuries. While I was there, I actually met a resident who was a member from Northside-Westmount, because he had previously been a patient of the member.

I am pleased the government has decided to go forward with this very important piece of the Continuing Care Strategy that we drafted so long ago. It's nice to finally see it show up somewhere. I appreciate the fact that the minister has engaged such a diverse group to serve as his working group on the strategy, and I hope that the many perspectives on this working group lead to a comprehensive strategy for Nova Scotia.

In the last decade we have put many regulations and rules in place to protect Nova Scotians, but this group will address more issues than that alone. I look forward to seeing their finished product, and I wish them the best in going forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the government and the minister for bringing this announcement and this initiative forward. I know there are many people, and some are here in the gallery, in Nova Scotia who have worked extremely hard for decades to bring awareness around individuals who are living in Nova Scotia with an acquired brain injury. I know these are not just patients themselves; these

are family members, friends, community groups; these are clinicians who treat people who have brain injuries, who have been strong advocates for a very long time for the changes that need to happen to ensure that we have a system and services that can support Nova Scotians who have an acquired brain injury.

I know myself I've had a career in a number of areas, but have been fortunate to have been able to work alongside organizations like BIANs, the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia. As a paramedic, one of the first events I volunteered at was actually at the Canadian Tire store in Bedford, where it paired paramedics up with someone who had acquired a brain injury, to have a booth and show young people how to ensure that they have a proper bicycle helmet and that it fit right. That led me to continue to support their initiatives over the years. Then, of course, as an MLA and as Minister of Health and Wellness, on a number of occasions meeting with and working with BIANs and the Disabled Persons Commission to hear what their issues are and some of the concerns in areas that government needs to improve on.

I think maybe because of the lower number of individuals who have an acquired brain injury in Nova Scotia, the services and initiatives have not been a top priority. I think, honestly, I could say that. It has been similar to mental health services, Mr. Speaker. For many, many years, it was those areas that didn't get the attention, didn't get the support. We need to continue to support those organizations like BIANs, ensure that we listen to the Disabled Persons Commission on the concerns of the people whom they represent and they advocate for, so that we see positive changes in government and government policies and services.

I've seen first-hand and treated patients with brain injuries. It can be difficult at times because you can't treat those individuals in the same manner because their needs are different. We know their housing needs are different; their health needs are different. I hope that this strategy will shine a light on exactly what services need to be in place so that Nova Scotians who have an acquired brain injury can live in their homes longer, can stay an active member of their community - and they are, Mr. Speaker, and the events that I've attended throughout my career show that.

One of the first events that I attended - the very first public event that I attended as the new Minister of Health and Wellness in 2012 was just down the road here at the Common, at the skate park. It was a program called Protect Your Noggin where 15,000 helmets were going to be distributed to young people across the province. It was our law enforcement, our paramedics who were going to be provided these helmets, with the support of Medavie Blue Cross who was a partner in that program, so that if a paramedic or a police officer saw a young person going down the road without a helmet, which we often see, that they could pull them over and not give them a citation but give them a helmet. It was a great initiative and I know many, many young Nova Scotians have benefited from that.

We need to see government continue to do those types of programs, continue to bring forward initiatives. We can be leaders in Nova Scotia when it comes to preventing injuries. We were the first jurisdiction in Canada and, I believe, in North America - maybe around the world - that brought in a mandatory helmet law, for example, for the ski hills of our province. At first, people thought it wasn't a great idea, but it didn't take too long for people to support that initiative when they realized the cost involved with someone who has a brain injury. Nobody can argue that. If we can prevent one Nova Scotian from having an acquired brain injury, it is well worth it.

I want to support the government when they bring forward initiatives like this, important ones that recognize the hard work of organizations like BIANs and the Disabled Persons Commission and just advocates. I look forward to the strategy going forward. I know often in government you are criticized for bringing forward strategies, but I think strategies are important. They give a road map and they really make the government of the day and future governments accountable, because if you adopt that strategy, then you know where you need to go. You usually get recommendations - and I hope that that's the case in this initiative, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to thank all those in attendance today who have pushed hard and I want to thank the government for bringing this initiative forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of honour that I stand in my place today to recognize Persons Day, which is on October 18th. I also feel deeply humbled because I know that very few Nova Scotians have had the opportunity to serve in this historic Chamber as an elected representative and even fewer women have known this privilege.

Mr. Speaker, none of the women in this Chamber today, or those before us, would have been able to be here if it were not for a decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain on October 18, 1929. That is the day that Lord Sankey said, "The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word 'person' should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?"

Women were declared persons under the law thanks to the efforts of Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards, known as the Famous Five. Since 1929, many Nova Scotia women have sought, and some have obtained, political office at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. Women serving today stand on their shoulders, and it is important that we recognize their efforts and services. (Applause)

However, while we celebrate how far we have come, we need to remember that women still have far to go in seeking true equality in elected office and other spheres.

Today, seven of 35 mayors in Nova Scotia and 90 of 377 councillors are women. We comprise 27 per cent of the House of Assembly, 26 per cent of the federal House of Commons, and 38 per cent of the Senate. Women do hold 55 per cent of the seats on school boards.

Clearly there's much to be done to continue working toward the goal of equality. I commend the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women that has done so much to encourage and empower women who are interested in leadership. I'm pleased to announce that a fourth edition of *Votes for Women* is available in print and online. I have provided a copy to each member of the Legislature today.

Please share it with a woman in your life who might be interested in seeking public office and encourage her to find out more and to participate in the next Campaign School for Women. Status of Women has also produced a wonderful book called *The Nova Scotia Nine* that honours some remarkable women from the past and present, and I encourage all Nova Scotians to read it.

We are also looking at the future and working with young women and girls today to create engaged and strong leaders tomorrow. There are resources on the Status of Women website for girls and adolescents in Nova Scotia. Please visit that website and explore the information and resources available online. You can also find an excellent library and other resources at their offices on Quinpool Road.

I would like to close by quoting Daurene Lewis, who was mayor of Annapolis Royal, and who became the first Black mayor in Canada in 1984. I had the privilege of knowing Daurene, who was extraordinarily generous with her advice to many women who ran politically. "If I could teach one thing to the next generation, it would be that no one should accept the status quo." Let us all vow to never accept the status quo, and strive each day to instill that sense of purpose in the next generation.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would first like to thank the minister for providing us with an advance copy of her statement today. I am truly honoured to stand in my place today as a woman - a legally recognized woman - to mark this historic day.

The minister spoke of Lord Sankey, who, when all were asking why, asked why not? I am struck by that quote because so often when we see injustice we must ask

ourselves that question. I am privileged to be a member of this House of Assembly, and I feel it is a privilege to serve my constituents in Pictou West. As an elected member and as a female, I feel it is our duty to engage all individuals of all ages to truly represent the needs of our people.

As arcane as today may seem to some, we must remember that gender equality is not something available to everyone around the world. We are fortunate in Canada that our society has evolved so much that newer generations are probably not even aware that there was a time in Canada that they would not have been considered persons. It would actually be inconceivable. Today is not only a celebration of our democracy. It also serves as a reminder that gender equality is not present in many countries, and we must be proud role models to those countries to do the same.

I agree with the minister that we still have a lot of work to do. I am proud to be a female member of this House, and I encourage women of all ages to get involved in the political process and be a voice for women's issues. As wonderful as it is to look around this Chamber and see such a presence of strong women, we represent only 28 per cent of the elected members in this Chamber. We need to encourage women of all ages to get involved in the political process. The best thing we can do is equip young women with knowledge by educating them on issues and making them aware of the avenues of change. I believe we will see more and more women putting their name on a ballot and taking part.

I encourage my daughter every day to get involved and to educate herself, and I know that she will excel in anything she decides to do. I am proud to say that the majority of our caucus office staff are women, and I believe the women in this Chamber have proved we are not just domestic engineers anymore.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Not that there's anything wrong with that.

MS. MACFARLANE: There's not, there's not at all. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on a topic that is very dear and near to my heart.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I also thank the minister for providing an advance copy of her remarks. I enjoyed listening to them very much. I'm pleased to rise today as a woman and as an elected member of this Legislature to speak about Persons Day in Nova Scotia.

The declaration in 1929 that women were persons under the law was historic. It solidified women's place in public office and without it, there wouldn't be 14 women

sitting here today. But I believe we need more. There is still a lot more work to do to improve life for women in the Province of Nova Scotia and around the world.

As already noted, in Canada, women were declared persons under the law thanks to the efforts of just five women in particular: Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards. They're known as the Famous Five - and I have to say that it's a real shame that those famous five women have already been recently wiped off the face of the Canadian \$50 bill by the current federal government. I think that is a shame, and I think that the more women they put on the faces of our dollar bills, the more children and young people will learn who these people were and what they've done for the history of our country.

Over the last 85 years, we've had many moments to celebrate. We've had the first female senators and MPs. We've even recently had some of the first Premiers - and some of them are no longer Premiers, they were only Premiers for a very short time. In 1993, very briefly, we had our first female Prime Minister. Closer to home, we've had many accomplished women as MLAs and Cabinet Ministers, and, in fact, the very first female Leader of any recognized Party - of course, the incomparable Alexa McDonough. Last year, we also had our first female Finance Minister and our first female Deputy Premier.

Of all of these historic moments, they should all be recognized because they serve to remind us all how far we have actually come. But they also remind us that change has taken a very long time. Today, it is sad to hear that only seven of 35 mayors in Nova Scotia and 90 of 377 councillors are women. We comprise only 27 per cent of the House of Assembly, 26 per cent of the federal House of Commons and 38 per cent of the Senate. So 85 years after the Persons Case, and here in Nova Scotia, we have still not yet had an equal number of women and men in the Legislature. We've also never had a woman as a Premier.

I believe it's the responsibility of all elected officials to continue the work we're doing to ensure that women and men are equally empowered to run for office. During my first visit to the Legislature in the early 1980s, I saw that one woman alone on the floor, the honourable Alexa McDonough, speaking out on many different issues that affected the lives of women and their families in the Province of Nova Scotia. It appeared to me at that time that nobody was listening, but I was listening. I was sitting right up there and I was inspired by what I heard, by that one woman, and I vowed that someday perhaps I might join that member on the floor of this Legislature and to do everything that I could to encourage other young women to do the same and take an interest in politics, both in exercising their right to vote and by running for a seat in governments of all levels.

I also encourage all members to do the same because sometimes it's disheartening to hear young women say they don't bother voting, Mr. Speaker, sometimes they say they don't bother voting because they don't think it will make any difference. Well I think we are all here to say it does make a difference and their voices do need to be heard on the ballot or in the House.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that in the last federal election it was disheartening to hear young women on television, when they were asked how they were going to vote, say oh I have more important things to do. I leave that up to the men, the men decide, they do the voting. I have more important things to do, while they look down at their baby in their arms. They said looking after this baby was important, but I have to say if a woman really cares about the future for their children, then they should definitely mark their ballot and vote for a Party that they feel is going to help them and their children have a better future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say again, it is never too late to build a better world and I thank the minister for her remarks, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we move on to Government Notices of Motion, I want to present a ruling on the petition presented by the honourable member for Pictou East earlier. Upon review it is apparent that the petition raised by the member for Pictou East in relation to a bill from the last session of the House, died on the order paper when that session was prorogued: therefore, the petition is specifically asking the House to do something that it cannot do. On that basis I have to reject the petition.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 292

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for a moment of silence at the end of my resolution, if you don't mind.

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

Whereas the Afghanistan Memorial Vigil remembers and honours those who have fallen in Afghanistan and acknowledges the bravery and dedication of all members of the Canadian Armed Forces who have served in Afghanistan and supported the mission; and

Whereas yesterday the families of those Nova Scotians who lives were lost while serving in Afghanistan came together in an emotional ceremony to honour the fallen and unveil the memorial vigil; and

Whereas the Afghanistan Memorial Vigil is open to the public at the World Trade and Convention Centre until October 18th, and a guest book is available for all to sign and pay their respects;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly honour those Nova Scotians and Canadians lost in Afghanistan, and thank all members of the Canadian Armed Forces for their dedication to our country.

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.

I would ask that all members of the House please rise in a moment of silence in memory of those who laid down their lives in the battle in Afghanistan.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Justice. If may, before I read this special resolution, I would like permission to make introductions.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to the east gallery where we have with us today several police officers and I would ask that they rise and remain standing as I read each of their names: Chief Donny Hussher, Inspector Larry Wilson, Staff Sergeant Peter Marshall, Staff Sergeant Major Gary Latour, Corporal Cindy Renouf, Corporal Lana Woodvine, Constable Neil Edwards, and Corporal Angela Corscadden.

I'd especially like to recognize and extend our thanks to Chief Don Hussher of the Westville Police Service. Chief Hussher has been the Chair of the Fallen Officer Memorial Committee since its inception and has been the driving force behind the impressive ceremony that occurs each and every Fall.

