



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege today, and in accordance with Rule 29(2), I have given you notice of my intention to rise on this question of privilege earlier today.

On October 8th, in response to a question from me regarding a media report of the minister's intentions to expand his decision to prevent small processors from slaughtering turkeys to individuals, the Minister of Agriculture told the House that he had been misrepresented at a media interview. He said: ". . . sometimes the media - not the media that works here but some of the media - sometimes cuts and pastes answers and that was the case."

Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling raw footage from the media interview in question, and a transcript that shows that there was no cutting or any pasting, that cuts and pastes were not the case. It shows that what the minister said in the interview was accurately captured in a report and, if there was any misrepresentation, it was by the minister during Question Period.

As my friend, the member for Clayton Park West noted last week, “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.

She also rightly pointed out that *O’Brien and Bosc* says “. . . 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 that statement, the Member intended to mislead the House.” That comes from *O’Brien and Bosc*, chapter 3, footnote 128.

On the first requirement, by viewing the raw footage of the interview, I believe you will find there is no question that the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture was misleading. On the second requirement, since the minister was the person being interviewed, there can be little doubt, I hope, that on October 8th he was aware of his own comments he made in the media interview at the time of responding to my question and, therefore, he knew his statement was incorrect. Finally, the minister presented the conduct of the journalist in such a way as to discredit her and, in turn, mislead the House of Assembly.

As my friend said, “The deliberate misrepresentation of information damages our ability to do our jobs correctly and properly.” If the Minister of Agriculture erred during the interview, in fact, it would have been a far better thing to own up to that mistake, rather than err in judgment and misrepresent the House.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the evidence I presented supports a case of deliberately misleading the House. As such, I would ask that you put the question to the House. With the evidence and explanation I have given, if you 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 Minister of Agriculture during Question Period on October 8, 2014, were misleading, that the member shall apologize to the House of Assembly, and that his statement be stricken from the record.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, I would urge you to speak with the minister himself regarding this point of privilege. The minister has a long parliamentary history and, in fact, is the longest-serving

member of this Legislature. In his career he has certainly put himself out in a respectful manner in his department and in his dealings with this House. I have no doubt that he at no time intended to mislead this House, and I believe that once you review all of the facts, you will come to that same conclusion. Merci.

MR. SPEAKER: Two things by way of quick response - first, I am not sure whether it's appropriate to table video footage, but I will accept it tentatively at this time and I'll check with our Clerks on the admissibility of that. I will take what the honourable member is alleging took place on October 8th, which is almost two weeks ago, and in cases of points of privilege timeliness is an essential element in raising matters of privilege - can the honourable member please tell me exactly when he learned of the alleged evidence he is relying on?

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, at the time we took the minister's comments at face value. Apparently the journalist in question had gone on vacation very shortly afterwards. My first opportunity to speak with her was last Thursday night, so it's very recent that we found this information out.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. I'll take the point of privilege under advisement and I will be sure to speak with the Minister of Agriculture.

Before we move on to the daily routine, the topic for late debate tonight submitted by the honourable member for Inverness is:

Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Government act to prevent further erosion of health services at the Northside General.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: In my capacity as the Attorney General, I hereby beg leave to table the Public Trustee Annual Report for the fiscal period ended March 31, 2014.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Pursuant to Section 12 of the Surplus Crown Property Disposal Act, I beg leave to table the report under Disposal of Surplus Crown Property for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2014.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: With your permission I would like to make an introduction of guests in our gallery before I begin my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. SAMSON: In the east gallery, I would ask them to rise as I introduce them and ask for indulgence and patience as I try with a difficult name, but I'll do my very best. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery, I'd like to introduce Dr. Kanneboyina Nagaraju, Jeremy Roy and Amanda Mullen from AGADA Biosciences. They are here today for an announcement. We had the opportunity to tour their lab today, and I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

AGADA is working hard to develop drugs to fight disorders like muscular dystrophy. The company has also received support from the Global Business Accelerator Program, and I'm certainly pleased to see them join us here this afternoon, after our event earlier this morning.

We know that Nova Scotia companies doing business in foreign markets is essential for economic growth and our standard of living. The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy said the private sector must generate significantly more exports to achieve lasting economic turnaround. It challenged Nova Scotia's private sector to reach two key trade goals: increasing the value of exports by 50 per cent, and increasing the number of Nova Scotia firms participating in export trade by 50 per cent.

The Global Business Accelerator Program is helping us reach both of these important goals. The program reimburses businesses up to 80 per cent of eligible costs to a maximum of \$35,000. The funds are used to hire a professional with international business expertise.

Le gouvernement comprend qu'il y a parfois des obstacles à l'expansion des entreprises sur les marchés internationaux. C'est pourquoi le programme est si important aux entreprises qui reçoivent le soutien.

Il s'agit de petites et de moyennes entreprises. Elles sont installées dans nos localités rurales et urbaines et leurs produits et services sont très variés. Malgré leurs différences, Monsieur le Président, ces entreprises ont beaucoup en commun.

These businesses - their owners, managers and employees - are all about innovation. They have courage. They take risks. They invest in themselves first, before coming to government. In short, they are making a big impression on the rest of the world. These are the kind of businesses our government is proud to support. They understand the importance of trade and expansion into new markets. They are taking steps to become more competitive and are ready to take their businesses to the next level.

Government is helping these businesses find the expertise they need to explore new markets. The Global Business Accelerator Program is built on collaboration. Business leaders with great ideas are linked with people who know how to navigate international business. Together, I believe the potential and possibilities for success are endless. Our government is ready to be a partner and work with business to help set the conditions for success.

Monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement comprend le besoin de stimuler notre économie en tirant parti des nouveaux débouchés commerciaux internationaux.

Nous savons également que c'est le secteur privé qui est le moteur de notre progrès économique.

C'est de cette manière que nous pourrions créer des emplois, réinvestir dans nos collectivités et garder nos jeunes travailleurs ici.

We need more success stories like AGADA and 25 other Global Business Accelerator Program recipients that are ready to take on the world. Mr. Speaker, as you and members of the Legislature are aware, we are in the middle of Small Business Week, so there's no better time than now to recognize the achievement of these entrepreneurs and business leaders and affirm government's commitment to support their efforts to expand into new markets around the world. Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his comments here today. It's good to see small businesses working here in the Province of Nova Scotia, and it's good to see that Nova Scotia doing business abroad has improved and is improving. It's good for our economy, it's good for our people, and it's good for the province in general. It's nice to see that our export trade has increased by 50 per cent, and it's good to see that the Global Business Accelerator Program is there for businesses that need it.

Small businesses are making good decisions in Nova Scotia. They're more competitive, but in order to be more competitive we also have to look at lower power rates, lower business tax, and other conditions and incentives in this province to make this work.

It's good to see our government and business working together. We wish small businesses all the best, and we want to congratulate all 25 small businesses that have been awarded the Global Business Accelerator Program. We wish them the best of luck in the future. Thank you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for providing a copy of his statement in advance. I'm pleased to rise in my place to talk about the importance of helping Nova Scotia businesses grow and succeed. With the loss of 9,000 jobs in the past year, I am encouraged that the government is choosing to fund initiatives like the Global Business Accelerator Program through the Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

The Global Business Accelerator Program is an excellent program, and it helps Nova Scotia businesses work with business experts to help their businesses succeed in the international market. Funding for the program this year is in excess of \$740,000, or roughly three-quarters of a million dollars. Companies receiving funding this year, in addition to the ones the minister mentioned, include Acadian Seaplants Ltd. which has been granted the maximum amount - about \$35,000 - to support in-market intelligence gathering for target markets. I'm also pleased to see Aylward Fibreglass Inc. of Shelburne receiving \$35,000 to assist with market analysis and market strategies.

In light of the Ivany report, it is especially important that we continue to support businesses in their efforts to grow in rural Nova Scotia, where jobs are desperately needed. I'm glad to hear the minister acknowledge that investing in our small and medium-sized business is important. These are the kinds of supports for business that will make our government proud and us proud that they are doing that, and we support that.

According to the minister, government is ready to be a partner and work with business to help set the conditions for success. However, I must point out that I am concerned that what business has heard from the government during their election is: don't come looking for being a partner with government unless you're a small or medium-sized business. There is some concern, because large business also means many jobs. I fear the government is not setting up the conditions for success in that respect at the time, and remains closed off to larger opportunities to grow our economy and create jobs.

So far we have yet to see a plan to create jobs or even an attempt to establish those very important job targets by the government and that is somewhat troubling. I hope the minister will have something to share with all of us soon but as I have said, and my

colleagues here, business is extremely important to our province in terms of creating jobs and small and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in helping the province's economy. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we move on to Government Notices of Motion, I'll take the opportunity to give myself permission to do an introduction, if the House is okay.

At least once per session I like to bring in a member of my family, or members of my family, who would be representative of all of our families who are back in our hometowns looking after our spouses and our children at home, and in the case of today I'm very honoured to have with us my parents from the great hub Town of Truro, Nova Scotia, my dad Ralph, in the Speaker's gallery, please rise. And my mom Judy, from Bay St. Lawrence, Nova Scotia, is here today. I would ask the House to grant them a warm welcome. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Thank you Mr. Speaker. May I do an introduction before I read my resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: In the east gallery today I would like to introduce the family and friends of Leighann Wichman who tragically and suddenly passed away last week. With us today are Leighann's father, Terry; Leighann's mother, Lois; David, her brother; and Jeanette, her sister-in-law; and I would ask them to stand. As well I would ask Leighann's friends, who are also here with us today, to stand. I'd ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause).

Upon reading my resolution I'll ask for a moment of silence.

RESOLUTION NO. 342

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

Whereas Leighann Wichman was the executive director and founding member of the Youth Project who died unexpectedly last week due to an unforeseen health circumstance; and

Whereas Leighann leaves a legacy of positive change, having made our province a safer, supportive, healthier, and happier place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth; and

Whereas Leighann was a public health advocate, a valued partner and collaborator for the health and education sectors, an exceptional community leader, a mentor to youth and adults alike, and a champion for youth engagement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in honouring Leighann's tremendous legacy and in sending their deepest condolences to Leighann's family, including her Youth Project family, friends, and loved ones, and that all members dedicate themselves to supporting Leighann's dream of making our province a more safe and welcoming place for every Nova Scotian, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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.

We'll now have a moment of silence in honour of Leighann.

[A moment of silence was observed]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Before I read the resolution I ask your indulgence and ask everybody to draw your attention to the east gallery where we have with us today, and I'm very pleased to present to the House the Public Trustee of Nova Scotia, Estelle Theriault, and her husband, the Honourable Justice Richard Coughlan.

I would ask that they please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.
(Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 343

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

Whereas Estelle Theriault has committed over 35 years to the Government of Nova Scotia as the Public Trustee; and

Whereas she has contributed to law reform in the province as an adviser to the Law Reform Commission studying the Hospitals Act, Adult Guardianship, Legal Status of the Child, the Probate Act, and the Enduring Power of Attorney Act; and

Whereas Ms. Theriault participated in the development and implementation of a new health care decision unit, as well as the Personal Directives Act, which allows the Public Trustee to become the substitute decision maker of last resort for all mentally incapable persons who have no one to provide health consents;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Public Trustee Estelle Theriault on her retirement, and acknowledge the significant contribution she has made to protect the most vulnerable 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 344

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

Whereas in contrast to Ebola, which poses little risk to Nova Scotia, the flu sends thousands of Nova Scotians to doctors, clinics, and emergency departments every year; and

Whereas by getting a flu shot Nova Scotians can help protect themselves and others, especially those at high risk like pregnant women, children, the elderly, and the chronically ill; and

Whereas the seasonal flu vaccine is available for free from family physicians, from nurse practitioners, from most pharmacies across the province, some clinics offered by Public Health, and some workplaces;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize the importance of the seasonal influenza vaccine by getting a flu shot, and encourage Nova Scotians to get theirs as well.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 47 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Income Tax Act, to Provide a School Supplies Tax Credit for Parents. (Hon. Pat Dunn)

Bill No. 48 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 240 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Judicature Act, to Protect Education Funds. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 345

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

Whereas Agatha Feltmate, born October 21, 1914, in Queensport, Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, to Alfonse and Gertrude O'Leary, is celebrating her 100th birthday today; and

Whereas Agatha, widowed at the young age of 41, sacrificed so much to raise seven beautiful children, and in turn has helped raise 21 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren; and

Whereas this occasion is a wonderful reason for family and friends to gather to celebrate how Agatha's life, love, and laughter has touched so many;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Agatha on reaching this milestone in her life.

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 Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HINES: I'd like to introduce to the House a grandson of Agatha who is with us today, Mr. Trevor Floyd. (Applause)

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of introductions, may I do one as well?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Joining us in the west gallery, I will ask two individuals to stand when I call their name. Allison Garber and Jen Morris are a couple of parents of some

children with autism who are here today to call on the Minister of Health and Wellness to expand the EIBI program. I'm sure there will be a question later on and I'm sure there is a resolution that is going to cover this, as well, but I wanted them to receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 346

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder; and

Whereas early intervention and access to support is crucial in the years before starting school; and

Whereas additional lifespan support must be made available to individuals with autism and their families as they go through life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the government to honour their campaign promise and take immediate action to provide adequate services for individuals with autism.