I ask that the House recognize and acknowledge the presence of our police officers.

[Standing Ovation]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 293

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas this Sunday, October 19th, officers and members of the public will gather to pay their respects to fallen police officers for the 2014 Nova Scotia Fallen Police Officers Memorial Service; and

Whereas representatives of organizations from across the province will attend the event, including municipal police departments, the RCMP, the military police, Canada Border Services Agency, Nova Scotia Sheriff Services, the Department of Natural Resources enforcement officers, fisheries officers, and others; and

Whereas peace officers risk their lives every day to ensure Nova Scotians are properly protected;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the importance of our peace officers and acknowledge the tremendous service they have made to keep our communities safe.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution I'd like to make an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw everybody's attention to the east gallery of the House where we have with us today members of the Police Auxiliary. I would ask

each police officer to please stand when I read their name: Superintendent Ray Oliver; Corporal Cindy Renouf; Auxiliary Constable Bruce Snow; Auxiliary Constable Jessica Trites; Auxiliary Constable Derreck Carroll; Auxiliary Constable Donald Kaulbach; and Auxiliary Constable Robin Hawkesworth Gabrielle.

Mr. Speaker, there are two more: Inspector Larry Wilson, and Bob Purcell, Executive Director, Public Safety and Security.

I ask the House to please extend their very warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION 294

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has over 100 auxiliary members; and

Whereas auxiliary constables are unarmed, unpaid, uniformed volunteers who donate their time to assist our RCMP and municipal police officers; and

Whereas their tasks can range from participating in community events and supporting crime prevention initiatives within schools, to assisting with daily duties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the hard work and commitment of our auxiliary members, and thank each and every one of them for their outstanding performance.

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.

[Standing Ovation]

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

RESOLUTION NO. 295

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

Whereas driving is an important part of growing up for teenagers in Nova Scotia, and it is also one of the most dangerous activities they can do; and

Whereas many of the deaths and injuries sustained by young Nova Scotians in traffic collisions are preventable; and

Whereas teenagers need to be made aware of the dangers of unsafe driving practices such as speeding, driving while distracted, and not wearing seatbelts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House, in recognition that the week of October 19th is National Teen Driver Safety Week in Canada, encourage all young drivers and those who care for them to follow safe driving practices that will bring them home alive every day.

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 say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. MACMASTER: Today we have an MLA from Nunavut here in the Legislature with us. I would ask that you draw your attention to the west gallery. We have George Hicke, MLA, with us. George, please stand. He's the MLA for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, and he's also the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. So please extend him a welcome. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 40 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2010, the Oak Island Treasure Act, and Chapter 438 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Special Places Protection Act. (Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse)

Bill No. 41 - Entitled an Act Respecting a Lyme Disease Strategy for Nova Scotia. (Mr. Tim Houston)

Bill No. 42 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act. (Hon. Maureen MacDonald)

Bill No. 43 - Entitled an Act to Maintain and Preserve Voluntary Blood Donations in Nova Scotia. (Hon. David Wilson)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 296

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

Whereas today, October 16th, marks International Credit Union Day; and

Whereas 317,000 members receive excellent service from 54 credit unions throughout Atlantic Canada, which contribute to the health of the communities they serve; and

Whereas International Credit Union Day reflects upon the credit union movement's history and promotes its many achievements;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the great work that credit unions are doing in Nova Scotia and acknowledge the many contributions credit unions have made to the communities that they serve.

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 Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 297

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

Whereas far too many Nova Scotians still find themselves living in poverty, which negatively affects their overall health and well-being; and

Whereas October 17th is recognized around the world as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and serves as a reminder that our society still has much work to do in our quest to reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize October 17, 2014, as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 298

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

Whereas October 18th marks Persons Day in Canada; and

Whereas this day commemorates the 1929 Persons court case that included women in the legal definition of “persons,” allowing women to sit in the Senate of Canada; and

Whereas women past and present who have served in this House have made tremendous contributions to this province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the many contributions that women have made to this province, and continue to encourage more and more women to stand for elected office in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 299

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

Whereas on October 11, 2014, the second annual Howard Dill Memorial Walk for Liver Health was held; and

Whereas Howard Dill was known for his Dill’s Atlantic Giant seeds and pumpkins, and the Memorial Walk for Liver Health took place across the pumpkin fields to Long Pond on the Dill Farm, as Howard passed away in 2008 from liver cancer; and

Whereas family and friends gathered to celebrate the life of Howard Dill and more people are reminded of how many are affected by liver disease, with over 100 diseases of the liver and 500 functions that this vital organ serves;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Shyla Steeves for organizing the second annual Howard Dill Memorial Walk for Liver Health and creating much-needed awareness for the public.

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 East.

RESOLUTION NO. 300

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

Whereas Lyme disease is on the rise in Nova Scotia and all over Canada; and

Whereas early treatment of Lyme disease is critical, but it is a difficult disease to diagnose because symptoms vary from person to person; and

Whereas Nova Scotia needs a comprehensive strategy to ensure those suffering with Lyme disease get the timely diagnosis and treatment they need, right here at home;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the Minister of Health and Wellness to adopt a focused provincial approach to education, diagnoses, and treatment of Lyme disease.

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 Queens-Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 301

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

Whereas the Minister of Natural Resources stated on October 9, 2014, that firewood used by Nova Scotians does not qualify as an energy source; and

Whereas the Liberal Government promised in their election campaign to keep energy costs down; and

Whereas many Nova Scotians, especially in rural Nova Scotia, use wood to heat their homes to reduce their power bills;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Wellness encourage the Minister of Natural Resources to meet with firewood suppliers to get a better understanding of how the use of firewood can heat a home and reduce power bills.

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 Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 302

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

Whereas Friday, October 17th, marks the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, raising awareness of the dire need to eliminate poverty worldwide; and

Whereas 64,000 Nova Scotians experience poverty every day; and

Whereas the UN has called on governments to secure “the participation of those experiencing extreme poverty and social exclusion” in poverty reduction plans;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House show continued commitment to eliminating poverty in this province, and call on the government to make the eradication of poverty in Nova Scotia a reality by listening to the voices of people in Nova Scotia living in poverty.

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 East.

RESOLUTION NO. 303

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

Whereas Eric and Linda Barker, owners of Highland Ford, have partnered with various Pictou County schools in the Drive 4 UR School program; and

Whereas recently North Nova Education Centre was presented with a cheque for \$2,300; and

Whereas overall in the past year the event raised over \$6,500, which goes to extracurricular activities in the participating schools;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Eric and Linda Barker for their support and for helping to enhance the school experience for our students.

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 West.

RESOLUTION NO. 304

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

Whereas on October 15th the Tearmann Society marked 30 years of providing services in Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties; and

Whereas the Tearmann Society is a resource for abused women that provides emergency shelter for families who are victims of violence; and

Whereas the Tearmann Society is planning a greater online presence with Twitter and Facebook, and plans to further its work by tackling issues like bullying and hyper-sexualization;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly thank the Tearmann Society for the work they do in assisting victims of abuse and their continued efforts to educate about abuse, bullying, and hyper-sexualization.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 1:24 p.m., we'll conclude at 2:24 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - NOVA STAR: FUNDING - PLAN PRODUCE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On Tuesday of this week we learned that the government has committed another \$5 million to the owners of the *Nova Star* ferry to cover the past season's losses. That brings the total commitment for taxpayers to \$26 million. The minister responsible has all but admitted that there will be more subsidies to come in the future including, possibly, for winter storage and for start-up again next season.

Mr. Speaker, tourism operators, small-business owners along the South Shore and across our province, and Nova Scotia taxpayers all deserve to know that the government is handling this important service responsibly. I'd like to ask the Premier, will he produce a plan to show Nova Scotians that there is a plan for a sustainable ferry service from Yarmouth to Portland?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question and I want to thank the member for Yarmouth for the tremendous work that he has done over the last number of years to communicate to all Nova Scotians how important the Nova Scotia ferry is, which happens to land in Yarmouth.

When I travelled from one end of this province to the other, I heard from tourism operators who asked us to put in place this service. We've kept that commitment. We're working towards making sure that this service is sustainable in the long run. We have an operator that is providing service to the people of this province. I think it's premature for anyone in this House to prejudge or judge by four months.

We're going to continue to work to find savings. We have an auditor going in who will be looking at the books, announced there have been some costs associated with that. The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism put in place protocols that ensure that the executive salaries were in line with what would take place with that service.

We're going to continue to work with that operator to ensure that that service is not only there for next year, but is there for the long run so that all Nova Scotians can enjoy it.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I will note that in his list of thank-yous, the Premier forgot to thank the taxpayers of Nova Scotia whose money is making this all possible.

We all want the ferry to succeed. That is not the issue. The issue before Nova Scotians today is whether the government is doing a competent job of actually managing that service or not. I'll give you an example: the Premier is hoping for a line of credit from the Governor of Maine in the amount of \$5 million.

Interestingly, that governor will either be elected or not a short three weeks from now. His chief opponent in the race for Governor of Maine was asked whether he would

honour the commitment if he's elected. He said, before I do, it's important to make sure the operation is financially viable and that the business plan will work. You need to make sure that taxpayers aren't left with a \$5 million bill. He sounds like a pretty good guy. I don't know what Party he is, but clearly not the Liberals.

So there may be a \$5 million line of credit or there may not be a \$5 million line of credit. I'd like to ask the Premier, who is looking after this service, what is the plan B? Is another \$5 million bill coming to taxpayers to cover the State of Maine?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell all members of this House that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has been doing a tremendous job ensuring that the State of Maine plays a role and plays a part in ensuring that this service has long-term viability. As the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has just alluded to, there is an election going on in the State of Maine, and if anyone in this House should know the crazy things that happen in an election campaign, it should be the Leader of the Official Opposition, when he promised to give \$1 billion in tax cuts to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if anyone knows what crazy things can happen in election campaigns, it's the people of Nova Scotia who now see a Liberal Government that won the election but who have already committed seven years' worth of funding in one year, plus \$5 million, plus maybe more for winter storage, plus maybe more to start it up again next year. The crazy thing is they have no vision, no long-term plan for how to make that ferry sustainable. The issue is not whether we should have a ferry; it's whether they're competent to actually get it done.

I'll give you another example, Mr. Speaker. We now know that the *Nova Star* ferry that we're all paying for is scheduled to spend the winter at Fort Pierce, Florida, just south of Orlando, and at this point, just a week before it's due to get there, there is yet no confirmed work for the ferry for the winter. We all hope it gets work for the winter, but at this point, it's due to go and dock at a private marina south of Orlando next week.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he will be upfront and tell Nova Scotians, if there is no winter work, what is the maximum amount that Nova Scotians are on the hook for for that ferry to spend its winter in Florida?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the honourable member is that this government, this caucus will continue to work with Nova Scotians to ensure we have a long-term viable link going from Yarmouth to the United States. That service is important to all Nova Scotians and if that Party doesn't support it, stand up in this House and put their names on the record that they're not prepared to support that vital international link.

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

PREM. - EBOLA: GOV'T. RESPONSE - SATISFACTION CONFIRM

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is through you to the Premier. The current outbreak of Ebola virus was identified in December of last year in Guinea, West Africa. It quickly spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is now present in over seven countries. Almost a year later, front-line health care workers in Nova Scotia are still without proper protective equipment and training. So, my question through you, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Is the Premier satisfied with this government's response to the Ebola outbreak thus far?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Doctor Strang has been doing a tremendous job for this province, for a number of years. He is doing a tremendous job on this file and we will continue to work side by side with Dr. Strang to ensure the people of this good province, and those who provide health care to the people of this province, are working in safe environments.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday when asked about the Ebola outbreak, the Minister of Health and Wellness said, "... our province is in an extremely low-risk category" The Minister of Health and Wellness may not agree but the reality is that we live in a global society not far removed from the rest of the world. Our province has strong connections to African countries and travel to and from Africa by people in Nova Scotia, including doctors, humanitarian workers, and students for example, is more common than I think the Health and Wellness Minister would like to think.

So, I would like to ask through you, Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier allowing his minister to minimize the risk of Ebola when precautions like proper protection equipment and training should have been provided months ago?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell all the members of this House how proud I am of the work that the Minister of Health and Wellness is doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians to ensure that we have a sustainable health care system, one that all Nova Scotians, those who are providing health care to our citizens and those who are accessing health care in our systems, recognize that it is a safe working environment. Again, I want to tell the member that Dr. Strang is continuing to do the great work that he has been doing on behalf of the people of the Province of Nova Scotia, and we're going to continue to work side by side with Dr. Strang to ensure that Nova Scotians are protected.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would agree, we have a great, dedicated health care workforce here in the Province of Nova Scotia but they are not prepared. We are being told that equipment is on back order; it has not arrived yet. So those health care workers are concerned.

I would like to ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, what can the Premier tell those health care workers who are looking for that equipment, or how can he alleviate their

anxiety, which they have currently because of that equipment not being available, as we stand here today?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to respond.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to respond to the member's question. First of all I will restate that Nova Scotia is a very low-risk area to have a case of Ebola but no place, as we know, is 100 per cent secure in that regard.

What we know today is that the federal Minister of Health, in fact, had a telephone conversation with all Health Ministers last evening, as to a response to the Canadian Nursing Association and the concerns that they raised. We know that we have the best in protective gear, and in fact, if we don't have the very best, we know that it's on its way.

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

PREM. - NOVA STAR: EXECUTIVES - SALARIES TABLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of the ferry. I just want to put the Premier's mind at ease that of course we support the Yarmouth ferry, of course we support the thing. I want to remind him also (Interruption) They should be proud to stand there and answer questions about the Yarmouth ferry because the previous government didn't let us ask questions about the previous ferry problem. They just went and cancelled it without us even having an opportunity to bring it up in this House of Assembly. So we should be proud to ask questions about the Yarmouth ferry in this House of Assembly.

With that, questions have been raised about whether the minister signed a good deal or a bad deal. This is what we are hearing in our communities now. To put us at ease, the minister assured taxpayers that the executives of Nova Star Cruises would only be receiving half their salaries until the ferry became profitable. When asked about what those salaries were, the minister said, well, I'm going to have to get back to you on that. The minister has had a couple of days to collect that information; will he table today the salaries of those executives for Nova Star Cruises, his partners in the ferry business?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, from day one we posted the agreement on our website for all Nova Scotians to see. Any time we've had to advance funds we've shared that with Nova Scotians. We've shared our challenges along the way. One of the things that we were able to do from the deal that had been negotiated by the previous government was add in a clause that unless the ferry was turning a profit, the management team would only be able to draw 50 per cent of their salaries. I've instructed the company to release that information, and it will be made public this afternoon.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I thank the minister for that answer, and again, we're having the opportunity to discuss this issue as it stands before us in this House of Assembly. In that same scrum yesterday, the minister said: We've been as transparent through this as possible with you, and that will not change. He also said that in his capacity as minister he has seen correspondence indicating possible alternative routes and complete alternative business plans. Does that mean this service is going to continue the way it is or not? Not too sure with that kind of comment.

In the interest of this transparency, will the minister share that correspondence with the House of Assembly so that we can develop an informed opinion about the future of that service between Portland and Yarmouth?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked whether I had received any other suggestions about ferry services. If the member had listened a bit longer, I also suggested that some were considered to be not overly serious or credible. What I received basically is one-page emails or one-page letters outlining an interest in providing a ferry service to Nova Scotia. I would suggest to the honourable member that we did not take those overly seriously in light of the presentation, but at the same time it was very clear that the province had entered into an agreement with *Nova Star* to provide a ferry service.

We are going to continue to work with the operator. I'm sure the member would appreciate, as he's pointed out, that the first year of a ferry service that was cancelled by the previous government four years ago naturally has brought challenges with it. We certainly look forward to working together with all of our partners to try to ensure the success and long-term viability of this service to the people of Nova Scotia.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I know the minister can understand the concern that the people have about the ferry service, because of the experience that they've had over the last number of years. They want to make sure that this is going to be viable from here into the future, but when we see a government reacting and cutting other cheques, or actually committing up to \$5 million one week, and another week something else might come along, we're just asking whether there is an opportunity for a plan to be drafted so that people can be conformable that this ferry service will be here into the future.

My question to the minister is, can he table as much information as he can and maybe provide us a plan here to five years of where we're going with this ferry service?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure how advancing another \$5 million for a ferry service should put anyone's mind in doubt as to what our commitment has been to the service.

I would file that under asking a question to say you asked a question, but in reality, I would strongly suggest to the honourable member that if any Nova Scotians or any of his constituents are concerned about our support for maintaining a ferry service between

Yarmouth and Portland, if they don't feel confident in speaking with our own government members, I would advise them to contact Mayor Pam Mood of Yarmouth and ask her what her thoughts are on this government's commitment to seeing the *Nova Star* continue.

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

COM. SERV.: INCOME ASSISTANCE RATES - FREEZE EXPLAIN

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Community Services. Tomorrow is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. There is no group more vulnerable to inflation than individuals receiving income assistance. Between 2010 and 2014, the income assistance rate increased by 22 per cent, which works out to an extra \$47 per month for those who are receiving income assistance. But in 2014, the Minister of Community Services froze the income assistance rates.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, why is the Minister of Community Services placing even more financial pressures on families already struggling to get by?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the honourable member for her question. Nobody knows probably better than a few of us in this House who have had financial struggles, and have lived on the income assistance system, how difficult it is to make ends meet and to provide shelter and food for our families. Shelter rates have not risen since 2006, of which four years the previous minister was the Minister of Community Services - and also for the first year that she was in government, as minister, the income assistance personal allowance also did not rise.

I made a commitment a year ago and I will follow through on that commitment, but I am going to get my own house in order within the Department of Community Services so that we can best provide the best services, benefit package, and help in assistance to vulnerable Nova Scotians.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable minister for her answer, but I will remind the honourable minister that we initiated the income assistance review program and we took a holistic approach in terms of the increases that were created within that department. People actually received up to \$1,500 to \$3,000 more at the end of our mandate in terms of what they were receiving in the Province of Nova Scotia - not just through income assistance but all the programs that we encapsulated together as one, and took that approach.

Mr. Speaker, in a July 4th article in *The Coast*, a Community Services spokesperson said the department's review would improve the IA program as a whole - and I will table that article.

When will the minister table these recommendations in the House to give some assurance to those who are receiving income assistance and waiting to hear about these changes?

MS. BERNARD: The benefit reform review, Mr. Speaker, has been ongoing for a couple of months. We are now getting into the nitty-gritty of it. I would suggest that what we're doing is far more comprehensive than what the former minister initiated.

We have built on some programs that were started by the previous government. We have improved them, we have expanded them, particularly for persons with disabilities and also within service providers, particularly focusing on strengthening community organizations that help families in crisis and in poverty. I will release those changes when the department is ready to release those changes, and not a minute before.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the previous Liberal Government of the 1990s also failed to keep income assistance rates at pace with inflation, resulting in a serious deficiency that proved challenging to overcome by subsequent governments.

My question, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, how many years will her government freeze the income assistance rates?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, that is an area that we have not had long discussions with, I would say. I think it's a question that is really for the Minister of Community Services. We've certainly had discussions around the need to address poverty and I'll leave it to her to speak on the specifics.

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I am just at a loss because personal allowance rates were frozen in the first mandate year of the previous minister, and shelter rates were not touched by one penny in the four years they were in government. Compound that with the \$17 million they took out of the budget when they went from 12 months to 11 months, which would have impacted people on income assistance and service providers in a very negative way - I don't understand why we're "frozen" and back in 2010 that wasn't seen as frozen.

We're not trying to balance the budget on the backs of people like the previous government. I'm committed here today to making this system better and I will not release anything before it's ready to be released.

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

PREM. - HYDRAULIC FRACTURING: BAN - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House in Question Period the Premier said, "We are not in any way banning anything in this province." Well, that's

not what the Minister of Energy says, because I have with me the press release that the Energy Department put out on September 3rd, and the title of that release is “Government to Prohibit Hydraulic Fracturing”. Sounds like a ban to me.

For greater clarity, I will go on to quote quickly from the release. It says: “. . . the government of Nova Scotia will introduce legislation this fall to prohibit high volume hydraulic fracturing for onshore shale gas.” It also says, “We will therefore introduce legislation to prohibit using this technique to stimulate onshore shale projects.”

It further goes on. Quoting from the words of the Minister of Energy in referring to the support of the Mi’kmaq chiefs, he says, “. . . they expressed support for the government’s decision to prohibit hydraulic fracturing operations in shale petroleum developments.”

I’m not sure, Mr. Speaker, who was running the show over there, but there clearly is a difference of opinion between the Premier and the Minister of Energy about whether they’re banning anything or not. You know what? All Nova Scotians know that the government is banning a new way to create new jobs in this province. I ask the Premier, why not just admit the obvious, that he is in fact banning a new way to create new jobs?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank and congratulate the Minister of Energy for the tremendous work that he’s been doing. I want to thank him for going out and engaging Nova Scotians on a whole host of energy issues. I was very impressed at a public meeting he held that I was at, and the engagement by the citizens that were there. I don’t think I’ve ever seen that, quite frankly, at a public engagement by an elected official.

I want to continue to assure the honourable member that the Minister of Energy will continue to listen to all Nova Scotians. He’ll continue to look for economic opportunities out of the Energy Department, just like every minister in this government is going to continue to do - look for economic opportunities in their departments, drive economic growth and keep good jobs here at home.

MR. BAILLIE: I’m not sure if that was a yes or a no, but I will say I wish that the Minister of Energy or the Premier himself had engaged the 8,700 Nova Scotians who lost their jobs last year, or the 50,000 Nova Scotians, it’s estimated, to be working out West today, because this question about banning new ideas is at the heart of whether we’re going to try new things in this province or not.

The minister says it’s a prohibition. The Premier says it isn’t. This is an important issue and it’s too important to create this kind of confusion when real potential jobs are at stake. So I’ll ask the Premier, can he explain to this House the difference between a prohibition and a ban?

THE PREMIER: Not only do we engage those Nova Scotians - I drove one of them to the airport this morning and put him on the plane to fly out West. But I'll tell you one thing: one thing this government will continue to do is listen to all Nova Scotians and ensure that public policy represents the views of all Nova Scotians to make sure that our future is sustainable, not one that looks at public policy that only wants to divide communities across this province. This government will speak to Nova Scotians and will speak to them in a unified way to ensure that we move this province forward.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, again, that was interesting but in no way answered the question that I asked, leaving Nova Scotians wondering. We have a Premier who says there's no ban and a Minister of Energy who says there's a complete prohibition. It's a very important question.

The Premier wants to unify Nova Scotians. So do we. Let's unify them here at home, in this province, working together, families united, doing jobs that they're already doing out West except doing it here. There's a real plan to create jobs. But that's exactly what the Premier has banned, or prohibited, or stopped, or whatever word they want to use. But with 8,700 jobs lost in the past year, he won't tell us. Will the Premier at least explain to them why he is banning or prohibiting or stopping a new way of creating new jobs in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: We're continuing to work with the private sector to drive economic opportunities and job growth, Mr. Speaker. You want to know who's confusing the people of this province? It's the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. One day, he stands up and says he wants municipal amalgamation, only wants 18 municipal units. Lo and behold, when it hits the community that he visits periodically - when it hits Springhill - he starts changing his mind. That is the member who also told us to close the Pictou pulp mill, but don't lay anybody off. You can't have it both ways.

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

NAT. RES. - OAK ISLAND: ARCHAEOLOGIST - PRESENCE ENSURE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Natural Resources. As the minister knows, I have called on an archaeologist to be present during the explorations on Oak Island. In Question Period the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage agreed and has also written to the permit holders advising the men to hire an archaeologist to monitor activity. The Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage also said that he cannot enforce that an archaeologist be on site as that is a decision that is with the Department of Natural Resources and the licence goes under them. I will table that Hansard.

My question through you to the minister is, will the government ensure that an archaeologist is present to monitor all further explorations on Oak Island?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, when someone is pursuing a treasure hunt in Nova Scotia, according to the laws that have been set out by this Legislature, they are operating under a different piece of legislation, particularly in Oak Island. That piece of legislation was brought in in 2010 by the previous NDP Government. If the member opposite has any questions related to that, perhaps she could discuss the situation with her colleagues who brought that particular piece of legislation in.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the minister did not answer the question. I have had conversations with him and explained at that time that there was not the awareness of this particular theory that is coming from Petter Amundsen from Norway and that the discoveries that are being made are based on that theory that are heritage artifacts.

To date, there is still no onsite monitoring on Oak Island despite the fact that the exploration continues. The island's heritage objects could be damaged during the search for treasure, if changes are not made to the Oak Island Treasure Act or Special Places Protection Act to make the presence of an archaeologist mandatory. My question to the minister is, why is the government not bringing forward legislation to ensure all treasure and heritage objects on Oak Island are protected?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the proponents in this particular case are operating according to law. The law in this particular circumstance was written and adopted by the previous NDP Government.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the minister does not seem to get it. It's not about what happened previously. There is new information about Oak Island and that is why we are pursuing the need to have an archaeologist mandatory and that is a no-brainer. That's an easy solution that the minister himself can do to protect Oak Island and what is found there, protect the heritage for Nova Scotians, and protect tourism and cultural opportunities in the future so the treasures do not leave, if anything is found, and then all we have is a hole in the ground.

My final supplementary is for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. I would like to ask the minister, who owns the treasure and heritage objects found thus far on Oak Island and will the minister table a list of these items in the House?