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. 347

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

Whereas Tara Dunn, a talented athlete who excels in many sports including soccer, basketball, volleyball, softball, and hockey, and is the daughter of the member for Pictou Centre, was inducted into the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame on October 18, 2014; and

Whereas Tara played both hockey and softball for Harvard University and was a member of the 1999 NCAA Championship winning women's hockey team, Harvard's only national championship; and

Whereas Tara has been the recipient of many awards over the years including the Mary Ellen Magano Scholarship, in recognition of her leadership in sports and medicine, and the Joe Bertagna Award, one of three major Harvard hockey awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tara Dunn on her impressive athletic achievements and congratulate her on her induction into the Sports Heritage Hall of Fame.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 348

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

Whereas Stephen Kimber has been a highly regarded Halifax journalist and professor for many years; and

Whereas Stephen Kimber's most recent book, *What Lies Across the Water*, is an informative account of the wrongful persecution of the Cuban Five; and

Whereas Stephen Kimber's *What Lies Across the Water* won the 2014 Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction East Coast Literary Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Stephen Kimber on being named the 2014 Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction East Coast Literary Award winner, and express its gratitude for his commitment to exposing truth in Halifax and internationally.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 349

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

Whereas tomorrow, October 22nd, we pause to remember and reflect on the tragic death one year ago of Harley Lawrence, which impacted Berwick, the Valley community, and well beyond; and

Whereas Harley was a troubled soul, homeless and not welcomed by all, and his unfortunate death is a cause and a reason to bring light from darkness; and

Whereas Harley's short time in our community has inspired a positive response, especially among our youth, who are committed to a better world and a stronger, more diverse Town of Berwick;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remember Harley and thank all citizens at tomorrow's gathering for advancing a more caring community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 350

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas staff from Mullins Rite-Stop in Albert Bridge recently made a \$2,000 donation to the Children's Wish Foundation; and

Whereas Mullins Rite-Stop's staff and owners - Paul Mullins, Claudette Stockley, Chris Lamson, Charmaine Dean, Ed Mullins, Katie Campbell, and Alice Mullins - made the presentation; and

Whereas Mullins Rite-Stop staff raised funds by selling wooden roses and coin boxes and having cookie days and more;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mullins Rite-Stop and their staff for their dedication in helping others.

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 Chester-St. Margaret's.

RESOLUTION NO. 351

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the Scoutrees program encourages young members of Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers to plant trees across Canada; and

Whereas the 3rd Hubbards Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts planted 400 seedlings in the woods in Simms Settlement, Nova Scotia, on May 24, 2014; and

Whereas this group of young people demonstrated their real concern for the environment by taking concrete action;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the 3rd Hubbards Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts on their commitment to the environment and their continuing community work.

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 Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 352

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

Whereas Amanda Deagle, a teacher at the Verge House Transition Program, shows dedication and goes above and beyond for the students she teaches; and

Whereas Ms. Deagle teaches her students the life skills and social skills they will need to live on their own; and

Whereas Ms. Deagle's leadership has ensured that the Verge House Transition Program remains vital and relevant as the program enters its 31st year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Amanda Deagle's dedication and hard work to ensure that her students reach their potential and have the opportunity to live full and independent lives.

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. 353

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 Economic and Rural Development and Tourism 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 2:42 p.m. We will conclude at 3:42 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - AUTISM REPT.: ACTION - UPDATE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. A serious concern for parents of children with autism is knowing that support services will be there for their child throughout its life. The document *Lifespan Needs for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder* is a 2010 report that makes 53 recommendations to do exactly that. It is also the subject of a Liberal election promise from the last campaign. I will table that promise from their platform.

While the promise was only to review the recommendations in the report, we are now a year later, and parents, who took some hope from that promise, quite frankly, want to know what action has been taken. So I'll ask the Premier if he could update the House on when his government intends to keep the promise that it made to parents of children with autism.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of parts to the question there. In terms of the 53 recommendations and the AMAT report, there has been in a committee in place that is made up of the Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Community Services, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Department of Justice, and we're looking at continuing to work on the 53 recommendations. There's a very, very strong group that has been assembled to make sure that over the next number of years - this was a landmark report, recognized across the country. A number of those recommendations, especially across the life cycle, are now underway, but there are others that will take some time to fully implement.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer, but the problem is that the report itself, issued in 2010, was the result of the work of the pretty extensive committee

exercise to come up with actual action items. Now we have the government saying, after a year, that their response is to form a committee to study the work and the recommendations of the previous committee.

The parents of children who have autism took some hope from the Liberal campaign promise that they'd see real action. I'd like to ask the Premier if he believes forming a committee to study the work of a previous committee is keeping his commitment to parents who have children with autism.

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

MR. GLAVINE: I'm pleased to say that while perhaps it wasn't done in the first 100 days of our government, we have an outstanding panel that's put together just for EIBI. The work of AMAT is ongoing. It will probably be the work of a decade, and it's well representative of EIBI, whether it's at the Department of Health and Wellness, the IWK, clinicians across Nova Scotia, in fact, who are able to bring the needs of the entire province so that we can take a look and make sure that the next round of action is well placed.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what we're trying to establish here for parents who have children with autism is that real action will be coming from the government. I appreciate that they have a committee of well-qualified people, but parents are looking for action, both early intervention and action on the entire lifespan of young Nova Scotians who are going to go through life with autism.

In 2011, the previous government, the NDP Government, created an Autism Action Plan that was complete with real, measurable goals and public progress updates that we could all see how they're doing. Mr. Speaker, there has been no update on the Autism Action Plan in the year that the Liberal Government has been in, despite previous updates under the old government.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier, will he assure the House that we will start getting progress updates on the Autism Action Plan, starting in this calendar year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to respond.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest to all members of the House that we have not waited for a report to take action to address the needs of the students, in our school system, suffering from autism at some point on the spectrum. In fact we have an autism consultant at the department, we have an autism consultant in each board, and we have provided professional development for our teachers so that they better understand autism and so they can look for the signs that would indicate early identification and then the early intervention.

So we have not waited for the report, Mr. Speaker, we are acting.

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

PREM.: CHILD CARE SPACE - COST

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier.

We all know that it can be a real challenge for young families with young children to acquire affordable child care in Nova Scotia. Unaffordable child care can make life very difficult for a growing family, and the average cost of child care is high enough to consume a significant portion of many young families' household incomes.

My question to the Premier is, would the Premier please tell us what is the cost for a child care space in the Province of Nova Scotia for an infant - an unsubsidized child care space?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to respond.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible now for early learning and early childhood, I think it's important to note that when the department was transferred from Community Services to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, we recognized that there were certainly some areas within the child care sector that needed to be addressed. One of those, as the member would know, has to do with the wages we pay to our early childhood educators, as well as the spaces that we have available, the subsidized spaces.

There has not been a review of what we have, how we are delivering, where are the efficiencies, where can we better deliver - so that review is certainly what we need to do before we continue down a path that may be the wrong one.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the cost of a monthly child care space for an infant in the Province of Nova Scotia on average is \$825 a month, and for a toddler it's about \$700 a month. I will table a chart that shows these costs in comparison to other provinces in Canada that comes from a national organization called Rethink Child Care.

Mr. Speaker, in the Province of Quebec on an annual basis, child care for parents with infants costs on average less than for Nova Scotian parents - \$8,076 a year. Imagine having two kids and having to face these incredible costs if you are going to remain in the workforce.

My second question to the Premier is, what is the government's plan to address the unaffordability of child care in Nova Scotia, to ensure parents can remain in the workforce?

THE PREMIER: I see the Interim Leader of the Democratic Party had the answer to her question. It is unfortunate that when she had four years in power, she actually didn't do something about affordability.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development answered that question in the first response. This government is continuing to work with community organizations, ensuring that there will be child care spaces that are affordable across this province for Nova Scotia families.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, Mr. Speaker, after the mess that this crowd has made over 250 years, it really wasn't possible to fix everything in four years, but let me say this to the Premier. The Ivany report, *Now or Never*, states that Nova Scotia has both a declining birth rate and a declining labour force participation rate, and hopefully we can all agree across party lines that none of us can afford to ignore an issue like affordable child care that could help retain young families and improve labour market participation.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, why is the Premier and his government not taking any actions to keep young families in Nova Scotia with a plan for affordable child care.

THE PREMIER: I want to say how proud I am of the work this government is doing to ensure that not only young families but all Nova Scotians get an opportunity to work in this province, continue to grow their families, raise their families in this province. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this House that in 2006 it was the New Democratic Party that voted against a national child care plan that would have dealt with this issue not only for this province but indeed the entire country.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - EIBI: ADVISORY COMM. - DUPLICATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: The wait-list for the province's Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention program is quickly growing. In the past year alone referrals have been increased by 14 per cent. We have seen little action on the issue by this government. In September, the minister announced a working group to examine the issue of access to EIBI and the ways they can fix that. However, in the 2012 progress report on the Autism Action Plan put forward by the former government, a committee with the exact same mandate was created two years ago. So my question to the minister is, why has the minister opted to create a duplicate advisory committee than address the problem head on.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I am pleased to have the member ask that question because we know that EIBI and its delivery to pre-school children is now somewhat behind. In fact, in some years it can be the result of the availability of therapists. Last year we had a number who were out of their work for different reasons, however we know that with the rate that Nova Scotia children are being diagnosed with autism, we certainly have to now to get our plan more robust for the years ahead.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Quite honestly my question was, why are you recreating the wheel? The 2012 progress report indicates that the Department of Health and Wellness will be “. . . exploring ways to improve access and increase early identification and appropriate timely intervention. . .” The September 2014 working group’s mandate is, “. . . to ensure that children diagnosed with autism get the treatment that they need at the right time.”

You can see the similarity between those two mandates, they are nearly identical, Mr. Speaker. The government is well aware of the problems with access to EIBI and long wait-lists but they seem to be delaying unnecessary action. When can the minister tell parents he will actually buckle down and address the issue once and for all?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I have met with parents in different parts of the province on this issue. We know that some areas have their children’s program of EIBI pretty well 100 per cent getting the help they need, the therapy before going to school. Right now we have challenges here in the HRM area. In fact, I believe it was last year, 48 children with autism entered the school system. Some had to delay by a year before going to school. We know that this program, in order to be effective - and we want it to be that way - will need to be addressed in the coming year.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: My final question would be to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I do want to correct something that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development said a little earlier. She talked about children suffering with autism, and of course they don’t suffer with autism. That adds to the stigma of what autism actually is, and I hope that she thinks of that next time she is talking about autism.

But to the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister has publicly acknowledged that, as a province, we have a lot of work to do to support children on the autism spectrum. He has indicated that with one of the driving problems with the wait-list is a lack of trained therapists in certain areas of the province. The minister knows this. Why has he not taken action to resolve the issue, while he waits for the work of that expert panel?

MR. GLAVINE: This is one of the areas that will need to be addressed, both in terms of training, and also having the right number in the right place before children enter school. This is a program that can have tremendous positive impacts on future education and I’m pleased, in fact, to have assembled some of the best people, because we know,

also, that EIBI is also undergoing some change in its delivery, and we will have an up-to-date, well-supported program in the next fiscal year.

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

PREM. - CHILD CARE: WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT - IMPORTANCE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. It has been over 30 years since the 1984 Royal Commission on Equality and Employment, led by Supreme Court of Canada Justice Rosalie Abella, who said in that report, which I'll table, "Child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers."

In the years following, the Province of Quebec introduced a child care program and employment among women in that province increased by nearly 10 per cent. I'll table a copy of that study, as well. My question to the Premier is this, does the Premier agree with the statement that child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workplace for mothers.

THE PREMIER: There is no question that affordable child care provides an opportunity for families to have equal access to employment, ensuring that their children are safe. There is no question to that.

MS. MACDONALD: We are starting to get somewhere. In our gallery today, we have a mother with her young child, who lives in our province in Dartmouth. She has two children, in fact. Her family's monthly bill for child care would be \$1,600 when she returns to work after maternity leave. Because child care is so expensive, this mom, Susan LeBlanc, may need to leave the workplace for an extra year, and says she just doesn't know how her family will deal with such a large monthly child care bill. So I want to ask the Premier, what advice does he have to offer parents like Susan, who would like to re-enter the workforce and advance their careers, but cannot find affordable daycare in the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank Susan for being here in the House today to be part of this serious issue that is raised, not only for our province but indeed, for our country. As I mentioned earlier, there was a national child care plan that would not only address the issues for Suzanne and her family but for families all across Nova Scotia and across the country.

It is my hope that as we move forward that we will see a national government that will engage provinces in a way to ensure that we have an affordable child care network across the entire country - and that will be a great day for this country.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to \$15 a daycare nationally as well.

In the meantime, in 2006 the Premier, who was in Opposition in this House at that time, said, I think we need to take a serious look at the issue and this program and expand it to a level so that every Nova Scotian child between two and five years old has access to quality daycare. I'll table the Hansard in which he urged his colleague, the member of his Cabinet who was in the government of the day, to act immediately and said in Hansard that there was no reason not to act immediately.

My question to the Premier is, it is now 2014, eight years later, why is there no plan to make child care affordable so parents can remain in the labour force as active participants, Mr. Speaker?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in 2006, I first of all want to acknowledge the member of our Cabinet who did a tremendous job as the Minister of Education, and I want to commend her for the great work that she is doing again on behalf of the people of the Province of Nova Scotia and Cabinet.

In 2006, Mr. Speaker, there was a willing partner at the national level who was prepared to fund a child care program across the entire country. There was a partner at the national level that engaged with provincial governments to ensure that we had a national program, and it was killed. It was stopped because the New Democratic Party was chasing a few more seats.

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

PREM. - NOVA STAR: CONTRACT - ADHERENCE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Serious questions continue to be raised about the government's handling of the *Nova Star* ferry contract - \$26 million has been spent in less than one season and now taxpayers may even be on the hook to winter the *Nova Star* ferry down in Florida. Now former operators, like Henk Pols from the Scotia Prince days, are questioning whether the current ferry operator is even living up to the terms of the contract that the government signed.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he is satisfied that the *Nova Star* operator is living up to the terms of the contract that his government signed and, if not, is he willing to reopen the contract to better protect taxpayers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, KPMG is now looking at that operation. He would also know that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism made sure there were safeguards in there to protect Nova Scotians from outrageous salaries by the executive team.

One of the things I want to tell the honourable member and I want to tell all Nova Scotians is that we believe in that service, that we believe in the Nova Scotia ferry. The international link to this province that lands in Yarmouth is an important asset that drives economic development and tourism across this province. We've seen a tremendous rise in American visitors in the month of August but, like all programs of government, we're continuing to review to make sure that we're getting what is the best deal for taxpayers.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before and I hope all members agree, the question is not whether there should be a ferry in Yarmouth, it's whether the government signed a good deal for the people who rely on that ferry and for all Nova Scotia taxpayers.

That is the question. In fact, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism himself even questioned whether the *Nova Star* operator is living up to their end of the deal. A spokesperson for his department recently said that if another company has a proposal that they want the government to look at, they are prepared to look at it. I just tabled that quote a moment ago.