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, the items, first of all, you have to separate: there are treasures and there are artifacts. The artifacts belong to the people of Nova Scotia, the Province of Nova Scotia. Treasure is an item that once the licensee has the permission to do the digging, they own that treasure. Now, they are to give the province a royalty on that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - LYME DISEASE: N.S. TESTING - ACTION

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. He can probably guess what it's going to be about. Last Spring I asked the minister whether the government would show concrete support for Nova Scotians suffering with Lyme disease and we also talked about how many Nova Scotians are forced to leave the province to get diagnosed and treated for the disease.

At the time, I was pleased to read the minister say, and I'll table this: "If we don't have tests throughout the geography of the province and regional hospitals, I'm committed to moving on that."

Will the minister please explain what action the Department of Health and Wellness has taken since April to ensure that there are tests throughout the province and Nova Scotians no longer have to travel to the United States?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: At this point, we don't have the statistical profile for 2014 obviously, but for 2013, there were 154 confirmed and probable cases, and they have been able to get the proper regimen of treatment in our province. I know some years ago there were definitely gaps in the system. Now, with the work at the IWK, the QE II and right across our regions, there is indeed a protocol of both testing and treatment that is in place.

MR. HOUSTON: With that number of confirmed cases - I know I'm hearing from Nova Scotians all the time with concerns about the diagnosis they are getting on the spot, so that's a number that likely could - I'm sure the minister would say would go up. But in that same April newspaper article, the Minister of Health and Wellness said he believed that giving Lyme disease "... a greater focus and greater effort ..." was the best way to getting up to speed on education, diagnostic area and treatment for Lyme disease.

Certainly, Nova Scotians who are suffering with the disease agree that it's time for a greater focus and greater effort when it comes to their diagnosis and treatment. Will the Minister tell the House what form of greater focus and greater effort he's instructed to the Department of Health and Wellness to take?

MR. GLAVINE: In the Department of Health and Wellness, we now have a provincial campaign, one that focuses on the six endemic areas in particular. I know this year in DHAs 1, 2 and 3, there was a greater focus on making sure that the clinicians have a much better understanding of the disease, and in fact, with the work as well in support by Doctors Nova Scotia, we know that we are in a much better position in 2014 than at any time in the past decade.

MR. HOUSTON: We all want Nova Scotians with Lyme disease to get the treatment and support they need and deserve and we need to be screening properly even for ticks through certain areas, so I was glad to hear the minister is focused on that.

I would also like just to give the minister one more opportunity to give Nova Scotians some assurance, particularly those that are suffering with Lyme disease, that they will benefit from a truly provincial approach to tackling Lyme disease.

MR. GLAVINE: I'm pleased the member opposite has raised this important public health issue in our province. We know that, finally, as well, it's being recognized by the federal government. They have put in place in Atlantic Canada a public health officer dealing solely with Lyme disease. We also know that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education - the labour component in particular - now has undertaken a very direct program to have their workers, have workers that are in our forestry, our mining, surveyors, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, who are much more likely to get a tick bite - a whole program to support them is in place.

Right now, we're working with the federal government and we're hoping to be able to engage in some type of provincial conference that will bring greater attention to this disease.

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

AGRIC.: HOMEGROWN SUCCESS - UPDATE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today is for the Minister of Agriculture. According to Statistics Canada, while the NDP was in government, Nova Scotia was the only province in the country to see an increase in the number of farms. For years, farmers had called on the provincial government to create a plan for the agriculture sector, and in 2012 they got one. A minister with a vision who cared about farmers and wanted to create a more viable industry.

Can the minister please give the House an update on the status of the government's 10-year plan for agriculture called Homegrown Success?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I thank the honourable member for the question. We are indeed continuing with that program, and have had some success moving that forward. It's a very important program. I believe that at the present time - and I have to check with stats on this - we have the fastest-growing number of new farmers in the country.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that remark and the answer. I agree with him. It's something that Nova Scotia can be proud of, the growing number of farms in our province.

Growing our agricultural sector is very good for all Nova Scotians. We have to do what we can to help our farmers become more sustainable, while ensuring safety of the food and people is also paramount. There are concerns, however, right now across the

province, that the current government is cracking down on small independent operators with regulations they feel are geared toward big industry.

My question for the minister is, what new programs, funding, or training is the minister going to provide to help those farmers and small processors who are struggling to meet the standards that are being forced upon them?

MR. COLWELL: Thanks very much again for that question. The truth is that we are not forcing any new standards on the industry. We have in place programs to help people get certified if they decide to get certified under processing facilities, and we encourage them to do that. It's a voluntary process, and unfortunately most of the facilities have not approached us for that effect. If they do, the cost for doing that is absolutely free. From our standpoint, there are no inspection fees. There are no fees of any kind from our department. We strongly encourage people to do that, but again, it's totally voluntary.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, again to the minister, thank you for that answer. Perhaps he might be able to provide us with a phone number or a website or an email that small processors and small farmers could contact to find out what they need to do in order to bring themselves up to the standards necessary.

During the election campaign in 2013, the Liberals did talk a good talk on their election commitments regarding agriculture, but so far, they haven't really walked the walk on certain promises. Promises that they made - which I will table - included expanding local products in academic and health care facilities, expanding the agriculture in the classroom program, and expanding the buy local program. I will table that.

My question is, does the minister plan to implement these commitments? If so, when, and if not, why not?

MR. COLWELL: There are multiple questions there. Indeed, the answer to all the questions is, we are definitely working on all those programs. We have made significant progress in all areas, and we will continue to work with other departments, such as the Department of Health and Wellness and the school boards, in order to put the training in the classroom, more in the classrooms. We recently announced a book for the Grade 6 classes that talks more about agriculture and local food in the Department of Health and Wellness and other areas. We're working very closely with those departments and starting initiatives in that area.

We are on track with our election promises, and we will continue to grow the industry and support and put as many farmers to work as we can in Nova Scotia, and make sure every product we can produce in Nova Scotia we can sell here or export, and indeed, help our economy as we intend to do through the Department of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

ENERGY: NAT. GAS SERVICES - EXPANSION

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. As the minister is well aware, there are real economic benefits for businesses and homeowners associated with gaining access to natural gas. The government's bill that has passed second reading will enable a greater amount of investment into natural gas distribution infrastructure through the province.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, what dialogue has the minister had regarding the potential expansion of natural gas services to more communities in Nova Scotia?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. It's something that's near and dear to my heart, because I'm one of those Nova Scotians who would like to access natural gas at my own home.

This is something that we've been working with, not only Heritage Gas, but the bill before the Legislature, should it pass the Legislature, will allow other companies to get into the market. We already know that Irving Energy is - well they're already actually providing CNG services to Acadia, we're talking about build-outs of systems and one of the things that the Minister of Health and Wellness has done is ensure that the hospitals in the province are largely moving to natural gas, many of them through CNG opportunities, which will allow the creation of satellite systems in those areas. Thank you very much.

MR. LOHR: I thank the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, for that answer.

One of the areas that I'm especially interested in seeing is expanded natural gas services in the Valley, and I know he has already mentioned a couple. There is a feeling that the potential anchor load for customers is near being achieved in the Valley as we see Michelin, Acadia University, the Valley Regional Hospital, and possibly more large anchor users going on line with natural gas. With the supply of inexpensive natural gas in the Valley, the region will be even more attractive to potential investors.

Has the minister considered bringing large supplies of natural gas to the Valley from an economic development perspective?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly what he means about bringing large supplies there, so I'll try to interpret his question. There are a number of large anchor loads that we've met who are looking at the possibility of taking CNG's services. We have met the municipalities as well as the suppliers of CNG to see whether they would be willing to put in satellite systems that would connect those various anchor loads which, obviously, would then allow people to connect off that existing pipeline. The reality is that in the Valley, in particular, not everybody is going to get natural gas even under the best-case scenario, just because of the distances from that pipeline.

However, it is one of the areas that we are actively working with and, quite frankly, many of the suppliers are waiting to see whether the legislation passes first.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for that answer.

To get to where we're going to in this question is that while we're happy to have CNG, the interest in the Valley is to have a pipeline up through the old railway, DAR, and there is a feeling that there are enough customers there, or there could be, in the Valley for a pipeline. Certainly the farms, there are many farms that have converted to propane and could easily convert to natural gas - and large chicken barns are very large users.

My question is, will the government engage in the necessary stakeholders to investigate whether a pipeline is possible into the Annapolis Valley?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member that that has already been looked at and, in fact, the economics are not there to run a pipeline off the existing Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline system just because of the sheer number of kilometres that would be involved in order to get off that pipeline. It's the same reason that problem has existed in Truro - it's the same reason why Antigonish is actually doing a satellite system and they're even closer actually than the Valley to the existing pipeline system. But I would be more than happy to sit down with the member and have some of the experts on this in our department sit down with the member and sort of walk him through some of the challenges.

Some of the customers he has talked about are exactly the customers that we would love to get natural gas and those opportunities to. There are some cost challenges; I think the member would know even looking at farms, the length of distance from the road, even if you have it along the road, right to the barn is sometimes a barrier for a natural gas system. But I would be more than happy to have myself and our staff sit down and discuss the opportunities and challenges with that member.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

ENVIRON. - TRENTON POWER PLANT: FLY ASH - ADDRESS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

Last fall I asked both the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy to address the issue of fly ash coming from the power plant in Trenton. The soot covers people's cars, gardens, houses, and entire properties. It is both an environmental and a health concern for these residents. Both ministers told me last year that they had a meeting scheduled with Hillside Trenton Environmental Watch in January of this year.

The Minister of Energy spoke about this for the first time Tuesday. There doesn't appear to be any progress, and the group thinks this is an example of the minister telling the group what they want to hear, to keep them quiet. My question to the minister is, why has the minister failed to address this issue?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. With respect to this particular issue, situation, when the question came to the House in December of last year, I believe the Minister of Energy and I both responded to the question and indicated that we were planning, and already had a meeting scheduled with the concerned citizens on this issue.

In January we followed through with that meeting. The Minister of Energy, the Minister of Health and Wellness, and myself, as well as our respective staff members, met with that group. Following that, I know the Minister of Energy has had conversations and been in frequent contact with some of the leaders of that group. I myself sat down with staff members in Pictou. I went down to the area, which would be much closer, to reduce the travel time for the concerned citizens and had further discussions, had the opportunity to review additional information that they provided, certainly very engaged on the file, but as I had indicated - actually, I suppose at this point I'll let him ask a follow-up question, but there is more to say. Sorry.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the information that the minister has just passed on. Once again, this group has been very active for a number of years and they told me they are there to stay. One year later the Minister of Energy told reporters that the government was doing what it can within current regulations and I'll table that.

This should not have been a new realization. This issue is something the Minister of Energy took great interest in while in Opposition. Checking regulations should not have been a shock to the government and he had a year to do so. My question to the minister is, will the minister be making changes to regulations to allow action to be taken?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member is right. We took great interest in this in Opposition and we still take great interest. The interest we took - and if the member goes back and checks Hansard - the request we made was for government officials to sit down, work with the group, and give them a realistic timeline on when this would be solved, what the challenges are. In Opposition I personally delivered the industrial approval at the time to Mr. Boyles, to his House. I drove it down to Pictou and dropped it off to him.

The Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Environment and myself have met with the group. We have walked them through what the options are, what the timelines are. We have also been walking them through the IRP process with Nova Scotia, which is currently underway and the Minister of Environment has committed to the group that as the industrial approval comes up in the next 18 to 24 months, I believe is the timeline, that the

issues they have raised will be addressed or will be looked at as part of that industrial approval process review. Previously I had spoken with the president of Nova Scotia Power and they are aware of that as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ENVIRON. - BOAT HBR.: CLEANUP - UPDATE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Environment. Last summer the government signed an agreement with Pictou Landing First Nation regarding the long-promised remediation of the Boat Harbour waste treatment facility. All residents of Pictou County have long awaited action on this issue and are eager to know what the government plans to do and when. Can the minister update the House on the plans regarding the cleanup of Boat Harbour please?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this question to the House. It does give me great pleasure to come here and speak to this very important issue for the first time, since we hadn't sat when that agreement was signed in June. That opportunity, that experience and that agreement that we entered into with the chief and council of Pictou Landing First Nation, I would like to first and foremost acknowledge the work of the chief and council, Chief Andrea Paul and council in the work that they did during June to sit down with myself and representatives of the Government of Nova Scotia, to work out and come to an agreement that was to the satisfaction of both parties. (Applause)

The opportunity was quite important and so are the results. As far as an update, I guess I'm getting the motion for the time, if I can follow up in the supplement, I'll give more updates to that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HOUSTON: The update is really what we're looking for, and I guess when the minister stands back up, I'm sure we'll get that. But after so many years of inaction, all the people of Pictou Landing, including the people of the Pictou Landing First Nation, are concerned about this issue, and they are rightfully frustrated because it's an important issue. All of the people want to be included in the process.