Mr. Speaker, of course we need a sustainable service for Yarmouth; we need to know whether the government signed a good deal or not. I would like to ask the Premier if he can share with this House, is the government considering new proposals from other operators of the Yarmouth ferry, as the spokesperson for the department said, or not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first question, KPMG is now in reviewing this service. They will come back with recommendations to the province. I want to tell all members of this House that this government engages all Nova Scotians who have an idea about how they can move economic development in this province, and we'll continue to do so. I want to ensure the member opposite, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party recognizes that this province is open for business.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the province is open for business. That has not been evident from the government's actions to date in many other areas. The question for us today is whether this government signed a good business deal with that operator that protects taxpayers or not.

Quite frankly, we all want a Yarmouth ferry. There has to be a good deal and the people of Nova Scotia, all of them, legitimately are asking the government, did they sign a good deal that protects their interests or not? One of the reasons people are asking that question, not just us but lots of Nova Scotians who pay the bills every day, one of the reasons they are asking that question is that they don't see a plan beyond one season to the next. They don't want to see, year after year, more and more cheques written without an actual plan to have a ferry for the long run. I'd like to ask the Premier, when will his government actually show us a long-term plan for a Yarmouth ferry that works for everybody?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it has become clear to all Nova Scotians that the previous government made a reckless decision when it came to cancelling that service. Over the last number of days it has become clear to all Nova Scotians that the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia actually doesn't believe in the service. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Last order. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member for Argyle-Barrington is a bit nervous because he knows the very people in his constituency are embarrassed by the fact that their member is abandoning that service. This government . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member for Argyle-Barrington is going to have to decide if he is with the people who want the ferry or is he going to stand beside his Leader who wants to cancel it?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to respectfully ask the member for Argyle-Barrington to excuse himself for the remainder of Question Period.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and I would like to remind the minister and also the Premier that the NDP actually added over 1,000 spaces to the daycares throughout Nova Scotia. We also did something that the daycare advocates and workers have asked for governments previously to do for a number of years and that was to move Early Years over to Education. You don't do that with a magic wand so we took the time to make sure that a foundation and structure was created in the Department of Education to do that.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is the Early Years is about the future, not the past where they keep pointing fingers, we have to go forward. The average wage for early childhood educators, most of whom have a college or university education, is less than \$13 per hour. In August of this year the member for Glace Bay told the Cape Breton . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I'm getting to the question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Next member, please.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I'm getting to the question, Mr. Speaker.

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

ENERGY: WHEELER REPT. (CHAP. 11) - RECEIPT DATE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Wheeler expert panel on hydraulic fracturing released each chapter of its report over time this past summer for public and industry feedback. The only chapter that was not released until the end when the full report came out on August 28th was Chapter 11 that actually detailed the recommendations of the Wheeler panel. I'd like to ask the Premier, what day did his government receive the final Chapter 11 of the report that contained the actual recommendations?

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

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: We received that chapter the same day that all Nova Scotians did and of course, as the honourable member will know, the recommendations in the chapter were announced publicly over the preceding period of a few months by Dr. Wheeler at his town hall meetings across the province, so there was pretty well nothing in that chapter by the time it was released publicly or to us at the exact same time that had not previously been released publicly.

MR. BAILLIE: I appreciate that clarification, it's very important to now know that the government received the final chapter with the actual recommendations at the same time as everybody else on August 28th because the government has been saying that they have been considering those recommendations all along. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that on that day there were several revisions to the final report throughout the report and the first disclosure to the government and to all Nova Scotians of what the recommendations actually were.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue for the estimated 1,500 Nova Scotians that may get work in this new industry and whether government is willing to try new things or ban them. The minister has been accused of making this decision, this important decision after only three days of consideration, now he has confirmed that he had the recommendations for only three days and that revisions were made on the final report.

I'd like to ask the Premier, why did his government take only the Labour Day weekend to consider something as important as whether to try new ways of creating jobs in our province or not?

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

MR. YOUNGER: Maybe with all commotion in here earlier the honourable member didn't hear the answer to the previous question; in fact, the fact that the panel would be recommending hydraulic fracturing not proceed in Nova Scotia at this time was announced, I believe, in May by the panel. While that was in the final recommendations it had been stated at almost every single public meeting that Dr. Wheeler had held across this province, and it had actually been very widely reported, and in fact I met with the member for Argyle-Barrington and we talked about that very issue at a meeting.

MR. BAILLIE: Just in the interest of time I'll direct this question to the Minister of Energy directly. Mr. Speaker, we could debate for a long time why or if the government only took the Labour Day weekend to make a decision of this size about whether they're willing to try new ways to create jobs or not, but why don't we just turn to the Wheeler report panellists themselves and ask them that question. Many of them have already spoken out in print and in media interviews, saying that they think the government has not followed the recommendations of the Wheeler report and only took a few short days to say no. I'd like to ask the minister, has he invited members of the Wheeler panel to come together with him and sort out whether he's right or they are right?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the members of the panel were released by Dr. Wheeler on that day, I have spoken with Dr. Wheeler a couple of times and in that intervening time he was the chair of the panel. It was indicated to us that he feels that it did follow the panel's recommendations, two of the panellists have actually stated publicly now that they feel this more than followed their recommendations. I understand there are others who say they haven't, but all panellists - every single panellist - signed on to the recommendation that said that hydraulic fracturing should not proceed in this province at this time and that the social licence does not exist at this time.

We are following that recommendation. We are doing the science and the regulatory updates and everything else that is required before hydraulic fracturing should proceed, if ever, and before the social licence is addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the member should well know that in the areas of this province where there are shale deposits, those municipalities - many of them - have passed prohibitions on it, and the Supreme Court has recently upheld their ability to do so.

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

**EECD - EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS:
EDUC. REVIEW - WAGE INCREASES**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The average wage for early child educators, most of whom have a college or university education, is less than \$13 per hour.

In August of this year, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal told the *Cape Breton Post* that he supports higher wages for early childhood educators, and I'll table that. He also indicated that he had spoken with the minister on numerous occasions about the need to increase wages for child care workers and that the soon-to-be released education review may lead to some action.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, which section of the education review addresses the wages of early childhood educators?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that the Education Review Panel will be presented to me on October 30th. I have chosen not to take it, not to meddle with it, but to accept it.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you for the answer. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has seen more of the review than the minister.

In another article this summer, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal told *The Chronicle Herald*, "When you look at the levels that are near minimum wage, when you look at the fact that we are the lowest in the country . . . that's what we're going to look at and this review endeavour will give us some of those answers." I'll table that article as well.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, will she please share with us what answers are contained in the education review that relate to wage increases for early childhood educators?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I answered that question the first time. However, I will go on to say that when the Early Childhood Development component from Community Services was transferred to Education, that government, that caucus, acknowledged that Nova Scotia was 10 out of 10 with respect to wages. They lived with that for four years, and they are expecting it to be changed. It will be, but not in 10 months.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I will remind the member that, in fact, there was a plan with regard to wages, and we started that process. (Interruptions)

We are joined in the gallery today by representatives of the Nova Scotia association of early childhood education, and I think they will be interested to hear that when in Opposition, the now-Premier criticized the Progressive Conservative Government of the day for not putting the proper amount of resources into pay for people who work in daycare facilities, as they are early-year educators. I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, my final question through you to the minister is, what does she consider to be the proper amount of resources needed to improve the wages of early childhood educators?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the member referenced me in her question. I want to tell all members of this House, and I want to especially tell the members in the gallery, that in 2006, when they're bringing those comments out, the national government of the day was building a national child care program that would have set this country on a path that would have recognized the potential in young Canadians, as well as recognized the work that is being done by people who are looking after our children and providing them with quality child care.

Our government will continue to work with people providing child care across this province so that we make sure we address the problems you left undone.

MR. SPEAKER: I would just remind the honourable Premier not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Inverness.

FOIPOP - ADMIN. POSITION: VACANCY - ACTIONS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Last week the minister said he was not aware of any vacant FOIPOP administrative positions. The Department of Energy's FOIPOP administrator had left his position about a month ago. The alternative person listed in the department to deal with FOIPOP requests is the director of Regulatory and Strategic Policy. I can expect that person is fully busy dealing with onshore natural gas issues.

My question for the minister is, what happens in instances like these where a FOIPOP administrator leaves and the alternative person is at maximum capacity working on issues relating to their primary capacity?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as I have over 600 employees in my departments alone, I'm not going to keep tabs on another department. Perhaps the Minister of Energy would like to comment on an employee who is in his department.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the FOIPOP position was a 0.3 FTE. I doubt in any department it's actually a full FTE and it's actually being absorbed by multiple people in the department at the moment, led by the contact who would be the director that you mentioned.

MR. MACMASTER: I guess the challenge becomes when there are people who are filling a role temporarily, it leads to delays in processing of requests. This position has a great deal of importance; it has a steep learning curve making it difficult for temporary people to fill in. Apparently, what we have heard as in the case of Energy, they have actually hired a consultant to fill this void for the time being. So my question again to the minister responsible for the Act is, how often does the government hire temporary workers to fill vacant FOIPOP administrator positions?

MR. KOUSOULIS: As this is in the Department of Energy, I'll pass the question on to the Minister of Energy.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is exactly correct. We have hired a temporary consultant to deal with that to ensure that a backlog does not exist. I might also add, as the members of his caucus will know, in the three departments that I'm responsible for, one of the things we do is we try to deal with as many requests just by routine disclosure of information, if people call and ask. We try to limit the number of times we require people to go through FOIPOP in any case, but we're doing that to actually ensure the problem the honourable member is talking about doesn't happen.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the answer. There is no question, I think with these kinds of requests, there is a bit of back and forth, and that's a good thing if it helps to focus in on the information requested that saves everybody time and fees of course.

My final question, and since it seems to be going to the Minister of Energy, why not let the Minister of Energy answer this one? We know that it does take two to three months, probably closer to three months, for a hire to be made in government, according to the Public Service Commissioner. Can the Minister of Energy tell us when a new administrator at Energy will be hired to fill this position that is currently being handled by the person who has been contracted on a temporary basis?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, we are going through the process at the moment. That person is actually our Aboriginal Affairs coordinator, as well, and fills a number of roles, so we're going through that process at the moment and we're working with the Minister of the Public Service Commission to deal with that. I hate to refer it back but if you want additional information, I'm sure he would be happy to talk about the hiring process in the Civil Service.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: TRANSFER PAYMENTS - RELIANCE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Nova Scotians are worried about the financial situation of the province. The province has the highest debt it has ever seen and is set to table deficit after deficit. Federal transfer payments to this province totalled over \$3 billion in the last year. My question today is, is this government content to rely on the rest of Canada to fund its spending and increasing debt?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the opportunity to talk about the serious financial situation that we are in in this province. We have had a reliance on federal income over the years; in fact, it is less than it has been in years gone by, but it's still a very, very significant part of our budget. We are doing everything we can to work on the economy, to work with the Opposition, to work with labour unions to try and get everybody working together to make Nova Scotia as successful as it can possibly be.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. It would be wonderful if the government would listen to the Opposition on some of the things, but it's interesting that they feel they are.

The \$3 billion in transfer payments from the federal government accounts for about one-third of the province's total budget. This ratio is one of the highest in the country and in spite of these realities this government has shown little leadership when it comes to paying off the debt, supporting small businesses, or balancing the budget.

My question to the minister is, Nova Scotians are tired of being a have-not province - what is the government doing to transform Nova Scotia from a have-not to a have province?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, there wouldn't be time to go over everything that we are doing because there's so much going on in this province. In our relations with the federal government we don't consider ourselves a have-not province, we go into that to be a contributor.

One thing I would like to mention to the members opposite, in answer to his question, is that royalty revenues are up significantly this year, as are exports. (Applause)

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, despite the clapping and laughter, Nova Scotians are struggling, and the government would do wise to listen to Nova Scotians because the fact is that Nova Scotia is so reliant on federal transfers, and it's not being ignored by the rest of Canada - they are watching, eager to see what we will do to pull ourselves up. This government is one that is financed largely by the rest of Canada and yet it turns down new sources of revenue such as shale gas.

My question to the minister is, would the minister admit that we owe it to Nova Scotians and the rest of Canada to be more open to new ways of creating revenue such as shale gas development?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think a big part of the question that the member is asking is around the relationship with the federal government and our reliance on some of those funds. I think that it's very important to note that on the health transfers alone we have been treated very unfairly by the federal government in terms of our aging population and the pressures we feel in the health care sector. That needs to be recognized as we go forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD - ILLITERACY: REDUCTION PLAN - MIN. PROVIDE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Literacy is a basic foundation for a successful future. Poor literacy limits opportunities and leads to poverty. In today's information age, poor literacy is crippling. The Conference Board of Canada report, released in 2012, showed more than 40 per cent of adults in Nova Scotia had inadequate literacy skills and the board gave Nova Scotia a D grade. And I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the minister - the Eradication of Poverty Day was late last week in Nova Scotia. Would the minister provide a plan to substantially reduce inadequate literacy in Nova Scotia?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to stand and say that our government has identified illiteracy as a priority and, to that end, we have put additional dollars into the literacy strategy because we recognize that students need to have the reading skills perfected really at the end of Grade 3 so they can be successful as they move on to upper elementary, junior, and senior high school. We recognize that the scores are not good enough and I would say to you that when we saw the Grade 3 results in the Spring we recognized that there were a number of students who had not scored well and we made them our priority.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada report also indicated that nearly 60 per cent of Nova Scotia adults have inadequate numeracy skills and gave the province another D grade, and I'll table that. In today's employment world, numerous jobs including those of carpenters and a wide array of other employment skills require solid numeracy skills.

My question to the minister is, does the minister see a date in time when Nova Scotians will not be facing handicaps such as lacking numeracy skills in finding employment?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, who is a teacher and who would understand the importance of both math and literacy skills, I am pleased to say that when we looked at both of those, we developed a strategy; we invested millions of dollars in both math and literacy strategies, to ensure that we can give those students the skill set they need as they move on through high school and off into the work world

Mr. Speaker, no one can predict when or how, but we must recognize that it is an issue. We will invest in that and we will make sure that we improve those scores.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada report said that approximately 55 percent of adults have inadequate problem-solving skills. The board clearly indicates that inadequate problem-solving skills is one of 11 barriers to employment. I'll table that.

Nova Scotians must improve literacy and numeracy skills needed to increase the finding of meaningful employment. Nova Scotia's unemployment rate is already too high and certainly has not improved in the last year. What is the plan to prevent these people from falling through the cracks?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that, as we've stated here, we have an education panel that will be presenting their report on October 30th. We recognize that it will look at what Nova Scotians are saying about our education system, what we need to improve on, and where we need to invest. I anticipate there will be something in that report which does help us focus on those two priorities, both literacy and math skills in this province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - EBOLA: HEALTH CARE WORKERS - PROTECTION

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday in the United States the Centre for Disease Control, the CDC, released its guidelines for Ebola protection, which requires that all health care workers in contact with the disease be provided with a protective garment, hood, face shields, double gloves, face masks and respirators that cover every square inch of the body. I'll table that.

Canada, however, with the lone exception of Ontario, has a much lower level of protection that is being offered for their health care workers, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Nurses says that the level of protection being offered in Nova

Scotia and in other Canadian provinces is unacceptable and does not meet the standard to protect health care workers, and I'll table that.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, why is the province not providing the same minimum level of protection against Ebola as Ontario and the United States?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the member opposite would have had that question answered in the briefing that he would have received earlier today. I want to ensure the member and all Nova Scotians know that we have, in this province, ordered the latest protective garments, impenetrable garments, for one major unit here at the QE II and we hope they will be arriving shortly.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the briefing was yesterday, I did ask the question, and that's why I'm asking it again because it wasn't clear. It is not clear that all health care workers who potentially could be exposed, will have access to the equipment that I think they should have.

As I mentioned before, Ontario has taken steps above and beyond what Health Canada is recommending to protect its health care workers and the public. The Ontario plan outlines that at all times two nurses provide care to any patients confirmed as having Ebola and that those nurses will not be allowed to care for any other patients. Qualified management staff, who have been appropriately trained, must also supervise the safety of health care workers at all times. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, if there is a confirmed case of Ebola in Nova Scotia, will health care workers be recruited solely for Ebola care and how will those health care workers be selected?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Nova Scotia was the second province, second part of the country, to have the crisis team arrive here and go through the team that in fact would be responding to a suspected case of Ebola and I feel that our nurses, our physicians, all clinicians who would deal with a suspected case will, in fact, now continue that training.

As well, protocols are being extended across the province to every district so that we have a very clear plan as to what would take place. If there was a suspicious case in Sydney or Yarmouth, the care would go to them first and then they would be brought to the unit here at the QE II.

MR. WILSON: The key to protecting health care workers against infectious diseases like Ebola is not only equipment, but it is also important to have the training. It is why the United States' CDC has ordered that health care workers practice repeatedly and

demonstrate proficiency in donning and doffing the gear, before being allowed near a patient with Ebola.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, I wonder if the minister could indicate how many times health care workers in Nova Scotia have been required to practice donning and doffing the protective equipment that is going to be provided to them?

MR. GLAVINE: It is an important question the member asks because really, it has an application to any infectious disease that could come into our health care system. We learned much from SARS and from H1N1, but this Ebola does require the best protective equipment, but also, as he has identified, training.

This is why the crisis team came to our province yesterday: to make sure that we have a standard that will be practiced right across the country. The whole goal is that continuous practice will take place, and we will be well-prepared if there is even a suspected case.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

LAE - OIL & GAS IND.: INVESTMENT DECLINE - EFFECT

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Labour productivity is a telling indicator of how competitive an economy is. In 2013 Nova Scotia had the lowest labour productivity in Canada, about half that of Alberta. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

On a positive note, between 1997 and 2010 business sector labour productivity grew faster than the national average. A report prepared for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education in 2012 showed that mining and oil and gas extraction were the main contributors to this growth. I'll table that.

My question to the minister is, would declining investment from the oil and gas industry negatively impact Nova Scotia's already lagging labour productivity?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to thank the member for the question and I would like to inform him that the Minister of Energy has indicated to me that, in fact, it has gone up.

MR. DUNN: Labour productivity is the key component of economic growth and social development; I'll table that, Mr. Speaker. In this province, the labour force itself is not an obstacle to productivity. We have a well-educated and capable workforce. Instead, it's the lack of investment in research and development for emerging industries that has held Nova Scotia back.

My question for the minister is, was she consulted by the Department of Energy, prior to his decision to ban the development of shale gas industry in this province?

MS. REGAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. No.

MR. DUNN: As the minister knows, innovation and investment in the energy sector is important for improving labour productivity and making the provincial economy more competitive. My question for the minister is, will the minister work with the Department of Energy in the future to ensure that his decisions do not harm Nova Scotia's long-term competitiveness - yes or no?

KELLY REGAN: I'd like to the honourable member for the question. We are always happy to work with the Department of Energy, we have terrific workers here in Nova Scotia, we have many programs that help them with their productivity, and so we're always happy to work with our other departmental partners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

ENERGY - MED./LOW VOLUME FRACKING: BILL NO. 6 - DETAILS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Bill No. 6 references five occasions in one short page of high-volume hydraulic fracturing, I wonder - my question for the minister - does the bill, by omission, permit medium- and low-volume hydraulic fracturing?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: As the member well knows from reading the bill, and I know that traditionally we don't discuss directly the details of bills in Question Period before the House, but I'm happy to tell the minister that the definition as we committed to publicly is being done through a stakeholder process and a public process, and even the draft recommendation and definition will be published for 30 days as is standard with regulations.

Mr. Speaker, that is the standard process with regulations and I look forward to the input of that member in those regulations.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, how can you bring a bill in without having definitions?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it isn't terribly complicated. High-volume hydraulic fracturing is extremely well understood in the energy industry; in fact, there are numerous jurisdictions that use that and, in fact, as I said publicly at the beginning the definitions are really around things like . . .

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

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: May I make an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I'd like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to introduce a number of very dedicated child care educators in the Province of Nova Scotia, and they're from the Nova Scotia Early Childhood Educators - and if they would stand as I mention their names: Michelle Lohnes, Carrie Smith, Kathleen Couture, and Kelly Goulden. Would everyone please provide them with a warm welcome. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

[3:47 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[3:57 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker, Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 9 - Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act.

Bill No. 10 - Service Nova Scotia Statutory Officers Appointment Act.

Bill No. 12 - Correctional Services Act.

Bill No. 14 - Gas Distribution Act.

Bill No. 15 - Builders' Lien Act.

Bill No. 16 - Police Act.**Bill No. 17 - Police Act.**

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

Bill No. 5 - Government Restructuring (2014) Act.

which was reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, without further amendments, and the chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

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: 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 Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I stand here before you in this beautiful and historic House of Assembly proudly responding to the Speech from the Throne. It has been a full year since the people of my wonderful riding of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage elected me to be their MLA. It has been a great privilege to represent my communities of South Woodside, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage, Cow Bay and Shearwater.

The past year has flown by so quickly and the last 12 months have been filled with many new things, from learning the Rules of the House of Assembly to helping a constituent get what they need. Let me say that I truly love my new job and I look forward to the new challenges ahead. Helping people and advocating for change has always been important to me and has become even more of a focus for me. My first priority will always be to my son Ryder and my husband Joe, who still does not know how to cook, but my second priority is to represent the people of my constituency to the best of my ability.

I also have another family now, my fellow members of government. We work together as a team, sharing knowledge, helping each other by trying to do what is best for Nova Scotians with the Premier leading the way. The diversity of our members brings many different views and skills to the table, when tackling the challenges faced by the people of our province.

When I woke up on the day after the election, my first thought was, well, what do I do now? This job did not come with a manual, and the learning curve was steep. That said, I forged ahead. After being an entrepreneur for 28 years, I've always met a challenge head-on, so off I went with my wonderful assistant Jan Moore at my side to set up the new constituency office with its scenic view. My riding is very lucky to have Jan as my assistant. She is a hard worker and loves to help people. In Jan's Newfoundland words, let's get 'er done.

I will always remember my first official duty. It was on October 17, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. I was invited to present a congratulatory certificate and flowers to a long-time resident, Elsie Johnston, and her late husband, Don, who were being recognized and honoured with a plaque on the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Wall of Honour at the Tallahassee Community Rec Centre. Elsie is a volunteer in our community, and has been since I was a kid growing up. It was so surreal when I passed her flowers to her. She's a great human being, and I got to congratulate her on behalf of the province.

I will never forget the day many of us were sworn in as MLAs for the first time. It was amazing to have my son and my sister watch this important ceremony, a very historic moment in my life. After that, we were thrown into our first House sitting, and the learning began. To all of the experienced MLAs who have mentored me and continue to help me, I thank you. I would also like to individually thank the MLA for Preston-Dartmouth for always answering his phone when I call, and for giving me great advice.

Remembrance Day has always been a big day in my community. The people have always taken great care in honouring the veterans and the soldiers who fought for our freedom. There is always a church service followed by a parade to the Cenotaph. Laying the wreath on behalf of the province was a very moving moment for me. On the Saturday before Remembrance Day, the Knights of Columbus also had a very special ceremony for the deceased military at the St. Andrew's Cemetery. Flags were placed on the graves of all the deceased veterans. It was wonderful to honour them for their service to our country. "Freedom" is a word we don't take for granted anymore. The things that are going on in the world around us today make us realize how lucky we are to live safely in this great nation of Canada.

Christmas was crazy busy with event after event and everybody celebrating the joy of Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year's. Our Christmas tree lighting at Quigley's Corner was once again a community highlight. I would like to thank the volunteers who make this event possible every year. I would also like to thank the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Lions

Club for the great job they do in making sure that needy families receive Christmas food boxes and presents for the children. Your hard work and your thoughtfulness bring tears to my eyes every year.

In November, I was invited to Astral Drive Junior High to speak on Career Day. As I prepared my speaking notes to relate my life to junior high students, I realized that I had been involved with government since student council in Grade 7. I enjoyed my morning with all the young minds. Pay attention: our youth really are listening.

The Minister of Agriculture met with a group concerning animal protection in December. I'm happy to report that the department is producing legislation concerning standards of care for cats and dogs. This legislation will provide the government more flexibility to enforce and protect animal rights.

The same minister, who is Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, made a visit to my riding in January to speak with the fishermen about the importance of their job to the economic growth of Nova Scotia. We discussed safety in the workplace, and we will be having a safety session with the fishermen in early Spring 2015, in keeping with the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education's message, because the most important reason for making your workplace safe is not at work at all. It's at home.

Eastern Passage and Cow Bay make up a lot of ground in my riding, but I have had the pleasure of getting to know more about South Woodside, a smaller wonderful part of my riding. This neighbourhood community operates its own community centre and, let me tell you, it is run by a group of truly dedicated, hard-working people. Their hearts are big and always open to making their community a better place. Their love for their community shows in all they do, and thank heavens they are finally getting the new roof on their school gym, which also serves as their community centre. They are very excited and happy this is happening. They are now planning one of their biggest events, a Halloween celebration for all the kids in the neighbourhood. I can't wait to go and participate, and I thank you South Woodside for letting me be part of what you do - your spirit is inspiring.

A group of seniors working with the RCMP offer the Seniors Police Academy each year. It teaches seniors how to be safe in their homes and how to protect themselves from possible intruders and people trying to take advantage of them. I was a guest presenter at the graduation ceremony where I presented them with a resolution from the House of Assembly congratulating them on their success. I am happy to see that the province is offering a Senior Safety Grant through the Departments of Seniors and Justice. The grant will help groups fund educational safety programs like this one for seniors.

I would like to recognize Medric Cousineau, a veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder who has been working diligently to bring attention to the need for service dogs for persons with disabilities. It has been my privilege to work with him and the Department of

Justice advocating for legislation on this very important project, and I hope we can make it a reality. (Applause)

The Community of Eastern Passage-Cow Bay has an invaluable communication tool, it is called *The Beacon*, a community newspaper that has been around for 39 years. It is run by a tireless group of volunteers and it is a gem in our community. We also have a community radio station which is run by Wayne Harrett and a grand team of volunteers. Seaside FM is broadcasting all over metro and is now working hard to raise funds for a spot on the CBC tower. I recently helped at a spaghetti supper fundraiser to help them achieve their goal - and now I have a new respect for waiters and busboys.

In early June I attended the funeral of Chief Lawrence Paul in his Community of Millbrook, which also has a satellite site in my riding. I was touched by the cultural traditions and the love of the people who gathered to celebrate his life. This man did a lot to help his people and his Community of Millbrook and it is very obvious that he will be missed by many.

The military base of 12 Wing Shearwater is also in my riding and I recently visited their Military Family Resource Centre. This centre is dedicated to supporting its members' families. It is a non-profit organization that fundraises to support itself. I always thought it was federally funded, but now I know differently. Kudos to them. The Nova Scotia Government continues to place importance on its relationship with the Canadian military. Nova Scotia recognizes the importance of all military members and families and all they do to defend our country and bring us peace.

I had the pleasure of participating on a guest panel for a Junior High Student SpeakOut in Cole Harbour that was hosted by the Cole Harbour Lions. It is an annual event where students speak on topics of their choice and the guest panel asks questions. Congratulations to all and to the Lions for presenting this great experience for our youth.

It is always exciting to honour our special groups, people, and milestones with the resolutions in the House of Assembly. It is our opportunity to give them a pat on their back for a job well done. Speaking of jobs well done, I would like to recognize Lynda McConnell who performed a fabulous "pay it forward" paint job on our 12-foot statue of our bull moose who was in desperate need. The moose overlooks Silver Sands Beach in Cow Bay and has many fans and a community who loves him. We thank you.

There are many community festivals and events that take place in my riding. Some of these include the Eastern Passage Cow Bay Summer Carnival, Cole Harbour Harvest Festival, Seaside Harvest Festival, Tallahassee Days, South Woodside Christmas Eve celebration, Eastern Passage Business Expo, Shearwater MFRC family days, school and church plays, book launches, Canada Day celebrations, and Halloween events. There are really too many to mention. To think, all of these are run by volunteers who contribute to their communities unselfishly. It makes me proud to work alongside of you.

Our government has recognized the importance of senior citizens and the value they bring to our communities. It has increased support for Senior Citizens Assistance Programs by \$4.15 million for repairs to their homes, allowing them to live in their homes longer where they are the happiest.

When I was campaigning a year ago, dementia was a topic that came up often at the doors of my constituents, loved ones concerned about how to deal with this dreadful disease. It broke my heart to hear their stories. I am very proud to be part of a government that is working on a dementia strategy to help families cope with this increasing need for this type of assistance. The strategy will be introduced in the Spring of 2015.