The residents of the entirety of Pictou Landing would like to see public meetings held in the area to allow their input on the government's plans for Boat Harbour. When the minister provides his update on what he has done so far, I wonder if he would commit to holding public meetings in the coming weeks so that all of the residents can be included in the process.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess as far as an update, what I want to indicate is that the agreement we entered into - to let the members of the House that may not be aware, members of the public - the agreement explicitly indicates that we are committed to ending

the flow of effluent into the Boat Harbour facility as well as the long-term remediation of the area.

As far as the progress on that particular issue, we've established a committee that has representatives both from the Pictou Landing First Nation, elder representatives as well as a member of the council and other members from their community, as well as representatives from the Government of Nova Scotia.

We've learned from past experiences with environmental challenges, in particular the work that was done on the Sydney tar ponds, an environmental disaster situation in this province that many thought at the time would be insurmountable, that could never be achieved. Yet in the past year, we've seen the opening of a fantastic park in that area.

We've seen that even in the face of some of the most problematic environmental disasters, that with a lot of hard work, a lot of commitment and with the will, we can move forward. Much is the case behind the direction and the plan and how we're moving forward on the Boat Harbour file. Thank you.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. I was listening intently to the makeup of the committee. I can assure the minister that all the residents of the area want to be part of that solution and they want to be part of the process, so I would ask the minister today if he would consider adding a couple of other residents from the area on to that committee. I'd specifically ask him if he would include Jane Thompson, who is a local lady whose family has been there for generations. She is very knowledgeable on the subject. She'd love to be part of the process.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, there are no plans to change the composition of that committee. We put a lot of work into building the trust and coming to the agreement that we came to. A lot of the work that was put in place through the month of July was actually in determining and establishing both the terms of reference and the makeup of the committee working on this file and moving forward.

We've made a commitment to address this issue and bring legislation before this House by June of next year. To start changing the course of action now might put the entire process at risk.

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

NAT. RES.: SHUBENACADIE RIVER - SALT DUMPING

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The Mineral Resources Act states that the Crown owns all minerals in or upon land in the province and the right to explore for, work and remove those minerals.

Currently, there is a plan in Colchester County to empty salt caverns in Alton and flush the salt into the Shubenacadie River, but that proposal now faces a potential treaty rights conflict, according to Chief Rufus Copage and his Shubenacadie First Nation Band Council.

My question is, will the Minister of Natural Resources meet with Chief Copage and Alton Gas to consider alternative options for using the salt in the caverns rather than dumping it into the Shubenacadie River?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, one thing that I think we can take great pride in in the Province of Nova Scotia is we have a model of First Nations consultation that is a leader in the country. We take our legal and treaty obligations very seriously with our First Nations Mi'kmaq communities, and of course, whenever there are any concerns on any sort of resource extraction or use of Crown land, we engage in very substantial and meaningful consultation with them, as we are obliged to by law.

MS. ZANN: I thank the minister for his answer, and I would agree with him that this is an extremely important issue for First Nations and for the province and the people of our province. However, Chief Rufus Copage was quoted as saying that consultation does not mean consent, and he would like to have further consultations with both Alton Gas and the province.

So my second question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The annual production of salt in Cumberland and Colchester Counties provides more than enough to meet Nova Scotia's industrial needs, but we could be exporting significant quantities of salt to other markets. In a *Chronicle Herald* article which I will table, the vice-president of the Nova Scotia division of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters said that exports are increasingly important to economies with small domestic markets such as ours.

Will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism agree to meet with Alton Gas and the Shubenacadie Band to consider export opportunities for the salt brine now that the Shubenacadie First Nation says their eel traps make the salt brine disposal site an active treaty fishing area for their people?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I'm more than happy to meet with any interested groups looking at exploring export opportunities for our province and helping grow our economy, and would be more than happy to meet with the parties that the member has identified.

MS. ZANN: Thank you to the minister for that response. I will definitely follow up with that with his office and with the other interested people.

My final supplementary is for the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Environment told us last week that a permit is required from the Department of Agriculture to approve any impacts to the dike lands of the Alton Gas project. Can the minister please tell us if Agriculture staff have confirmed that work conducted near the dike by the Alton Gas contractor last week has weakened the dike and what their plans are to protect that dike from high tides?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Indeed, there was some work done on the site by Alton Gas that was not authorized by our department. There is not an agreement in place yet to do that work, and we are investigating the condition of the dike.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre, with 40 seconds.

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Literacy is a basic foundation for successful futures. Poor literacy limits opportunities and leads to poverty. In today's information age, poor literacy is crippling. A Conference Board of Canada report released in 2012 showed that more than 40 per cent of adults in Nova Scotia had inadequate literacy skills, and the board gave Nova Scotia a D grade. I'll table that.

My question to the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired. Now we'll move on to government business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Government House Leader for ensuring we were able to do this today.

One of the things mentioned in the Speech from the Throne was an indication that a sexual violence strategy will be released in the year ahead. We can all agree that we need to do all we can in this Legislature to prevent sexual abuse. Today, I will be speaking about some of the sexual abuse that occurred in the Strait area and how we must support victims and protect our young people.

The Strait area is no different than other areas in the province, and unfortunately, this activity knows no bounds. I could mention the names of the abusers - some have been charged, some have not - and with the exception of two, I will not be doing that, for the sake of their families. But I do have a message for those families today. When you feel the pain of learning that someone close to you preyed upon children and young people, put that pain aside and think of how it was for the victim.

I'm not professionally trained in these matters. All I know is what I've learned from speaking with victims and the people who try to help them put their lives back together. There will not be any mention of the acts of the abuse, even though I have heard some stories and they would shock you. Man's inhumanity to man. The abuses I speak about today involve men and boys.

None of the abuse that I've heard about will be mentioned, primarily out of respect for the victims. I would not want to put those victims through that abuse again by speaking about it. I would not want to hurt them. Another reason is to protect the ears of the young who may hear these words. And hearing about how these predators work and what they do could very well arouse the anger of the public, and have a call for the return of the death penalty.

There is hope for these victims. We must help to give these victims hope. We can acknowledge that it happened, it was wrong, and it was not asked for or deserved. We can look them in the eye and tell them that they are good people. Surviving sexual abuse requires great courage, and in my mind these people deserve Nova Scotia's medal for bravery. (Applause)

Some have bravely asked that their names be put on the record here today in this Legislature. As we know, Mr. Speaker, when names are read into the record, they are read for all history to be remembered. I'm going to read those names now: Alvin MacInnis, Dale Sutherland, Barry Sutherland, Jeoff Hadley, Weldon Reynolds - and Mr. Speaker, with us here today, in your Speaker's Gallery, Bob Martin and Garnet Boudreau. I would like these two gentlemen to please stand, and I would like all members to give them a round of applause. (Applause)

I think of the amazing courage these people are displaying by coming forward like this. I also want to acknowledge people who are deceased. Out of respect for them and their families, I will not be mentioning their names, because of course we do not have permission. Sadly, I could mention the names of up to 40 others who have been impacted.

What it is like for these victims to come out publicly, Mr. Speaker? Well, Barry Sutherland, whose name I just mentioned, sent a note to me, and I'm going to read what he said. He said, "the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life, no question, but also the greatest. I spoke for the little goalie from Steep Creek, Guysborough County. That little nine- to 11-year-old boy. He now believes in himself."

As a society, we have a history of hiding sexual abuse. It wasn't until the late 1970s that stories of it began to be openly discussed. We also have a history of misunderstanding it. Freud suggested that women who claimed to have been sexually abused were hysterical and believing in fantasy.

A large per cent who seek counselling are people who abuse drugs. They do it to numb the pain and to distance themselves, but then there is no time for healthy living. All energy is being used to avoid thinking about what happened. Many victims come forward because their attempt to run away from what happened is destroying them. Many do not go to counselling willingly. They may, in fact, go for another reason and eventually disclose that sexual abuse is the real reason for their need for counselling.

Those who specialize in helping victims have identified that one of our core vulnerabilities is our sexuality. Sexual predators go after children and young people to build themselves up and to address their own inadequacies. What do we get in return? At least 15 people dead in Inverness County, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I shouldn't be talking about that but I say it because it's real, and it happened because we could have done more to help those people and we could have done more to protect them. Let us not forget them.

We are making decisions right now in this Legislature about matters that affect the safety of young people from the predators who live right here in our province. Our legal system is making decisions. Look at Fenwick MacIntosh, free to roam the world and abuse more children because our justice system could not get him before the court to face charges in a timely manner. Think of how those victims felt after courageously coming forward. I can tell them right here and right now, Mr. Speaker, that coming forward mattered. We know. The secret is broken and the shame only belongs to MacIntosh.

We must do better. Whether it is a child here or a child in India, we must do better. Let us build institutions that victims can trust. Trust is the hardest part for these victims. Their very hope rests on the trust needed for them to acknowledge they were abused and sharing that with others to free them from some of the damage done. Let us give hope to those suffering in silence. We can help them to control the impact of the damage so they can have a better quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, the secrecy of the acts of sexual abuse holds great pain for the victims. In fact, this secrecy is used by the Fenwick MacIntoshes as a way of holding power over their victims because it is the secrecy that holds the victim back from releasing all of the emotions they have bottled up inside - sadness, anger, lack of self-worth - even though they

are good human beings and may still have found a way to be successful and build their own loving families.

Families of the abuser must acknowledge, no matter how difficult it is for them to accept that their father or their brother or their son sexually abused others, that it happened or, at the very least, may have happened, because the only way forgiveness and healing can begin for everyone is when the actions of abuse are acknowledged and everyone agrees that those acts of abuse are wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I think about Father Claude Richard who on the court steps said, I may have sinned but I did nothing wrong. Now imagine that - and a man of the cloth no less. We know the problems that the church has had with some of its priests, but I will say this, those were not priests, I will say they were imposters. When I think of all the good priests out there, yet some of these people who made it their life to become a priest, quite possibly for the sole purpose of gaining access to children by using the position of respect and power they had in communities where people trusted them and using that just to get access to young people.

When we think about Father Claude's statement - I may have sinned, but I did nothing wrong - it opens up a window into the mind of some of these predators. Fenwick MacIntosh is a psychopath who walks free because our justice system failed to put him in jail for sexually abusing hundreds of boys. He did acknowledge that the abuse occurred, but in his sick mind, he actually believes - and stated in a court of law - that the abuse was consensual. Imagine. He believes he did nothing wrong.

This dark soul is now travelling poor countries under the guise of a spice company, once again preying upon the innocent and the unsuspecting and picking out from the crowd the young boy who has nothing and may be poor and uncared for, the boy who may be living in a broken home, and giving that boy a whole new world of problems. Can you imagine, years later, people turning their back on that boy and saying, that never happened - or worse, you asked for it. Does that lead to healing and forgiveness?

Sexual abuse is not a car accident we can look away from because we don't like what we see. We must acknowledge it and we must stop it from happening. That means effective punishment for the abuser and it means supporting the victim and confirming that what was done to them was wrong and helping them to see that they can still build a successful life. To stop this abuse, we need everyone to watch for it and to take responsibility to watch for it.

This week, I know that former NHL player Sheldon Kennedy was in Halifax making an appeal for early intervention and more coordinated care for young people who have suffered sexual abuse. He bravely came forward about the sexual abuse he suffered at the hands of a former hockey coach. Dr. Amy Ornstein, the medical director of the Child Protection Team at the IWK, says the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre, which is

located in Calgary, is a model she would like to see developed here in Nova Scotia. It has the services survivors need - pediatricians, child psychologists, therapists, police officers and Crown prosecutors.

One of the benefits of this system is that children don't have to tell their stories over and over again to different people, creating the risk for people who defend pedophiles in court to use any discrepancies that a child might have between those different stories they are telling to various people and using any discrepancies to suggest that the child isn't really sure of what happened. I was pleased to see Minister Peter MacKay here this week announcing support for that centre.

Bob Martin, who is here with us today, has publicly offered to help victims of sexual abuse. There is help for victims, including from people who have gone through it. I want to pass around a photo - I'm going to table this, but I also want to pass around - a photo from 1970. I'd like for every member to have a look at this. Mr. Speaker, could I table a photo? Thank you.

The photo that is being tabled is a photo of the Port Hawkesbury Band. The young boys in this photo, some of them have been abused. I wanted to table that so that people could see it and how easily it can happen and how unsuspecting people can be, but it can be right in their very own corner of the province.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Martin has publicly expressed an offer of help both to victims of MacIntosh and also any who have served in the Port Hawkesbury Youth Band who were victims. He is a victim in both cases, and having spent the last 19 years in court with the MacIntosh case, his biggest worry is that people who know what he went through will choose to stay quiet.

Mr. Speaker, we can't have that and I think it is great that Bob is stepping forward to try to ensure anybody out there who is worried that if they come forward that it's all for naught. His very being here today is testament to the fact, and our recognition in this Legislature is testament to the fact, that it matters when people come forward.

Another of Bob's concerns is that this is not about vengeance to the abuser but is an opportunity for victims to have a healthy dialogue with another victim to ease the pain and to know that they are not alone, that they should not feel guilty or ashamed.

Healing from sexual abuse does not require victims to go into great detail about what happened. I am told victims need not come out publicly. They need not take on another burden. I am told they should keep the matter secret, if they need to, but if that burden is too heavy, we in this province must ensure there is help and support available for them.

When victims do come forward, it is the first step they can take to break the power the abuse has had over them, and when they display extraordinary bravery and come forward publicly, it helps other victims to know that what was done to them was wrong, it was not asked for, and the abuser no longer has the power of secrecy over that victim. Mr. Speaker, others know and they know that it was wrong.

When we think about the impact on families, one of the other victim's names I mentioned today is Dale Sutherland, and Dale shared with me the impact to his family. He said that he wanted us to know here in this Legislature that on a personal front - and I will just read:

“. . . my relationship with my wife and children has suffered tremendously due to the toll the lengthy legal process took to complete. . .

It broke my family unit down, month by month and year by year, and now our relationships are in tatters. They want nothing more to do with the Fenwick MacIntosh case, because it has stolen so much from them.

The victims however have no such luxury, and must live out their entire lives in 'some kind' of pain, with or without their family and friends.

I am going to try and somehow get them listen to your speech, and if successful perhaps it may provide them with a bit of comfort knowing their efforts were not in vain.”

Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment in this Legislature right now to thank the families of the victims who have stood by their loved one and who have supported them, and who took the time to understand what happened and what that meant for the victim. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these families are healers and their love will conquer every wrong by every abuser on any day. May we all stand together in this Legislature and say to victims of sexual abuse: There is no shame for you in what happened. You are the brave ones and we honour you today. (Sustained Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 6.

Bill No. 6 - Petroleum Resources Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it's with a heavy heart that I go into this subject, just having heard my colleague, the member for Inverness and his topic. I know I would speak for all members of the House, hoping for the victims of sexual abuse that in their courage to go forward and help others they would find healing themselves - and I'd like to thank my colleague for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, in my comments about Bill No. 6 previously, I addressed a number of issues - one was the comment from the Minister of Energy that fracking would have a negative impact on agriculture. In those comments I drilled down into USDA statistics for Pennsylvania and North Dakota, two states that have been heavily fracked in the period from 2007 up to this day. We saw in those statistics that, in fact, there was no negative impact from fracking, that in both cases both states had significant increases in agricultural production in that time frame.

In both cases both states had significant increases in the number of acres farmed. In both cases both states had increases, in one case more modest; in the case of Pennsylvania in terms of the value of agricultural land; in the case of North Dakota the value of the agricultural land doubled from 2007 to 2012, at a time which I would remind you in the United States that home values and general real estate values declined in that time frame, 2007 to 2012, and are only now rebounding.

I did make the comment, Mr. Speaker, that the agricultural economy runs a little different than the general economy. In that time frame we saw significant increases in the value of basic commodities.

I hope I at least put what I think are very, very credible statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a highly-respected gathering of statistics that is done by that organization and has been done for more than 100 years.

Then I talked about three farm friends of mine whom I had actually called on Monday night, all three of them, who are respectively in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. My friend in Saskatchewan who actually has a gas well on his farm that dates to the 1950s, I talked about the value of that actual decommissioned well to his farm and I hope that someday in the future, if this process goes ahead, that when it comes time to

decommission wells that landowners would have the opportunity to purchase or acquire those decommissioned wells because a gas well will continue to give small amounts of gas for possibly hundreds of years, certainly enough to supply my friend Jack Rigby's farm, with two homes, two sheds, a corn drier, with all the energy needs for the last 40 years - so of significant value to one property.

I did talk about my friend in Saskatchewan and finally also my buddy in Alberta. I had not realized prior to phoning him that, in fact, my friend in Alberta who lives in Innisfail, Alberta, and is a vegetable farmer with 1,000 acres, is on a piece of property that is heavily fracked. In those 1,000 acres there are 15 wells. Each well takes up about an average of four acres, according to Rod. He told me that depending on the type of ground that is being taken up, whether it's high-value vegetable ground or lower-value ground, the range can be from \$2,500 an acre to \$900 an acre. So my friend Rod, based on those calculations, he would be receiving at the low end somewhere from about \$60,000 to \$150,000 royalties - not royalties but rental fee per year. It was a significant revenue source for Rod on his own vegetable ground. Rod grows carrots, sells them into the - I believe it is the Calgary market. Also, as I mentioned - I talked to him, and he was actually driving his combine. He does grains in rotation.

I also brought forth statistics from Statistics Canada that showed that in the time frame from 2007 to 2012, farm values in Alberta and Saskatchewan actually went up significantly, when in Atlantic Canada the farm values did increase, but only very marginally.

I hope we put real-world statistics to the fact that, yes, these industries are going into these areas, but that the impact on agriculture is not clear at all. It certainly would seem to suggest that there is no impact and the agriculture went forward, and in fact, there might be indications that the increased revenue to farmers like Rod Bradshaw were a factor in the fact that more land was farmed in those states. One of the things that farmers tend to do when they have a new source of income is buy more land, buy a new combine, buy a new tractor, so even though they tend to invest in the productive capacities of their own farms when they have added income, and that may in fact, by my guess, be the case.

The fact that Rod Bradshaw can be on very, very highly productive vegetable land in Alberta and not have an issue with 6 per cent of his land - 60 acres out of 1000 - going into wells, to me speaks volumes of the fact that, as in many cases, farmers are able to adapt to the circumstances and continue to do the activities that they like to do. In fact, when I asked Rod what the effect of these wells on his land was, he said there were two effects. One was - without him mentioning the revenue. I had to bring that up, and he was not real keen to share that with me, but I drilled down into that a little bit. He did appreciate the fact that they made good roads, but he did have underground pipelines on his farm. Accommodating the underground pipes was a bit of a factor, but it didn't sound that huge.

When I looked at the Wheeler report, I noticed that on Page 319 there's an analysis of environmental impacts and hazards. If you look at that, you can kind of draw a line and draw what's down below ground and what's above ground, and if you look at it, the two threats that are below ground that are mentioned are both cited as a frequency rating of "rare." They would be the direct migration of pollutants from the deep zone to the shallow zone at A and B well integrity.

It's interesting that as we talk about fracking, I think the public imagination is that the risks really are - because of the term "fracking," and it's maybe even a pejorative term in the way we speak. But those underground risks are actually exceedingly rare, and are fairly easily dealt with.

I did notice when we talked about that, the idea that natural gas could come up into your well because of fracking - I would like to quote from the Wheeler report here, from Page 206: "At this point, it is important to mention that risk in wellbore integrity is evaluated not only as the probability of a gas migration incident but also as the consequences of an incident. For example, although gas migration is well-known and there are instances reported regularly in Alberta, there is a great deal of indirect evidence suggesting that gas leaking into groundwater wells is not a major public health issue. Much of this indirect evidence is a general lack of morbid effects noted despite many hundreds of thousands of known cases of naturally-occurring methane seepage into water wells around North America."

In other words, what that is saying is that many, many hundreds of thousands of wells could have one form or another, whether it's biogenic or naturally-occurring natural gas seeping into their wells, and there is no effect from that. So that's already - pre-fracking, that has been there since wells have been drilled in North America. There have been many, many hundreds of thousands of wells that have this condition and there are no known morbid effects. That's in the Wheeler report.

This idea that most of the effects, when in the public imagination, the fear of what is happening underground - in fact, the Wheeler report goes on to mention 14 more environmental effects associated with fracking, which I would categorize all of them as being above-ground; 13 of the 14 are categorized as certain to happen, and one is listed as likely. I think you could categorize them as sort of the general effects that any industrial activity would have on an environment.

So if we think about the oil and gas industry that we have now in Nova Scotia, there are many - we have, for instance, if you are using furnace oil to heat your home - if we looked at that furnace oil industry and if we didn't have it here and we said we were going to introduce a furnace oil industry today into Nova Scotia, we might well look at that and say, no, we don't want that.

One of my activities prior to becoming an MLA was I was on the board of directors of Kings Mutual Insurance Company, which is a small - I'm very proud to be there - it's, I believe, a 108-year-old insurance company in the Annapolis Valley that primarily insures farmers. I'm very proud to be on that insurance company as a director.

One of the major concerns for Kings Mutual and for all other insurers in the province is the effects of furnace oil spills on properties. I can tell you that when a tank of furnace oil is let loose and drained into a home, inside a home or outside a home, underground, if it's less than a half-million-dollar bill for the insurance company, then you got off pretty good - very serious effects.

Many of the effects that are listed here in this Wheeler report are similar to that. They are effects that would be associated with any type of industrial activity in our province. I don't know if the public really understands that in this debate. I think that - and actually, ironically, as I read the Wheeler report, I realized that one of the things that the Wheeler report was asking for was public debate. Possibly, in having this Bill No. 6 and a moratorium on this, the minister has inadvertently triggered the debate the Wheeler report has asked for. That's an interesting effect of that.

As we notice these above-ground effects, then I would say that those apply to any activity that we would have. For instance, if you were to say, if we can imagine that we lived in a world where we didn't have any automobiles, and if I was to say, well, we're going to introduce the automobile industry into Nova Scotia and it will be worth billions, it will provide all these jobs - which is clear, you know it provides a lot of jobs. But I would say that about one person in 7,000 is going to die in any given year in a car accident - I think that we would say no, that's far, far too dangerous. Yet we accept the automobile industry.

We accept the fact that the automobile is a major pollutant in global warming. We accept that it's very, very dangerous, very many accidents in a year, huge insurance costs, many people are maimed and injured with the automobile, yet because it's an ordinary activity and we have the feeling of being in control when we're driving an automobile, we accept huge risks. But when we talk about a new industry coming in, we say it has to meet this requirement of having all of it being perfectly safe, yet we accept things that are not perfectly safe all the time.

I just think that if we think about that in those terms, sometimes what we as - and maybe that's a long way of saying that sometimes our fears and the reality of the risks and the fears of the risks do not always match up. It's very easy to be afraid of things that are kind of mysterious, but in reality, the risks associated with fracking do not exceed the risks associated with any other industrial activity. You cannot say there are no risks.

Certainly if we look at the opportunity we have in Nova Scotia - and I'm not going to say that I know what that is, it is certainly unknown. I think that remains to be seen but it

would be interesting. If the oil companies are interested in doing something here then possibly there is some possibility that we could have that industry here; we know that they are and we know there is at least a reasonable level of interest in the shale gas in Nova Scotia.

How much more time do I have, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have three minutes.

MR. LOHR: Three minutes, okay. I had more material there but we'll just go back to that - I'll leave that alone.

What I would like to say in conclusion is that, in my opinion, industry across the nation is very sensitive to signals sent by governments. This is one of the things that my friend from Saskatchewan, Ian MacFadden said. He said: John, everything turned around when we got rid of the socialist governments and we had a government that was open for business.

In 2003, when I was in Saskatchewan, if you had looked at a map, you would have seen oil wells in Alberta and none in Saskatchewan. Well, I can tell you that the geology of those two provinces doesn't follow a political line, that there was always oil in Saskatchewan, but there was a socialist government that was against development. I say that to say that the signals the government sends are important. For the government to send a signal of a moratorium is a very disappointing signal to send to industry across the country.

In my experience - and I don't know if this is totally comparable - but I've had the experience of going into the head office of Walmart in Ontario to pitch my Farmer John Summer Savoury. I've had the experience a number of times of going into Loblaws and Sobeys, and when you are dealing with those people who work for major corporations, it is difficult to appreciate how busy they are and how much stress they are under. You need to make things very simple and quick and they are making a quick decision.

I can only imagine that the oil/gas industry executives who would be making a decision of where to invest their money would be under equal, if not more, pressure. Signals that are sent by governments make a difference to these companies. It has a very serious, chilling effect to send a moratorium on oil and gas development, shale gas development. The way this government has said that, I would say, has a chilling effect and not only on shale gas development companies, but also on basic resource development companies because they are under enormous pressure.

The people who work in those companies are people like us and they are not going to take the time to try to push against the stream, in terms of legislation. They are not out to do us any favours; they are just trying to get their job done and maximize their role in that

company as quickly as possible. In that sense I'm very disappointed that there was a moratorium, that this bill proposes a moratorium.

I'm also very disappointed that this bill brings up the issue of high volume. My understanding of what, from reading the report . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Your time has elapsed. Thank you.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill No. 6, amendments to the Petroleum Resources Act. It's certainly a very, very important piece of legislation and Act in our province. My main focus, in the following few words, will revolve around the theme: let's not block any further advancement regarding the acquisition of information regarding onshore exploration.

Madam Speaker, natural gas has proven itself to be a reliable, clean fuel source to meet the energy needs of modern economies around the world. We have seen industries grow here in our Province of Nova Scotia, thanks to the access to affordable natural gas.