Another government priority under the Department of Community Services is addressing accessibility inclusion and supporting persons with disability. The government is committed to working on legislation to address these concerns. I am also proud to be part of a government that has finally realized that victims of sexual violence need help. The government wants to improve services for victims and prevent sexual violence. In the year ahead, a sexual violence strategy will be launched. I know that our Minister of Community Services is a very strong advocate for this change and all of us members, on both sides of the floor, support her wholly.

I would like to make mention of all the dedicated people who support our youth through programs like Cadets, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Stetsons and Spurs, Boys & Girls Clubs, and sports teams. You are role models. The guidance and the leadership you show to these young minds is an invaluable example to them. I personally was involved in Girl Guides of Canada for over 11 years and loved working with these inspiring and impressionable young ladies. It is probably something that I will go back to someday because I loved it so much. Cooking a turkey dinner for over 60 Girl Guides of all ages is fun, entertaining, and very memorable.

I have always been a strong advocate for buying local and now the government has recognized it as a smart initiative and is promoting buying local as a positive move to help our economy.

I had saved my last topic as it is the most important to me: education. I believe that educating our children well is the key to the future of Nova Scotia. A well-educated workforce is important as a driving force for the province's economy. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education is committed to modernizing its apprentice program, a positive step to keeping our young people home. The government has removed the interest from student loans, retroactive to 2007. This removes more financial burden from our graduating students entering the workforce. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is a driving force in reviewing the education system.

The review panel received over 19,000 surveys, and their thoughts and ideas will form that report which the minister will respond to. Our government is reinvesting funds

back into our education system: smaller classrooms for students to help them learn better in their younger years, making learning a positive experience. Watching students learn and be excited about learning is something that the government is also excited about.

Over the next year additional math and literacy support for the students and teachers will be added to our education system. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development realizes that our schools are the hearts of our communities. Classroom learning is important but schools also have the opportunity to provide other services needed. The expansion of SchoolsPlus and mental health clinics in our schools is brilliant. Our students face more and more challenges and our schools should be equipped to help them face these challenges.

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development recognizes parents' concerns regarding report cards and is committed to revising them so that the words are clear and jargon-free, the message is individual to the student and points out the student's strengths and where improvements need to be made. They will also provide advice to parents on how they can support their child's learning at home.

Finally, I would love to talk about the new Eastern Passage high school. Our new high school is on my mind every day. There is not a person in my caucus who is not aware of the importance of this high school to my community. As other members have mentioned in their speeches, schools are the heart and soul of our communities. With it the community of Eastern Passage-Cow Bay will finally be complete. The site is now being finalized and I will be the first one to put my shovel in the ground to dig the hole. Everyone will be invited to the Eastern Passage ribbon-cutting celebration, so keep your eye out for your invitation.

Standing here before you in this House of Assembly is an honour and a privilege. I would like to recognize, as other members will confirm, that the bulk of a representative's work takes place in our constituency office. No matter what the media or its experts may portray, it is in the constituency office that the real work takes place every day.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the two most important men in my life: my husband, Joe, and my son, Ryder. Without their support and their love I would not be able to give myself to this job. Families of elected officials sacrifice a lot in order to help others. When they are working around the clock, our families are put aside. Missing saying good night to your son and not being part of a special family celebration are sacrifices we, as members, make. It has been our choice to do our jobs but sometimes it is really hard. I love you both to the moon and back.

I want to thank everyone who has helped me and has supported me in the last year. It has been a job that has brought great joy, emotions of sadness, and immense learning. I feel confident in moving forward to represent you to the best of my abilities. To my constituents, my door is always open, I will always listen and I will always work hard for you. Thank you. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member across for the very compassionate Address in Reply to the Throne Speech. Again it is a pleasure to stand here in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and have the opportunity to say a few words. I think I would like to start off by saying thanks to you, as Deputy Speaker, and of course the Speaker, for the commendable job you have been doing since the election in the Fall of 2013. I certainly think I can speak for everyone; we appreciate the work you do on our behalf.

I had the opportunity to meet the Speaker of the House prior to the election in the Fall of 2013, through Junior B hockey. He was the owner, manager, doctor and whatever else for the Eastern Shore Jr. Mariners and I was the coach of the Pictou County Scotians, so we had the opportunity to meet and talk prior to coming to the Legislature. He did a great job with that organization, prior to his time here. I was happy to see the members for Sydney River-Mira-Louisburg and Sydney-Whitney Pier present here on the opening day of the Throne Speech, sitting in their respective seats.

I think it is safe to say that MLAs are not often appreciated for the work that they do. There are a lot of people who don't realize that we are basically on a program of 24/7 and we have a lot of issues that we deal with. To have these two MLAs present with us on that particular day was very touching.

It is very comforting to have CAs running your offices. I can certainly speak about my CA, Brenda Wilson. She is basically awesome, with regard to the work that she does for me and for the residents of my constituency. Her pleasant personality, previous experience dealing with the public, and her willingness to assist anyone that arrives in our office makes my job so much easier.

If there is one common ground we can all agree on, it's that we want to improve the quality of life for everyone in this province. During my first few years in the Legislature I had the opportunity to meet and become friends with several MLAs from all Parties. Harold "Junior" Theriault, the member for Digby, certainly brings a chuckle when I think of him. He was a very good MLA and a friend to everyone. We had many nights where Junior had us holding our stomachs during a debate on fisheries and seals, or the alders growing along the highway in his constituency.

It is an honour and privilege to represent the constituency of Pictou Centre. Pictou Centre consists of three towns: the Town of Trenton, the Town of New Glasgow, and the Town of Stellarton. The Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne laid out four pillars: fiscal sustainability, economic growth, education, and demographics.

I will use this opportunity to express some of my personal views on a couple of the above four priorities. The youth of Nova Scotia continue to possess a high level of literacy

and education; however, they face challenges due to our high level of unavailable jobs. Pictou Centre, like the rest of Pictou County, Nova Scotia, is experiencing a period of transition and change. Our population is declining and with the out-migration of our youth, we are faced with a significant increase in population over the age of 50.

Town councils are struggling due to the loss of revenue, as job opportunities have been on a downward spiral. There is an increase in families looking for additional support. Many families are struggling. The theme *Now or Never* seems to be very appropriate for the residents of Pictou County. Several large manufacturing companies are gone. When I think over the last few years, I think of Nova Forge, which was in Trenton; Greenbrier from Oregon, a railcar plant; Maritime Steel; and a number of small businesses have closed.

The Town of Trenton is a community with a great history that was founded around industry, and is noted for the first pouring of steel in British North America. In fact, Madam Speaker, my great-grandfather, James Dunn, was a member of that crew that poured the first steel in British North America. I believe the year was 1883. I don't remember that year, but I was told that was what happened then. (Interruption) Just a baby, I guess, at the time.

He continued to work 64 years in the railcar plant, Madam Speaker, retiring at the age of 83. When I look back, I remember some talks I had with him at his residence in Trenton, and I wish now that I had taped some of those conversations to be able to pass them on to other people in the community.

Madam Speaker, we have an airport in Trenton. This particular airport was officially opened in 1932, and is currently owned by Sobeys capital investment. Over the years, a lot of different people landed at this airport to go to various places in Pictou County. Some names that I can recall from reading previously - Babe Ruth visited the Trenton airport and played some ball in Westville on a special occasion; a celebration in Westville for Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, and a few Prime Ministers, and many politicians have arrived at the Trenton airport. It's a very active airport right now, and again, owned by Sobeys.

Trenton has probably one of the most beautiful parks in the province. It's one of Nova Scotia's finest parks. Whether you're going out for a stretch, a run, or a walk, to fish in their fishing pools, or to swim in their swimming area, the Trenton Park can provide an experience for youth and for the elderly.

There are several walking trails - six or seven kilometres - throughout the park. It's approximately 565 acres of coniferous trees, and it is a hidden treasure right in the town. It is a great location for family fun, for a barbecue, for a picnic, and for many events.

Madam Speaker, DSTN - Daewoo - in Trenton, the windmill operation, continues to develop its diversification efforts. Although they have struggled since 2010 trying to get

up and running and get the contracts to keep everyone busy, they have been making some progress. Senior management has travelled throughout North America meeting with potential customers in industries such as gas and oil. They are presently finishing an order of 34 towers for the South Canoe Wind project, which will be considered the largest wind farm in Nova Scotia, with 102 megawatt capacity. The expectation was that at peak production, 200 employees would be working on this project.

The company also worked on creating a few large 30,000-VSG pressure vessels, and I had the opportunity to see them, Madam Speaker, as I toured the plant just a few months ago. So DSTN continues to be optimistic, with a South Korean owner, with an ongoing effort for continued improvement and innovation. Again, I'm sure the mayor, Glen MacKinnon, is hoping that they will be able to get some international contracts and get more people back to work.

Madam Speaker, another town in my constituency is Stellarton. Stellarton is very proud of their new industrial business park, which we can see along Highway No. 104 as you're passing by heading east to Cape Breton or west to Truro. It's rapidly growing, and there are several businesses that have already moved in and set up shop: Access Nova Scotia, Central Supplies, a Toyota dealership, and Home Hardware are some examples. Although the majority of these businesses moved from nearby, it is still good news for Stellarton and the mayor of Stellarton, Joe Gennoe, and of course, all of Pictou County. Stellarton is proud to have the head office for Canada's second-largest grocery chain, Crombie Properties, Empire Company Limited, Scotsburn, and a diversity of small businesses.

Madam Speaker, the Town of New Glasgow is under the leadership of Mayor Barrie MacMillan. The town was settled in 1784 and was named after Glasgow, Scotland. It was incorporated in 1875 and has a population of approximately 9,500 people. New Glasgow has a combination of small, midsize, and large businesses. There are several commercial services and business districts in the town. Many financial institutions and several law firms are also well represented in the New Glasgow area.

New Glasgow is home to Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline central office, Stright-MacKay, Aberdeen Hospital, and a few major car dealerships.

Unemployment is one of the key drivers of youth out-migration in Nova Scotia, especially rural Nova Scotia. Out-migration from rural areas is predominantly an exodus of young people. We also have an unusually high number of Nova Scotians who are five to ten years from retirement working out West - oil and gas companies are willing to pay high wages for expertise that comes with these experienced employees. The majority of us have friends and family members who have temporarily or permanently packed their belongings and moved out West for work.

I had the opportunity to chat with several Nova Scotians, during the past two weekends, who are home for a brief time prior to returning to the West for work. All of them would prefer to be home working, many communities in the Maritimes, Nova Scotia being one of them, have lost high numbers from their community. I made reference before, there are many names all of us could quote but there's one, John Wilson, who ran a plumbing company that he had created in 1979, and he left October 8th for Cambridge Bay to work. In a recent conversation he's enjoying his initial days in Cambridge Bay and thinks that after an interim of eight weeks he may at this point remain there, stay there because there's lots of work. Of course, the wages are a lot higher than they are here in Nova Scotia and in particular Pictou County. Again, he left and he took one or two employees with him, and they have left the county to work in the other end of our country.

When I talk to some of these workers, they shake their heads sometimes stating that it's apparent that Nova Scotia wishes to remain a retirement province. They refer to the high standards and accountability that are in place today in the oil and gas industry; they claim it is a very different industry today. We have to provide our communities with business friendly ideas, resources, and support.

There are just too many fewer jobs in our province, less revenue, and greater needs. We have to find ways where our rural communities are placed in a better position to secure investment, create job opportunities, and improve their economy. We have to find ways to attract companies to rural areas of our province. I believe it is the responsibility of every MLA to give residents across Nova Scotia, in particular in rural areas, some hope and opportunity.

We cannot avoid globalization. There was a time when companies were competing with businesses in communities relatively close to them; we now compete with those around the world. In order to compete in the 21st Century knowledge-based economy we must do things differently. We have to quickly become more aggressive, innovative, and flexible. We must create new economies to generate the most value from our provincial resources.

With regard to the consistent out-migration of Nova Scotians - some residents will tell you we are simply trying to make the most of an opportunity, we are open to change. If we stay we are displaying a lack of ambition and closed attitudes. Madam Speaker, this may be a form of stereotyping, however I have heard several people say this.

Meanwhile we are losing numerous, talented, young, and experienced Nova Scotians. Policy should focus on the creation of opportunities for young people to return to Nova Scotia rather than simply encouraging them to remain. I only have to look as far as my own family with six children - three boys and three girls. Years ago, my wife and I were very fortunate to secure teaching positions in Pictou County close to our home; however this is not the same today, it's much more difficult.

When we talk about having family as close to home as possible, that's something that we talk about around our kitchen table all the time, Madam Speaker. I have a son and a daughter working in California. I actually have a couple in Nova Scotia, which is great, and I also have a couple attending school in Montreal. Again, hopefully, most of them, someday, will return to Nova Scotia, find appropriate employment, and live with their own families one day here in the province.

Again, will it ever happen? Well, Madam Speaker, anything is possible and I'm certainly hoping that will happen, as we improve the economy in this Province of Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, with regard to youth entering post-secondary schools, community colleges, universities, today it is a very expensive venture and I'm one of many MLAs who certainly have had some experience in that area. Many of them cannot acquire a loan, due to the fact that there is a particular cap where there are loans and grants and so on from the provincial and Canadian Government. Many students, because of these reasons, have to get a line of credit from the bank and that becomes very expensive and a financial burden on families because once a student has spent one, two or three years at a university, they are responsible for paying back the interest on the part of the loan, the line of credit that they paid. Again, that's another financial burden for families.

Madam Speaker, I realize we have many people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas of our province. Nevertheless, the traditional focus on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry has to change. Global production networks and increased migration to urban centres has changed the character of rural areas. Education, physical infrastructure, entrepreneurial spirit and social infrastructure are the determining factors in improving rural areas. One of our greatest challenges in Nova Scotia is ensuring the sustainable growth of our rural economy. Opportunities for this to happen are wide-ranging, including farm diversification, improving the tourism economy and appropriate new, rural businesses.

Madam Speaker, on the other hand, agricultural profitability, long working hours, basically a 24/7 lifestyle sometimes is not attractive. I believe there are at least two reasons why youth are ignoring the opportunity to take control and operate their family's farming business. I think we need more Farmer Johns in the industry.