Madam Speaker, this is one particular topic in our province that certainly is divided into two camps. It doesn't appear that anyone is on the fence. You are either against it or you are on the other side where, perhaps, you want more information with regard to it, to make an informed decision. If doors look like they are closed for any future hope of exploring natural gas in this province at the present time, the government doesn't appear to be interested in allowing the experts to do their work and find out if it is possible for Nova Scotia to benefit from their natural resources.

There is an opportunity to create jobs in Nova Scotia. My question is, does the government have a plan to create these jobs? Meanwhile, thousands of Nova Scotians have left, and more will be going in search of employment, the majority of them out West. Last week a friend of mine, John Wilson, who initiated and created a plumbing company in 1979 and is known all around the county for his expertise, closed his plumbing company and left with one or two of his employees for Cambridge Bay. Prior to that, he had nine other opportunities to work in various areas of the western provinces and the Northwest Territories.

Again, this particular individual really did not want to go, however, because of lack of job opportunities in work, he decided that it was time to make a career decision and he is looking at, perhaps, spending his last four years prior to retirement working in the western provinces. We all have family members and friends who are working out West. Just to name a few - names that come to my mind very quickly - Dave MacKay, Alan Dunn, Jim MacKay, Curtis Purdy, and the list goes on and on.

We are at a crossroads in this province. Should we be ignoring the prospects of creating jobs in Nova Scotia? We have to move forward, collectively, and improve the economy of our province. We just have to create jobs. We have to keep our people here, especially our youth. We have to improve our economy. If there is one thing that is important in this Legislature, it is that all members work collectively to make Nova Scotia better, to create jobs, and not only keep our youth home but workers with experience.

There are no easy answers. However, when the opportunity arrives on a silver platter, the opportunity to examine a way to create jobs, we should at least have a look at it. We need up-to-date stats indicating the amount or volume of available gas. We need correct numbers. We need to eliminate red tape. We need less bureaucracy and this certainly would be beneficial in a lot of different areas, in particular this one.

As mentioned many times in the Legislature over the last few days - we have 8,700 fewer jobs in the province. The country is growing and improving, but it appears Nova Scotia is sliding backwards. Nova Scotia finally has a new way to create jobs and what do we do? We have placed a ban on a potentially viable project. Has government downgraded the onshore potential? This Party would like to take the opportunity to explore the potential of onshore gas resources.

Madam Speaker, can we do things safely? I think so. There is a potential for 1,500 jobs. We would like to see more research; we would like to see more scientific stats. And, hopefully, we are not closed for business.

Where do we go from here? Well, Madam Speaker, we know that Alberta has unlocked massive amounts of oil and natural gas. This means Canada's energy security has increased. This improves the ability to generate electricity, heat homes and provide power to vehicles for many years and generations to come. Hydraulic fracturing has improved economies. It has generated royalty payments to property owners, tax revenues to governments, creation of high-paying jobs and a tremendous spinoff of jobs in construction, hospitality, engineering, equipment in the oil and natural gas shale development.

Having said that, we do need additional information. With that additional information, perhaps down the road, in the future, we can make an informed decision what direction we should take. Do we have an abundance of natural resources? Well, let's find out how we can unlock new supplies of natural gas. We could transform our energy future in the province. Responsibly developing these resources is what we have to discover. If that can be done, the end product is very good jobs and a vibrant economy in this province.

Fracking is a contentious issue in Nova Scotia, and I think it should be. We have to gain a greater insight into drilling shale formations. Like I mentioned earlier, we have two groups or sides on this topic: residents who wish to have our natural resources developed in

a safe and responsible way, and residents who prefer not to have any oil or natural resources developed at all.

If Nova Scotia has a considerable amount of clean-burning supplies of natural gas, would this mean more affordable energy and perhaps more consistent prices in the province?

I will admit that this process would definitely need close scrutiny or supervision by our local, provincial and federal regulators. Let's find out more from the experts before we close all doors. Let's find out about the development process and the necessary steps required to ensure safe operations. Experts in favour of this industry will often say that drilling for natural gas, in itself, doesn't pose a threat to air and water quality if it's done properly. Well, if that's true, let's find out and see if that is true. Let's leave the doors open for more dialogue and new dialogue because we have many, many questions.

Members on both sides of the House have many questions with regard to this industry. Do the benefits obtained from shale gas outweigh the pitfalls of fracking? What about cost-benefit analysis? Once again, is there something wrong with the methods of extraction? We could go on forever putting questions forward, trying to get additional information, accurate information, scientific information to see what the province should do with regard to this topic.

Did the panel members of the Wheeler report have the opportunity to sit down and speak with the appropriate government officials? Once again, we are not advocating that fracturing should start immediately, because there's a lot of work to do before we ever reach that point, if ever. Will anything happen now that there is a ban on hydraulic fracturing, Madam Speaker? With no ban it would still take a considerable amount of time and study before one would see any wells being drilled in this province.

Therefore, does the government's decision mean Nova Scotia is closed for business? What's the rush to do that? Let's be reasonable and tackle this issue in a responsible way. We do have a new way to create perhaps 1,500 jobs. I believe we have a responsibility to find out the answers, the knowledge that is required to make an informed decision. Environmentalists are claiming the ban isn't enough; industry are saying, slow down and let us move slowly and carefully to find out if it might be the way to go.

We certainly want to be a have province. I haven't met anyone happy about being a have-not province, and we have so many Nova Scotians working out West because of their resource development. Meanwhile, we are denying them the potential to be working in the province that they live in. Imagine how all the workers from Nova Scotia that are working out West would feel if they knew that the government was intending to have the experts do further study on this issue. They would look forward to returning and working here, the excitement of reuniting with their families.

Madam Speaker, as all members in this House know, it's really hard on the family dynamics when you have a loved one returning out West with all types of different schedules - some working two weeks with time off, some working four weeks with time off, some working for three months before they actually get a chance to return home, depending on the particular company that they work for.

Again, we're at the crossroads. What is the correct thing to do in this case? Should we just leave it alone and ignore it, or should we study it further and get some accurate information to base our final decision on? I'm not sure who made the decision to actually ban this here - how many were involved in the decision? What did they base their decision upon? Scientific evidence, industry findings, so on? But we're in a situation in this province where our economy is at an all-time low, and we certainly have lost too many people to the western provinces. I'm hoping that wiser heads will prevail and give everyone the opportunity to explore this diligently, to find out if it's something that could happen here in Nova Scotia, something that could be environmentally friendly and safe, and at the same time, improve the economy of the province.

The government has introduced another bill that will enable the growth of compressed natural gas satellite distribution networks around the province, providing access to inexpensive natural gas to areas away from the mainland. Some areas of the province have access to natural gas, and once again, that is continuing to expand. We're looking in areas of Pictou County now that will certainly have the benefit of that. It has been a topic on the minds of most constituents in our county, that they may finally have a stable supply of natural gas coming to their businesses, to their hospitals, to their homes.

Madam Speaker, I was very disappointed to find out that the government's decision was to put the brakes on, especially after three days. I really believe that the Wheeler report did not intend for this government to put a ban on hydraulic fracturing. Again, our Party stance is the fact that we would like to see the experts in this industry gain as much information as they possibly can on the pros and cons of drilling for natural gas and again, to see if it does or doesn't pose a threat to our air and water quality, if it is done properly.

Once again, I think we owe it to ourselves to find out if this is true, Madam Speaker. Leave the doors open. Acquire more information. Get our questions answered. See what the benefits are. See if the benefits outweigh the pitfalls of fracking, and as my colleague from Pictou East has said a number of times in the Legislature, what about that cost-benefit analysis again?

There is so much information we don't know, Madam Speaker, and I think it is our responsibility to go forward and find out this information, find out the answers to all the questions we may have.

In closing, Madam Speaker, we would like to see more open dialogue and study into this industry and perhaps, after due diligence, an informed decision can be made. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, government every day is required to make a range of decisions, some have a positive effect on Nova Scotians and we all take great pride in those decisions. We all should be working towards more effective goals for the province.

There are also a great number of tough decisions to be taken and decided upon. They start with an assessment of priorities. Government must have priorities in order to move the province forward in a sustainable, safe and healthy manner. A top priority for the government should be jobs, and for government and for individual Nova Scotians, jobs should be at the top of our list, along with a healthy environment. Being able to work and raise a family in Nova Scotia should be easy; it should not be so difficult. We shouldn't be seeing 9,000 jobs lost in a year.

From 2009 to 2013 the number of people leaving Nova Scotia for other provinces in Canada, annually, increased more than seven times, from 751 to 5,877 and a number of those were under 25 years of age.

Nova Scotians need jobs and the government should be doing everything that is expected of them to support jobs, especially private industry that creates them. Now I believe we have just closed the door - or I should say the Liberals have just closed the door and possibly even threw away the key - to an industry that could create thousands and thousands of jobs in our province.

I think we are getting really good at missing opportunities here in Nova Scotia, one that would bring families home - our sisters, our brothers, our mothers, our fathers.

In my opinion, I think this is a weak piece of legislation. The bill actually pleases no one, or so that's what I've heard from my constituents. On one hand, I have those who are anti-frackers saying that it's not enough. On the other hand, I have frackers who are saying that it's very disappointing and they see no one wanting to come here and invest in Nova Scotia or even explore. I think that we're looking at a bill here that really pleases no one. It kind of makes us look, or allows Nova Scotians to sort of have that visual of us just sitting on the fence.

I have given a lot of thought about this for a long, long time - actually, my first experience with drilling, fracking - I spent a lot of time in Pennsylvania over the years, the last 15 years, and one thing I have witnessed in that state is that it's probably the second, maybe even the first state that has had more drilling done than any other. But technology

has improved and it has improved greatly. It certainly provides a lot more security now for those who are in the industry of drilling.

Again, I do think this is a piece of legislation that is weak and no bold action has been taken on it. I look at many people in my constituency, in the Town of Pictou. Growing up, there were about 5,600 people in the town of Pictou; now, we have 3,100. Many of my friends are working out West in this industry and have told me personally that they would love to be home working in this industry.

They often wonder why we're not doing more investigating. I think that they have a good point. I think, who is going to do any type of exploration for a resource that they are not allowed to produce? It makes no sense. I think we've just turned away a number of companies that would be interested in coming here and exploring and just finding out what the potential is.

Maybe there is no potential. Maybe we don't have any gas to drill for. What I do know though is that people - and I know all the members in this Chamber - we're coming into those months where people are going to be turning up their thermostats and I know that there's a lot of difficulties around that. I know a lot of are continuously calling - or I know in my office, it seems like every other day I'm calling the resource department at Nova Scotia Power looking for help and assistance and helping people. Even myself, I love the idea of thinking that we can have natural gas here - clean fuel and cheaper.

I know myself, I live in an older home, 200 years old. It's an old stone house, but I went through the process of investing a large amount of money to put new windows and insulation and everything. It's only 2,000 square feet, but my oil bill last year was \$5,600. Now, I like it warm.

AN HON. MEMBER: How big is your house?

MS. MACFARLANE: It's only 2,000 square feet. It's a very old home - like I said, it's 200 years old - but it was all gutted and new insulation and everything, but I spent \$5,600 with Bluewave Energy.

AN HON. MEMBER: This winter, we're coming down and renovating your house for you. New windows, new doors and everything.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: There's your offer.

MS. MACFARLANE: I'll report back this time next year and let you know about that.

I'm lucky that I can afford to pay for the oil, but there are many people in my constituency who can't, and they're constantly coming in and asking, when are we going to

get natural gas? Now, I know a lot of them don't understand the process of getting natural gas. They think it's just an easy fix. I had the opportunity to meet with Heritage Gas and go over some their plans and future ambitions. With great welcoming, we see them now in Pictou County, but of course it's sort of bypassing the Town of Pictou. But Northern Pulp will be using them. I believe our hospital may be tapping into that resource as well. Pictou is on their radar but certainly not for anytime soon to make sure there's piping over that way.

Once again we go back to people who can't afford to heat their homes in the winter. It's very difficult to see people come into my office and have that struggle and many of them are suffering. I'm glad Nova Scotia Power does have that resource department that usually works out something, but I wouldn't be surprised if many of you are like me and there have been times when financially you have helped someone to kind of get across to that point of knowing that we can set up a plan, but they need it to put oil or pay their power bill in order to get a new system through Nova Scotia Power to help them subsidize their heating costs.

I look at this bill and I just think to myself, I'm really not sure about the whole purpose of it. I think it's almost a stalling tactic not to take that bold action. As I have mentioned earlier, I have done a lot of research and investigating and, like the member for Cape Breton Centre the other day, it kind of made me chuckle when he said you know I don't think I'm ready for "drill, baby, drill" and I had to think back to myself and that's probably how I feel right now. What I do know is that we need to explore more. I've certainly attended six anti-fracking drilling events or conferences and I've attended about four that were pro. What I do know is that any of us probably in here right now could go to Google and justify either case.

I have a cousin who is in Alberta who is president of an oil/gas company and oddly enough his sister is an environmentalist in California. I've listened to their debates and it's quite interesting, and there is one thing that both of them agree on and that's we continue to evolve and we continue to find newer technologies and new ways of doing things better and safer. I just believe that considering the economic decline here in Nova Scotia we seriously need to open up this opportunity to do more exploring. We have to; we have to show the people of Nova Scotia. We have 900,000 reasons why we need to show them that we're at least investigating and looking at new ways to have employment here - good, sustainable, well-paying jobs.

I remember the other day, in the gallery, we had a gentleman here by the name of Rob Henderson and he - Madam Speaker, I don't know if you recall, he was in the gallery and he was introduced and he's a crane operator. For the last two years he has been commuting back and forth to Alberta for work. He struggled with that and just a few weeks ago he made a tough decision, a very tough decision and he moved his family out West. I know that many of us see that day in, day out. He wanted to stay here, he wanted to raise his

kids in Nova Scotia but it just wasn't possible anymore without meaningful work, and he simply couldn't afford the cost of not having them out there with him.

I know everyone in this Chamber knows someone like Rob, whether it's a family member or just a friend. What I'm witnessing though, it seemed like there for a few years every time I turned around it was a friend of mine who was moving out West to work in the gas or oil industry, but now what I'm witnessing is - I just lost some good friends, but they're grandparents and they're retired teachers and they have decided our children are out West, what's the point in us staying here? We're missing that opportunity to be with our grandchildren and see them every day. So now we just don't have people going out West to work, we have people moving out West to be with family. It is very scary to think that we are losing them as well.

I think we are getting to the point of no return and I just hope that this government will look again at this weak piece of legislation. I really do believe that they simply have closed the door on exploring and welcoming anyone who would invest any amount of money into exploring. I just hope that, possibly, they didn't throw away the key as well. On that note I will take my seat and thank you so much for allowing me to speak.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: When I go home I always get asked by people, how are you doing here? And I say to myself, I say to them, you know, it is quite a learning curve, except that I haven't seen the curve yet. It seems to be just straight up, for me anyway, at this point in time.

One thing that I tell them that is common for both of these jobs - the one that I did before as well as the one I am doing now - is that I do have the desire to do what is best for God's creation. Now that includes the people within that creation, the animals within that creation, and also the environment within that creation.

One of things I have found out is that nothing is black and white. I thought there would be some things that would be, but I'm finding out, more and more, that there are less and less things that are black and white and this particular issue is one of these areas for me.

If I were asked, maybe a few years ago, how do I feel about fracking? I would probably say I don't want to see it happen. If I went to one of my church meetings at this point in time - I found this out the weekend too - I would be told the exact same thing: do not touch it, do not do it, it's not good for us.

You are just hit with so much information as to what is actually best for us to do, and that is what I mean about not being sure what is the best route to go. I remember going to a meeting, back in the Fall, on waste water. The meeting was in Truro and it was a very, very heated meeting. Waste water that is in Debert, waste water that is in Kennetcook,

there are millions of litres just sitting there and we were trying to decide what the best thing is to do with that.

Now some people suggested that we just truck all of those litres, take it out to Ontario or Alberta, where they can deal with it, and just get it out of our environment. Others said look, if we brought that from New Brunswick, why don't we just truck it right back to New Brunswick and dump it on them. Well, for me, they are not good options because what is good for us is good for someone else. What is bad for us is also bad for someone else, so I do not want to dump problems on someone else, if it is a problem.

Here I am caught with hearing people who are very concerned about the environment, of which I am as well, and then I go in to caucus meetings and I talk to other businesses, and I get different information. Now part of the information is that we have a lot of jobs in Nova Scotia that are just not being utilized and it is a concern that a lot of people are going out West and they are not being able to find the work. So if this process of natural gas is going to give us some jobs, then maybe we need to have a look at it.

I was again thinking of how we handle the waste water, for instance, and that's a big concern of people. Lafarge came up with an idea that this government has adopted, and I think rightfully so. The waste water is being used by Lafarge to do some cooling in their system. Tests have been made, and it has been found that it is a safe way to get rid of the waste water. So we do have a way to get rid of that. I'm not sure what is in this province.

Going back to God's creation again, you know, this creation - I think this province has so much here which we can develop that it would just boggle my mind. I have talked to geologists, I have talked to scientists, and they tell us that we are sitting on "a gold mine" here. We have so many resources that we could get at.

Now if we can get at these resources and these resources are good, then I must believe that we have the go-ahead to develop. Whatever herbs or whatever vegetables or whatever animals that are on this earth and we find ways in which we can use them, then, again, I think we have been given the okay to go ahead and develop. That's how our medicines came to be developed, by using what is around us.

When someone came up with fire, they had to take the elements, put those together, so that we had fire. We have all the elements here upon which to work. We just need to know how to use them properly.

I find myself now where I didn't find myself before. That is, I am now open to the science. I was closed off to the science, I think, to a large extent, and now I'm finding that because of Lafarge, because of Alton Gas and what they have put me through, as far as indoctrination is concerned, that the science, if we follow it properly, can really help us, not hinder us. I have to trust someone out there, I really do.

I'm not a scientist. I can't just categorically say that this is wrong or we shouldn't be doing this or it really doesn't matter, whatever. I've got to trust something, and I've got to trust that the science is going to tell me what direction to go in. With respect to this, I've got to trust the Minister of Environment to do his job and to make sure that whatever is done is going to be done safely. There are just so many factors now that we have to consider. As I said, I am really open to the science. I am open to what is best for this province and the people who are in this province.

Natural gas just seems to be the cleanest, most efficient route to go here, because again, I have so many people in my constituency who really are suffering because of power bills. They need to find alternative ways for energy. To me, this is a good alternative for energy. It just has to be done properly. It really needs to be done properly, and we need to be very careful about how we go about it.

So, having said that I am open to the science, the science has to prove to me that this is the right way to go. I'm just hoping that we in this province will make some good decisions with respect to the resources we have here, taking into consideration all the other needs of this province such as an alternative energy, the jobs that we need. There's a whole raft of things that we need to look at, so I hope we are going to remain open to this, just to hear what scientists do say, how it can be done safely, and if it's okay, I would like to see us proceed.

Now, if it's proven to me that it's not okay, I'm not going to support it. But I need to find out the information before I can make good decisions - we all do. Putting a ban on, I don't think is allowing us the opportunity to find out just what this province does have and how we can utilize it for the benefit of all of the citizens. (Interruption)

Madam Speaker, I was just getting some advice from my caucus.

I'd like to close by saying that I am more open now than I ever was before, at least to finding out what's here and how we develop it. I would really like to see us move in that direction. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: It's kind of risky for me to get up to even talk about this subject. It was incredibly contentious in my area not that long ago when there was a company looking to do oil and gas exploration at Lake Ainslie - it wasn't in the lake, but it was very close to it. There was a lot of discussion, at least in my area. I honestly think there was probably more discussion in my area than any other corner of the province. I'm also hearing about Cape John as well. In any case, I do want to get up and say a few words. Water certainly is our most important, precious resource. If we didn't have it we couldn't exist - simple as that.

Energy is still important. I know the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River was referring to the movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and it was kind of funny, I was chuckling and I was thinking to myself, another movie I remember seeing when I was young that I enjoyed, called *The Road Warrior*, when they were running out of oil and fuel. I was thinking about how crazy everybody got in that movie; people racing across the desert, their heads slinging back in their seats because they were going so fast - some of them were even wearing studded leather.

It's still one of my favourite movies, Madam Speaker. Of course it was part of a three-part series, that movie, but it certainly highlighted on its own - it was a very low budget movie at the time, but it received great acclaim and a lot of box-office success, and it's probably because people recognized how volatile the world can be if you get into a situation where you don't have energy.

So there's no question we need it and anybody who would say that we don't, I don't think is being realistic. We need a balance - and where would we be without oil and gas today? Well, I suppose we'd be coming to the Legislature here in a horse and buggy.

AN HON. MEMBER: A train.

MR. MACMASTER: It could be a steam engine. I'd love to be able to come in a train, but I'd also love to be able to have the time to come here in a horse and buggy because it would be a pretty relaxing trip. I'd have some company with me. But, you know, we've come a long way from the horse-and-buggy days.

I think about plumbing, and a lot of indoor plumbing now uses plastic pipe and, of course, plastic pipe is made from petrochemicals, oil and gas. Now, if we didn't have that development we'd still be throwing our trash and our sewage out into the streets, and that wouldn't be good for our environment either.

So some of these things have brought us great advances and have made the world safer and healthier, but, Madam Speaker, only if they are done properly. I think of the quality of our life over the past hundred years, how much it has grown and how many people in the world today are living in the middle class because of things like energy being harvested from the earth and used to improve travel, improve productivity amongst countries, to manufacture goods, and to create the civilization we enjoy today. I even think of my own people, seeing pictures going back a hundred years ago, and how much things have developed, and energy was always a part of that development and our quality of life is higher.

Madam Speaker, I do believe I have a colleague who would like to make an introduction.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you Madam Speaker, I would like to introduce my cousin, Dr. Neil MacKinnon, in the west gallery. He's a dean and professor at the University of Cincinnati, so welcome home to Nova Scotia for a few days.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. MACMASTER: So Madam Speaker, I was just talking about the quality of life, how it has improved because of energy playing a big role in the development of our quality of life and bringing people into the middle class. I also think about the energy that is used in things like surgeries and organ transplants. I didn't have time to do a lot of research on this but I do know that vast amounts of energy are used during those procedures and, of course, they mean life and death for people. In situations of life or death they mean life, of course.

I can also think of things, Madam Speaker, that may seem more trivial like vacations and things like that. We all travel and we certainly know how much a lot of us fly and we certainly know how much that contributes to pollution and to impacting our environment negatively.

If we were our own little country here in Nova Scotia, there would be no debate today, I really don't believe there would be, because almost a third of our revenue comes from the federal government. Some of that is our own money coming back to us in terms of federal income tax dollars, GST portion of the HST when we buy things, that is money we're sending out to Ottawa and we're getting it back, but Madam Speaker, there is also a good portion of that money coming back by way of transfer payments connected to royalties that are being generated in provinces where they are doing this kind of energy development.

We have lots of Nova Scotians working and travelling back and forth and bringing that money home too, Madam Speaker. So in my mind, if we didn't have those transfer payments - and I'm trying to find out what that actual number is now, but for rough general purposes I would estimate it is probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of a billion dollars a year coming to our province. If we didn't have that, there would have to be massive pay cuts across government. There would have to be major changes made to the way we put together the budget for the province that would affect everything from roads, to hospitals, to schools.

I suppose for a while we could add to the debt, we have certainly done that in the history of the province, but if we were short a billion dollars every year, in 15 years we would double our debt. By extension, in today's terms, our interest on that alone would be \$2 billion a year - in today's terms, a \$10 billion budget - that would be a significant change in what we could offer Nova Scotians because we would be spending so much money on interest. My point being, energy is driving this country's economy, it's clear. Just look at the provinces who are involved in energy development. It's a major part of things that

we're all enjoying, from roads to hospitals to schools; t's playing a part in paying for those things.

Madam Speaker, there is the assumption by some people that we can't have oil and gas development. There's an assumption that it's going to bring pollution, that there are going to be mistakes and that we should only use renewable energy. I respect that decision, but I just don't think it's practical, not in a pure sense.

By contrast, there are some people who assume we can have this development without any problems. I know the Premier of Saskatchewan has recently come forward with a statement about a month ago stating the incidents they have. Of course, when I was reading it, I was thinking, is he going to talk about the incidents of pollution or of environmental damage? He talked about the incidents being a 2 per cent unemployment rate, which, if we had that here, we would have thousands more people out there who are unemployed today having jobs. It would be a tremendous thing for them personally to be able to have a job where they are making a good living, but it would also make a heck of a difference for our province as a whole, because we'd have so much more revenue coming into the government coffers.

The Premier of Saskatchewan also talked about one of the other incidents - young people being able to stay home because there was work. I know even little things in areas like the one I represent, where people are trying to put together sports teams, where schools are trying to keep enough student population to stay open, having jobs for young people who are going to be raising the next generation of Nova Scotians is critically important. That is why just to ban, as this bill does, the type of energy development we're talking about - it's an easy thing to do, but I think it's too strong a measure. There has to be a balance.

I think, with that, Madam Speaker, seeing the hour of the day and seeing that we were to finish at 4:00 p.m. today, I would move that we adjourn and resume again on Monday. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 6.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. At that time, we will call Government Business, Public Bills for Second Reading: Bill Nos. 6, 18, 22, 25, 26 and 38; and, if time permits, Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I therefore move that the House do now rise to resume again on Monday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on October 20th between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 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. We stand adjourned until October 20th at 7:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 3:59 p.m.]