We have to think creatively about how to make sure needed public services get delivered. This means thinking outside the usual parameters regarding how to sustain government programs. I think we are obligated, as sitting members, to continue to diligently work to reform government programs and make sure funding is available. If we reach the moment in time where we cannot maintain government services in the traditional way, we have an obligation to find other ways to serve the residents of Nova Scotia. Using technology to provide efficient and responsive government and eliminating road blocks and red tape are examples that will help.

Madam Speaker, the idea of shifting the risk of failed initiatives from taxpayers to investors is probably worth examining. I believe working outside the box, creating different ideas, is something that we have to do.

The creation of a wellness program for employees was created where my daughter works in the U.S., Madam Speaker. Adopting a new health insurance contract where those who choose to meet certain attainable health goals will not see their premiums rise. These are examples where there has been a substantial saving in health care costs in her area. This is working for them, and is an example of working outside the parameters.

In our case, we have a different health system; therefore, it would differ here locally. We must be creative. We must think of other ideas to try to improve the livelihood of everyone here in the province.

This particular program, this health insurance contract where my daughter works in San Diego, sparked my interest. It was an attempt to change employee behavior and improve the overall health of the employees by zeroing in on the reasons for or causes of conditions like obesity, smoking, stress, and alcohol or drug abuse. I can recall reading a study from Harvard one time, and again, without stating any factual information, this particular study talked about how the investment in a wellness program was well worth every dollar in society and companies and so on.

Opportunities or creations like this could be an opportunity, if properly monitored, to save money, improve productivity, and reduce absenteeism. This particular idea that this company created in San Diego saved about \$1000 to employees that reached a certain goal. It was based on a scoring system of 100. If you reached a score of 85 or above, then you would save approximately \$1000 on your premium. Every year the company personnel would take their employees and measure their blood pressure, their weight and body fat percentage, cholesterol, blood sugars, et cetera, and if they scored high, then they would reap the benefits of that premium.

Therefore, the employees are responsible and accountable toward their health. They also reap the benefits, and the company reaps the benefits. The entire system benefits. This is an example where they save the system a considerable amount of money, and it's an example of where they went outside the box and created something that was very, very different.

We have to be creative, but at the same time live within our means. The province needs immediate change. Real change. Without change, we'll continue to see family and friends leaving our province. Without immediate action and a plan produced, we will continue to be in the same position one year from now.

I would like to take the opportunity to talk about one serious issue in my constituency. I'm sure every MLA can look at their constituency and think about many,

many issues that are in their constituency, some more serious than others. I have been and continue to be very concerned about what appears to be the dilapidated condition of rail line running through the Town of New Glasgow, and across our province, for that matter.

When I look at the rail line in various locations, it's just like someone throwing the dice. When is it going to happen? I firmly believe that the current system of repair is not enough. Sitting in a pickup truck and driving down a track at a slow speed appears to pass for a track inspection in some areas. I have read more than once that many tank cars are not safe to carry anything but water for the past 15 to 20 years. However, they continue to carry flammable and explosive materials. It appears to be, get the product to market regardless of the shape of the track. So is the dollar factor out-ruling safety? That is probably one of the questions, Madam Speaker. Have we reached a stage where reaction becomes more important than prevention?

We have to examine inspection criteria and revamp the rules and regulations. Should the penalties for failure increase drastically? Should we ensure preventive maintenance programs are accurate and top priority? Our mindset with regard to rail safety must change. We can no longer stand by and pretend everything is fine, that everything has met the required specifications. We can no longer ignore a major problem that exists on the rail lines every day of the year.

Over the years the culture of safety has not been a major concern. It appears to be a systematic problem that has gone on far too long. In the past we had freight trains derailling on the outskirts of New Glasgow. In fact, Madam Speaker, there was a derailment this Spring a few metres from the downtown business core. This section of line handles freight travelling from and to Sydney and Port Hawkesbury and travels through the downtown core of New Glasgow.

The condition of the track was brought to my attention by someone at the beginning of July. On Labour Day I saw first-hand that the train track is badly worn. The head was skewed in various directions, with long sections of steel fractured and broken off on the rail. A close examination of this section of line would show the disintegrated condition of the ties, the numerous loose or missing spikes, as well as the broken, worn rail. If you take a good look at the rail, Madam Speaker, it looked to be out of gauge. The normal specification of gauge is 4 feet, 8.5 inches from inside to inside. However, when you look at the rail there are a number of areas where it certainly exceeds that.

Cross ties are definitely in mixed condition and there are splits and rot throughout. The ends are broken off some ties. Numerous spikes have worked their way out of the ties, as the wood has lost all integrity and can no longer be an anchor for these spikes.

There's also a ribbon effect, Madam Speaker, sort of like a roller-coaster effect, the ballast being loose, you have that up and down heaving of the rail. If you stand and look for a long distance, you can see this effect on the rail itself. Common sense would indicate that

this might result in the rails spreading and moving laterally, when exposed to pressure. We have experienced two derailments in our area this past Spring, 2014, and early summer. The largest was in the West River area outside New Glasgow, only a few kilometres from New Glasgow. A train carrying butane derailed causing an evacuation of area residents for several days.

A recent derailment happened in Saskatchewan where two cars left the tracks carrying the same type of fuel that travels through New Glasgow. What is keeping this from happening in our downtown core? Madam Speaker, most brackets have the opportunity to have four spikes through them into the ties. I walked through the entire downtown core of New Glasgow on that track and I did not see one brace that had any more than two spikes. In fact many of them had only one. It would be safe to say that 80 percent of them were loose and were a few centimetres up; the head was not even down flush on the rail, holding the rail to the tie. The majority had one or two and certainly there were very few of them anchoring the rail to the tie.

Madam Speaker, I know that safety inspectors will state that within - and listen to this because I shook my head when I received this news - safety inspectors will state that within every 32 feet it is only necessary to have eight good ties. Again, I took a foot off that just to round it out but it is 39, the minister is right. But it's still just in compliance - so basically one tie in eight.

Someone, perhaps the National Safety Board, should go back to the drawing board and examine regulations. Some rails will have hot journal detectors on their line - I'm not sure if this particular line has them or if they really need them but, again, that's another question. This is a detector mounted across the tie and it reads the journal temps as a railcar passes. I am not sure; I didn't see any.

Just a few weeks ago I spoke with the recently retired president, the owner of the Cape Breton Central Nova Railroad. Over the phone he disagreed with me that freight trains were actually carrying butane, propane, through downtown New Glasgow. He told me on the phone that there was a spur line and it didn't go through the downtown core. I'm not sure what the exact procedure is for inspecting a rail line but, from my vantage point, I cannot understand why an inspector would sign their name to an inspection sheet - did they just ride over most of these tracks without getting out to look?

I must thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, he did arrange for an inspection group to go through this area, and I was very appreciative of that. This happened just recently, maybe last Wednesday.

Although there is no crude being transported at this particular time, the probability of this happening in the future is very real. When this is the case we'll see much longer trains, approximately one mile in length, 80 tanker cars each filled with crude weighing 127 tons. This crude oil was being transported through Lac-Mégantic in Quebec. These

trains probably required five engines with each of them weighing 195 tons. This could make for trains going over our rails somewhere in the range of 8,000 tons, and there is no way that the rail I saw in its present condition could sustain this type of wear and tear.

Ironically, since I've brought this to the attention of everyone, including the owners, government, and Transport Canada inspectors, there has been an unusual amount of activity on this particular part of the line. Many trucks, machines, and employees have been looking and working on this section, so that is positive. If there's anything they can do to make this line safer it is good for everyone.

Again, that line runs right through the downtown core of New Glasgow. It's only a few metres from the buildings, the track is that close. In fact it goes through one building - it used to be known as the Goodman Building in New Glasgow. I am positive that the condition of the rail lines in the downtown core of New Glasgow is presently in better shape now than it was just several weeks ago.

I want the rail line to be safe and at the same time avoid any potential disaster that could happen in a downtown core that may result in business damage and, most important of all, the loss of life. Rail companies don't want derailments; they cost a lot of money. Government does not want derailments. I strongly believe that the required specifications have to be improved and tightened. Owners, governments, safety inspectors, and residents, must step up to the plate and make the changes necessary to protect our communities.

We know safety inspectors travel the rail lines at least twice a week; however, what is the real structural integrity of the various tracks in Nova Scotia? I know the one I saw, Madam Speaker, the line that runs through the downtown core of New Glasgow resembled or looked like a line that was earmarked to be abandoned or closed down.

The accident that occurred in Lac-Mégantic in Quebec, certainly there is a report out about that from the National Safety Board. It is available for anyone to read; 47 people were killed in that disaster, family dynamics destroyed forever. It took about four days to put out the flames. We have a lot of repairs and upgrades to do or perhaps, whenever this crude oil - if it reaches the point where it is going to be transported on our rail lines to terminals to be shipped out of our province, we are definitely not prepared for carrying crude oil on our rail lines.

With efforts by companies to get their crude to market we'll probably see, as I mentioned earlier, much longer trains travelling through our communities. The oil is toxic and explosive. Is the dollar investment for improving our rail system enough? What are the actual standards? What about the thawing and freezing that occurs yearly? Track condition is often the reason for derailments rather than too much speed or human error.

In fact, Madam Speaker, if one were to read the files on numerous derailments, it appears that the common theme, or reason, for train cars leaving the track, is simply a

broken track, a track that has been damaged or moved out of line. The transportation of oil by rail is all risk and actually no benefit to our communities that exist near the rail lines or tracks. Improved communication to all the communities is necessary concerning potentially hazardous materials travelling through our areas.

If our tracks are not improved and vigorously inspected with high standards, we will continue to have more derailments and the potential for disasters. As the demand increases for this oil, the more trains you will see and no doubt the risk of derailments will increase. I know inspectors are checking these lines at least twice a week therefore they are very familiar with the tracks. If the track's geometry is altered, the relationship between the two rails and the support system, which includes the ties, the plates, the spikes, and road bed that hold these rails in place, it will be the ingredients for a derailment.

Madam Speaker, just returning to the derailment in Saskatchewan just a few weeks ago, hearing the same sort of product that goes through the Town of New Glasgow - and I'll just finish off by making a few comments on this particular accident. Transportation - and I'll table that Madam Speaker - Transportation Safety Board investigators are focused on a length of broken rail that is the likely cause of Tuesday's fiery train derailment in central Saskatchewan, an all too familiar incident that has raised questions about the state of repair of rail lines across our country.

Two tanker cars carrying liquid petroleum products exploded into flames forcing the evacuation of nearby homes. Madam Speaker, this was on a very level stretch of rail and it was near a community with approximately, I believe, only about 50 people. Pieces of the railhead were worn; they were battered. A video shot by a local resident showed a stretch of track near the crash site which appears to show loose and missing rail spikes. The unknown residents in the footage, whose faces are not shown, comment that a number of railway spikes are easily removed and so loose they appear not to be fastening the rail down to the wooden railway ties.

TBS reports dating back several years reveal that broken steel rails, shifting rail beds, and derailment stemming from track failure are nothing new in Canada. Eight TSB crash reports in the past five years blame problems with the track that were either missed by inadequate inspections or were neglected and not fixed in time.

Madam Speaker, I think perhaps I will end by saying that doing the inspection is one thing, doing the repairs is something else. What I saw a couple of months ago - no one will be able to convince me that track was in the shape it should have been. I know the ties rot over time but I don't think they replace them quickly enough. You're going to go in very soon and put your winter tires on your car. The mechanic is going to tell you that it's not necessary to put the six nuts on, I'm going to put three on. You'll be okay. Don't worry about a thing, just listen to us and believe in us. It's not necessary to have the six of them. We know that that is not right, that is not correct and it could cause a problem on the highways, if you were driving that particular vehicle.

So that is an issue that I wanted to talk about because I feel very strongly about this particular issue because the rail runs right through the downtown core. If we have an accident, if we have a derailment, if we have an explosion, it has potential to wipe out the entire town because of the proximity of the track and the downtown core buildings, law offices, stores and so on. It's not all that far away from the emergency responders, the fire department, which is not too far from the railroad track.

So thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'll finish by saying that I hope all MLAs will continue the wonderful work that they do in their particular areas, and that we continue to make life easier for the people who need our help across the Province of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: On October 8th, the Province of Nova Scotia made a decision for change and since this day I have earned a whole new respect for politicians. The responsibility that a sitting member has for their constituency is huge. You are the last line of defence for people who need help. You are the person they reach out to when they need help with roads, community centres, immigration, school and whatever else you can think of. All I can say is, what an honour it has been to represent the people in the riding of Halifax Chebucto.

But before I go any further, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge some birthdays. I feel that if you turn 100, you should be recognized in this House, since reaching 100 is a huge accomplishment. Please bear with me as I acknowledge these people. Ms. Joyce E. Tynes turned 100 December 12, 2012. Ms. Bernice K. Spurr turned 100 July 17, 2014. Ms. Lois M. Gilson turned 100 on August 27, 2014.

In the riding of Chebucto we have some great things occurring. The biggest announcement that happened is Le Marchant St. Thomas will be getting a new school. I cannot tell you how excited the community is about this project. I am going to share with you some history of the school, so members will understand the rich history and importance of Le Marchant. The first Le Marchant school was opened in early 1887 and has taught many great minds. The present school was built in 1923 and modified in 1930 and 1958. The first addition to the original school was made in 1896, giving additional rooms with seating capacity for 150 children.

Although two rooms were added in 1913 to accommodate the increased attendance at the school, the building has again reached its capacity. The need for an assembly hall has also been urgent and pressing for many years at this school, and it was thought that by building the most desirable addition, the needs of the school could be met for some years. In the 1980s Le Marchant and St. Thomas Aquinas amalgamated and today stands as Le Marchant St. Thomas. This school, being one of our older ones, will be coming down, and

a new chapter in the riding of Chebucto will start, where new minds will begin to grow in Halifax.

With the new school coming and the first education review in 25 years, and over 17,000 Nova Scotians participating in the review, this shows the passion and concerns for our education system. Madam Speaker, the children are extremely excited for the new school, and the parents are pleased that our government is taking the education system seriously.

I guess from there I would like to take you on a little journey of what I was part of this last year. We'll start with one that was very close and dear to my heart, Camp Brigadoon. This year our government purchased over 300 acres of land around the camp. This land was purchased between three different departments - the Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Environment, and the Department of Natural Resources. With the three departments buying this land we have protected the camp from future developments happening in and around the camp. Now, chronically ill kids will always have a place to enjoy Nova Scotia wilderness, where kids can be kids.

I'm a believer that you have to put your money where your mouth is, and if this government is going to support a cause that I so believe in then I will support it. First off with the help of Swim Nova Scotia, we held the first swim race in Halifax Harbour in over 50 years. The swim was called the BrigaSwim, with all proceeds going to Brigadoon. The exciting thing about this was all three levels of governments spent over \$380 million to clean up the harbour and this year the harbour was safe to truly swim in.

With this event we tied into the big swim where myself and 49 other swimmers swam to P.E.I., fundraising over \$300,000 (Applause) which equals 300 kids going to camp next summer. We are looking forward to the Minister of Environment to accomplish the same feat.

In the last year I think I've heard the Ivany report referred to so many times, I have lost count. The great thing about this is people are talking about the report in so many ways and referring to it in so many ways. Everyone has an opinion; everyone has a solution. Today I stand here and I want to talk about the fundamental aspect of this report, the one thing that I truly believe, as a business owner, needs to be addressed. This is something that government has no control over. This is one part of the report that will change the province around - and I'm talking about attitude. To me, this is the fundamental thing that will move Nova Scotia forward, and I'm going to read this piece of the report because of this whole report this is the one that stands out the most.

The report states:

A better future for Nova Scotia, and most empathetically for its rural regions, is not possible unless ways are found to grow the economy at a

greater rate than has been the case for the past 20 years or more. And if we are to sustain rural communities and grow the provincial economy as a whole, the province will need more businesses of all types - predominantly private sector but including social enterprises and innovative voluntary sector organizations - to employ more people and generate more wealth.

With federal transfers leveling or shrinking, a heavy debt burden, and very little room to increase taxation rates, the increased revenues our municipal and provincial governments need if they are to maintain and improve economic infrastructure and public services will have to be generated to a much greater degree than in the recent past by growing the economy. The wider public needs to understand and support this imperative by openly addressing current attitudinal barriers to business development and entrepreneurship. Leaders in business, labour, government, communities and strategic institutions need to embrace this challenge and take responsibility for making it happen within their own activities and through expanded collaboration across their different fields of influence and activity.

A new, more dynamic Nova Scotia economy needs growing urban centres that draw in people and capital and push development out to their surrounding regions. It needs well-managed and expanding linkages between cities, adjacent towns and rural regions. To provide impetus and a focus for resolving our urban/rural tensions in Nova Scotia, government and community leaders in rural regions need to pursue greater understanding and more positive attitudes toward the growth of our cities and larger towns, and their urban colleagues need to recognize their dependence on rural regions and economic sectors, and embrace new responsibilities for the development of the overall economy across this province.

Municipal reform is of course an important vehicle for more effectively linking urban communities to their surrounding regions and sharing both the costs and benefits of economic development more equitably. Similarly the Regional Enterprise Network model provides and [sic] new and potentially powerful vehicle for coordinating the development efforts of different jurisdictions and generating greater cooperation and policy alignment across the province. An immediate task for rural leaders is to accelerate both areas of development and to become willing partners in building a more focused and unified governance for the province.

For their parts, urban leaders need to undertake to develop and actively support wider planning processes to manage the pace of urban expansion

and to optimize economic development, quality of life and environmental impacts on surrounding regions and communities.

In order for this to happen, the private sector needs the respect of Nova Scotians. People have to understand that being an entrepreneur in Nova Scotia is hard. Entrepreneurs work hard every day because they want to succeed. They want to give back to their community, and most of all, they have the passion and drive to make a difference in their fields of business and in their community.

What a lot of people do not understand is that an entrepreneur is the last to get paid. Their house is on the line, their car is on the line, and the stress is high, but I can assure you that not one entrepreneur would give this up. But guess what? These people are the backbone of Nova Scotia. These people will carry Nova Scotia to the next level. So when we see a successful business owner who may be living in a nice house or driving a nice car, we should stop and say, good for you, thank you for making Nova Scotia thrive. But at the same time, when we come across a business owner who has lost their house, their car, and all their life savings, we as Nova Scotians should not look at them as failures. They should be celebrated just as much as a successful business owner because they tried. They had the guts to try, and during their time they made a difference. These failed business owners should wear their failure as a badge of honour.

In the United States, most successful business owners have gone bankrupt at least once. For example, last November Donald Trump bankrupted one of his companies, and he is still considered a successful business person. There are many examples of this, and we, as Nova Scotians, have the responsibility to pat the Braggs and the Risleys on the back for succeeding, and we have to treat the family business person with the same respect.

Let me go back to the importance of the private sector for a moment. The private sector needs to succeed in Nova Scotia, as it will make rural parts of Nova Scotia succeed. We have to look at what we have in rural Nova Scotia and work with government to make rural areas appetizing for future investment. One of many things we have to offer in Nova Scotia is a beautiful place to live, a place where you can own a nice piece of land on the ocean and run a business. Our time zone is one of the best in the world, because you can deal with Europe in the morning and the West Coast in the afternoon.

One of these companies that has done this is Ocean Sonics in Great Village. They chose Great Village because that is where they wanted to live, and they are only 1,000 metres from the Bay of Fundy.

Ocean Sonics is an ocean technology company that designs and manufactures digital hydrophones. The company's goal is to make the best digital acoustic listening instruments available. Underwater sound is one of the most important tools we have for understanding and studying the sea. It is vital for measuring the ocean's health.

Before Ocean Sonics existed the concept of the Smart Hydrophone was developed in 2005 by President Mark Wood at Instrument Concepts, a design and engineering company, where its first mission was to help save the world's largest semi-submersible rig that was listing in the Gulf of Mexico. Experience with this initial product in various places around the world drove the development of the compact icListen, with the introduction of the very low frequency icListen in 2010, and the 2nd generation high frequency icListen being introduced in March 2012.

On February 1, 2012 the company Ocean Sonics was formed to assume the role of designing and manufacturing the icListen Smart Hydrophones, leading Instrument Concepts back to its roots as an engineering services and custom design company.

They are scientists, environmental assessment specialists, engineers and field operations personnel. Users of the icListen Smart Hydrophones are looking for precise measurement of sounds whether that is mammals, fish, crustaceans and other aquatic life, ships and boats, wave and wind, seismic, pile driving and air guns or other [anthropogenic] noise in the ocean. These hydrophones are used by academic and governmental institutions, corporations, and individuals in over 10 countries.

This successful company is in rural Nova Scotia with a population of less than 500 people. This shows that high-paying, successful jobs in rural parts of Nova Scotia can succeed, if we believe.

In the attitude section of the Ivany report it talks about how we have to work together. The government understands this. We are building the foundation for private business to work together, to succeed. One of the things that we are doing is the comprehensive tax review led by Laurel Broten. Ms. Broten has worked tirelessly on this project, meeting with over 190 individuals, businesses and organizations, and travelled all over Nova Scotia. I can personally tell you that I am very excited to see the outcome of this report because this is one of the many things that this government is doing to build groundwork for private businesses to lead the way to making Nova Scotia succeed.

This is the perfect segue into my next topic. As chairman of the Economic Development Committee, one of my first meetings was with Jim Hanlon and Tony Goode who spoke on the ocean tech and aerospace defence. The combined economic impact of these two industries in Nova Scotia is over \$3.5 billion, so I believe that a few minutes on this topic should be mentioned.

Every day the ocean reminds us of the influence of Nova Scotia's history, geography and community life. The length of our coastline is 7,579 kilometres, which is greater than the distance separating Halifax from Moscow, and our licence plate proclaims we are Canada's Ocean Playground. But it is not only a place of recreation and beauty - it is a source of unique economic strengths: thousands of independent fishing vessels, hundreds

of aquaculture sites and fish plants, dozens of boat builders in ports around the province, offshore energy projects, and the \$25 billion federal shipbuilding contract.

About 15.5 per cent of the provincial GDP - that's more than \$5 billion a year - is from ocean-related industries. Some 30,000 Nova Scotians are directly employed in ocean activities. Countries around the world are turning serious attention to their ocean and coastal economies and some are starting to identify this trend as the dawn of the ocean economy.

Could there be a better opportunity for Nova Scotia, a province whose heritage, economy and culture are built around a connection to the sea? Consider our competitive advantage: the geography of Halifax Harbour and the Nova Scotia coastline; the highest concentration of ocean-related Ph.D.s in the world, working at Dalhousie, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, the National Research Council, Environment Canada (Atlantic) and Defence Research Development Canada, over 480 Ph.D.s; labour market capacity for highly skilled people in this sector through the NSCC, its Nautical Institute and other universities; and a strong industry cluster of businesses in the ocean sector.

How strong is this ocean industry cluster? Consider this - Nova Scotia's ocean technology companies annual revenues doubled from \$500 million in 2009 to \$1 billion in 2011. Ocean technology companies account for about 20 per cent of all our research and development performed by businesses in Nova Scotia.

Irving Shipbuilding's \$25 billion contract to build Canada's next generation of surface combats will bring 30 years of sustainable jobs and spin-offs including those involved in the ocean technology sector. In 2011 defence generated \$1.4 billion to Nova Scotia's economy directly related to ocean technology, most importantly, this is the export-oriented business we are actively playing in, which is growing rapidly.

The global market for ocean-related goods and services doubled in the last six years to \$3 trillion U.S. - 90 per cent of the world's commerce travels by sea and international maritime organizations. With Nova Scotia's geographical attributes, ocean knowledge assets and growing core of dynamic ocean technology companies, we are perfectly positioned to become a world play in the ocean economy.

Listening to my colleague, the member for Halifax Atlantic, he hit on something that I want to expand on, and if I can have everyone's undivided attention because what I'm about to say is probably one of the most important things that I'm going to say. The men's role in equality of women - if you have not recently taken the 13 minutes to listen to Emma Watson's speech launching the HeForShe campaign for the UN, please do. She calls for men to take a greater role in ending gender inequality. She calls for the world's fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers to stand up and support equality.

You are probably wondering why I am referring to this in my Address in Reply. Well, as some of you know, I am a father of two amazing girls: Anneke, 10, and Zofia, 7. I want to have a province where equality for women is paramount. I want to have a province where this can be discussed around the dinner table, classrooms, and school grounds. I want my daughters to be treated as equal.

Fortunately, Nova Scotia in most cases has this, and we are very lucky. But it is not perfect, and as a man, I want to make sure that we strive for perfection on this issue. So I am asking MLAs, CEOs, teachers, unions, and any male who has sons to teach their sons about equality, because we, as leaders, can encourage men to think about this issue. We can encourage boys to be comfortable with their emotions. We can teach boys to treat women with respect, and most of all, we can create a place of equality for my daughters and for many other women and girls of Nova Scotia.

In closing on this, I guess you can call me a male feminist, and I'm okay with this, because it is important for my girls - to support them and fight for their equality. I want to close my reply with a quote from Ms. Watson and ask men to step forward and ". . . ask yourself if not me, who? If not now, when?" Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MR. LLOYD HINES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased and proud to rise in this venerable place today to deliver my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. As a first matter of business, I want to give thanks to all the people who have given me the great privilege of being here in this important place. The great people who make up the residents and voters of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie must be recognized, with my sincere gratitude, for placing their most valuable possession - their vote - in my trust, with faith that my government will work diligently to improve their circumstances, for them and their families. Their strengths are shown each day in the way they work tirelessly as volunteers throughout the riding to advance their communities and take care of each other.

I can speak to their dedication with authority, as I have attended countless community functions, parades, and celebrations during the first year of my term as the first MLA for the new constituency of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, a constituency that proves its interest in its government, as shown by producing the second-highest voter turnout in Nova Scotia, at over 70 per cent, only to be edged out by Cape Breton-Richmond at 70.2 per cent. Maybe that has to do with the high number of Acadians that we have in both those ridings. These are wonderful people who helped found this province, and it shows in their interest in good government.

I must call out and thank publicly my constituency assistant, Ms. Shelley O'Connor, who has the most perfect blend of efficiency and compassion that such a pivotal

position requires. Each day we welcome more and more new inquiries at our office, and word has quickly spread about the professional and prompt responses that our office provides. I am eternally grateful to my family, who have sacrificed themselves so that I might enjoy the privilege of serving our people in this House, and for allowing me to enjoy over 29 years as an elected person in this great province.

So it passed that I was sent to join the Liberal caucus who were gifted by Nova Scotians to form government. In that government our Leader and Premier asked me to chair this new team of 33 members from across Nova Scotia as his administration began to move decisively to provide good governance and restore fiscal accountability to our people. Another wonderful privilege which I have been afforded, to work with such a group as represented by the government caucus, Madam Speaker - a collection of some of the brightest, most professional, eager and sincere people as I have ever had the honour to work with. This perfect blend of youth and seasoned members, men and women, and deep cultural diversity makes this caucus an exceptional one and one which will make its mark on the history of progress in our great Province of Nova Scotia.

You know, Madam Speaker, I also believe that our caucus does not have an exclusive claim to these qualities as represented in this House. I firmly believe that each and every member opposite is equally passionate about their constituencies and the people that they represent. Though the paths members have chosen to get to this place differ, the objective is driven by the same goal, which is to better the lives of their residents, to make life better for all. For that I thank all members of the House and I am proud to share this place with you all. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, at the end of the day and the rather tumultuous process overseen by the previous government, the new riding of East Nova was created. Already the largest geographic riding in the Nova Scotia Legislature and after several attempts by the Electoral Boundaries Commission the eastern portion of Antigonish County was appended to the riding's existing geography bringing a fifth municipal unit into the constituency family, and another great privilege afforded me to be the first MLA for the riding of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, renamed so in the final weeks before the last election.

Beginning on the Northumberland Shore in East Tracadie along the coast to the Town of Mulgrave through the Municipality of the District of Guysborough embracing the historic African Nova Scotian communities of Lincolnville, Sunnyville, and Upper Big Tracadie, onward through the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's meeting Halifax Regional Municipality in Ecum Secum, Madam Speaker, and pushing past Sheet Harbour to the beautiful community of East Ship Harbour, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie came to be.

Encompassing approximately 5,300 square kilometres and currently containing two regional health districts, two regional school boards, and government services

delivered out of headquarters in both Sydney and Halifax, this riding is a pleasure to represent because of the wonderful people with hope and faith who reside in our diverse communities.

Let me begin with an outstanding example of the courage and resourcefulness shown by the community of Havre Boucher. That amazing community began a fundraiser, Madam Speaker, for their community centre called Chase the Ace; no doubt members have heard of that type of fundraiser. It's quite popular around the province, but mainly I'm sure because of what happened at Havre Boucher.

This endeavour became a national story of fundraising success with upwards of 1,800 people showing up for these events, delivering a profit to the community centre at the end of the day, when finally the ace of spades showed up after a very long absence, a profit to the community centre of over \$400,000 peaking with the award of a prize to a lucky local lady in excess of a quarter of a million dollars, so how is that for spreading the wealth around, Madam Speaker.

Just to emphasize the extent of the community's generosity the group decided to share their bounty with other struggling community groups including the two volunteer fire departments that serve that part of the riding, and as we all know, volunteer fire departments have a great struggle in Nova Scotia because of the demographic that we have and the fact that many of our young people are not living with us here in Nova Scotia and can't volunteer for this vital service. A truly kind and generous gesture, Madam Speaker, one we can all be proud of, and I congratulate that community for that.

And while I'm in that part of the riding, I want to highlight a bold step forward by our Minister and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, with the establish of an Early Years Centre at East Antigonish Education Centre, which serves all of that portion of the riding. These centres are tailored to meet the needs of their community, offering programs and services such as early learning programs for four-year-olds, early intervention, before-and-after school programs, regulated child care, and parent education. The community is over the top; they are so happy for being singled out and having the benefit of that great centre.

Coupled with the re-introduction of Reading Recovery - and I'm so very happy to see that - re-investing in excess of \$18 million into the system and capping classroom size for children in grades primary to grade two, our education system is back on a firm footing in Nova Scotia, Madam Speaker.

Continuing on with the many accomplishments of my government and a busy first year, I want to move to the beautiful seaside town of Mulgrave. This community has hosted an important and innovative business and strong economic generator in the person of DSM, which stands for Dutch Systems Mining.

This facility was formerly Ocean Nutrition, started by one of our terrific local Nova Scotian entrepreneurs, and is the world's largest producer of Omega-3 on the planet. This company employs around 145 people at the site and recently their board was faced with a significant investment decision, which would set their compass-bearing for decades into future.

Similar to Michelin, when they're going to have capital investment - in this instance, it was \$30 million - they do an inside competition between the facilities and the choice they had to make here was whether to invest in their Mulgrave location or their existing facilities in Peru, in a city of about two million people. Mulgrave has 800 residents.

In a great credit, particularly to the workers at the Mulgrave site, whom I should point out come from all over the Strait area and beyond, DSM has announced an investment of \$30 billion in additional processing capacity and equipment at their Mulgrave facility. Our government assisted them in that decision, through existing programs to encourage firms to invest and re-invest in our great province. This decision clearly means that these vital jobs at that location will be preserved for generations to come. That renovation is underway as we speak. The Dutch folks don't mess around; they move quickly.

Just down the coast is the proposed site of the Maher Melford Container Terminal. This game-changing project is steadily working towards construction, as a strong value proposition it brings on a global basis becomes more and more inevitable. This project will bring our people home to work and keep our bright young people in our local communities.

In keeping with the theme of development that we have and the great resource for natural deep-water ports, we see the proposed establishment of a tide-water export aggregate quarry at Black Point, which has the potential to employ up to 100 people within the next several years. Madam Speaker, this facility, which would be similar to the one that already exists in that area of the province at the Strait, is about 11 kilometers from the former town of Canso and the communities of Hazel Hill and Little Dover. It would be an absolutely perfect complement to the fishing industry that currently is the largest industry in that area of the riding.

Further along the coast of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie takes us to the vibrant communities of Hazel Hill, Canso and Little Dover. Things are pretty busy, Madam Speaker, in that area these days. Coming off a very successful lobster and crab season, several contracts are underway, simultaneously: upgrades to the wastewater treatment systems; the demolition of a property that has been deemed surplus to the local government's needs, which was a large demolition and contract; new fire apparatus and fire hall upgrades to the tune of \$1 million; several kilometers of paving including the street leading to the Eastern Memorial Hospital, all of which is supported by funds partially provided by the Province of Nova Scotia. Some of those funds came from that deal that

was made on the disillusion of the town of Canso, and I must acknowledge the cooperation of the previous minister who we dealt with during that process from 2011 to 2012.

The jewel in the activity crown has to be the \$30 million Sable Wind Farm, owned by the municipality of the District of Guysborough. This project, which is in mid-construction, currently has a workforce in excess of 70 people, many of whom are from the local surrounding communities. This municipally owned wind farm, which will provide enough electricity to power about 4,500 homes, will provide a sustainable source of revenue for the citizens of the municipality for generations to come.

The reason it's called Sable Wind is because the municipality that is the host community to the Sable Offshore Energy Project knows that fossil fuel is going to be depleted. We were looking for something sustainable to replace that income with, so we could protect our rate payers, and we spent some time looking and just like the Bob Dylan song, the answer was blowing in the wind. Canso and Hazel Hill area has some of the best wind regime in Nova Scotia and it's going to be tapped by December to provide a good revenue source, to provide a legacy to the income that had been received from the Sable Project and replace the losses that will come out of that operation.

Let me send a shout out to the indomitable Canso Lions Club who is currently involved in fundraising for the replacement of their striking Seaman's Memorial Monument, after almost 40 years. The Lions Club in that area is unbelievable how they can survive and thrive in an area that is very, very difficult, is a tribute to their hard work and the generosity of their audience in that area. They need great recognition for that.

Not to mention the "rise again" determination of the Stan Rogers Folk Festival organizers who had to make a difficult decision in July to cancel that event because of the dangers to festival goers due to Hurricane Arthur. A mortal blow to most groups, but not this bunch. They raised over \$20,000 in July, with the Stan Fest Concert at the Metro Center, and I want to thank the folks who travelled from all over the province to be there and particularly the folks in metro who supported that project.

They have worked with their suppliers and clients who arranged refunds and pay their bills to ensure that the Stan Festival will return stronger than ever next year. Our government has been there for them with assurances of help to see the festival survive because this joyous event is also a significant economic generator for the entirety of Eastern Nova Scotia.

Nearby, in the shire town of Guysborough, excitement is rising on the news that the board of the Guysborough Memorial Hospital has reached the successful conclusion of their fundraising efforts to raise the community's portion of the \$5.6 million extension and renovation of that facility. That amounted to, I believe, \$1.5 million that had to come out of the community. Those people on that hospital board deserve special thanks for working

with the giving communities in the hospital catchment area to raise in excess of \$700 thousand in a little over five months. How remarkable is that, Madam Speaker?

Congratulations are due to the local government that pledged an amazing \$800,000 towards the community's portion in April 2009. To see this project moving forward with shovels in the ground this Fall is particularly satisfying. Why, you might ask? Well, two previous Premiers from the Parties opposite came to town during the two previous election campaigns - and I know, because I was running in both of them - announcing the imminent construction of this vital facility and nothing happened. It took our government to fulfill its promise and make this project happen.

Consolidating services that are currently housed at several different sites will provide greater access for the clients. Expansion of X-ray clinics and other space in the new facility confirms this government's commitment to rural Nova Scotia, and for that our citizens and I are eternally grateful. The RFP for this expansion and renovation closes Friday.

I must make mention also, Madam Speaker, of the important contribution of the private sector in the busy shire town economy. Authentic Seacoast, a business centred on the tourism and manufacturing industry, is busy building new facilities. I might mention that members have enjoyed the coffee from the coffee roaster here in this House. They have an organic, free trade coffee and I kind of like it, it's quite good. Authentic Seacoast has a new, 7,200-square foot stack house nearing completion in the shire town, a significant new architectural feature on the local skyline. The stack house is an integral component of the new distillery currently under construction in the community. It is only the third distillery to be operating in our province, Authentic Seacoast hopes to be in full operation in 2015, employing more Nova Scotians at home in their own communities.

I should inform the House that they are looking for a taster, if we have anybody here who is interested in that particular job.

Prospects for our province are alive and well in this portion of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, Madam Speaker, as we pause for a moment in the famous seaside community of Goldboro. This settlement, long noted for its gold production in the last century, is the host community for Canada's first offshore natural gas production, the Sable Offshore Energy Project. This development has contributed in excess of \$2 billion in royalties to our provincial Treasury over the past 14 years - \$2 billion.

Now the Deep Panuke offshore gas project also brings its gas to Goldboro Industrial Park, providing more royalties to Nova Scotians and property tax to the local municipality. Because of the presence of the Maritime and Northeast transmission pipeline at the site, Madam Speaker, a new company named Pieridae is deeply involved in the development of an \$8.3 billion liquefied natural gas export terminal at the site.

I should mention that Pieridae is the name of a very rare butterfly found in Africa. I think it's suitable for a new project for eastern Canada and for Nova Scotia. This project will employ thousands in the construction phase and hundreds permanently in the steady state phase.

In the picturesque community of Sherbrooke several contracts are underway - the community is settling in to enjoy its new P to 12 school, which has room for community projects attached; the wisdom of constructing the new municipal building is proving itself in that community; the local rink is having its roof replaced with assistance from our government, Madam Speaker; needed water improvements are underway with assistance from the Department of Municipal Affairs; and the enchanting Sherbrooke Village, a living museum, is enjoying a banner year.

But there is more excitement stirring in this wonderful part of our province. Recently a Chinese development company, Dongdu International, headquartered in Shanghai, announced plans to develop a significant housing and recreational development at Indian Harbour Lake and at Marie Joseph. Now you wouldn't find two more enchanting communities anywhere in the province. I wouldn't say they are better because our province is blessed with some beautiful places, but they are equal to anything that sits there. Though at the concept stage it seems inevitable that the world would be interested in the quiet beauty and pristine nature of this part of Nova Scotia, these folks are here with us and they tell me what attracted them is the fresh, clean air. Anybody that has ever been to Shanghai knows that's not a very available commodity.

In the most westerly portion of the riding we move into the fifth municipality that's contained in the constituency, Halifax Regional Municipality. Along the stretch of the No. 7 Highway from Ecum Secum to East Ship Harbour we are in the heart of the famously beautiful Eastern Shore. Cove after beautiful cove, island after beautiful island, this drive is a magnificent way to spend a day and I invite everybody to take that up.

At Sheet Harbour, the hub community of eastern HRM, lots of activity is evident. Recently Great Northern Timber has resumed operations at the Sheet Harbour port re-employing dozens of people who had been idle. This is possible because of the co-operation of our Department of Natural Resources in making fibre available and putting people back to work.

Our Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal recently awarded a contract to replace the historic iron bridge over the East River at a contracted price of over \$17 million. This vital link, now over 60 years old, connects the entire Eastern Shore from Dartmouth to Sherbrooke and its replacement ensures the safety of our residents and underwrites the continued success of our tourist industry, which depends on reliable transportation networks for its success.

I heard lots of discussion this evening from the various presenters about the excitement around new schools. Well, not to be left out, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie is having a new school shortly, too. What about that new school? Our government has committed to replacing four existing facilities: the Duncan MacMillan High School, just in excess of 50 years old; Sheet Harbour Consolidated; Mosher River Elementary; and Lakeview Elementary in Tangier with a new modern P-12 facility.

School replacements, Madam Speaker, in the history of our communities, are milestones. History shows that schools prevailed for over half a century, which is the case with this facility. So to say the communities are excited is an understatement. They are working with HRM, the school board, the federal government and our government to provide community enhancements to ensure that this facility becomes a true hub to serve the catchment communities for decades to come.

Let us not forget in any way the traditional industries that provide background context, the drum beat, the glue that cements our rural communities together. I'm talking about the hundreds of brave fishermen and women who work diligently at their trade supplying the finest lobster, crab and other species to the world; our farmers who are just finishing a record wild blueberry harvest and are eying a busy Christmas tree season while keeping up with the relentless demands of the dairy-farm business; and our hundreds of forestry workers who work daily in the lumber and pulpwood industry, reaping a living from the bounty of our forests. All against the background of the infinite natural beauty, which brings thousands of delighted tourists to our communities each year.

As you can see, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie is filled with hopeful, positive people who work hard and approach life with an open and realistic outlook. Perhaps part of the reason people feel this way can be attributed to the existence of the five separate local governments that serve the riding. It may come as no surprise to my colleagues in the House that I truly understand the power and value of municipal government.

Local government has its finger on the pulse of our communities and are indispensable partners of provincial governments. Being responsible for supply of services that most affect their citizens in their neighbourhoods, waste management, waste water, water provision, animal by-laws, mean that residents rely on their municipalities day in and day out for good governance. Land-use planning and the power of expropriation are valuable tools in the municipal toolbox that can assist communities express their future direction.

Our government is here to support and assist our municipalities. Providing such self-expression will stimulate economic development, which has the potential to repatriate our youth by providing good employment opportunities in our province, a strategic goal of our government.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to raise up the group of people to whom we owe the most. Of course, I am referring to our veterans, those who gave their lives over many conflicts so that we can enjoy the great privileges we have today. In my riding that means, in particular, Legion members of Branch 37, Cambrai at Mulgrave; Branch 46, Chedabucto at Canso; Branch 56, Sherbrooke; Branch 58, Courcellette at Sheet Harbour; Branch 81, Guysborough at Guysborough; Branch 86, Liscombe at Liscombe; Branch 117, Torbay at Larry's River; Branch 120, Four Harbours at Tangier; and of course, the Havre Boucher Veterans' Association at Havre Boucher.

To members of these nine organizations we owe a great debt, Madam Speaker. (Applause)

In closing, I want to acknowledge the many people employed by government who go about their important duties daily throughout Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie. I mean the hundreds of people who work at the five hospitals that serve the communities; the four nursing homes; the seven schools; the four Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal depots that service over 1,400 kilometres of roads in the riding; and the countless others from all the other provincial departments who provide services to our people. That is the role of our government: to help our citizens and to make their lives better. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I recognize the honourable House Leader, I would like to mention a little bit of a lapse that we've had during the last two hours. We've had many, many people pass between the Speaker's Chair and the person who was presenting. We all know the rules. We know you're not supposed to be doing that, and it's not appropriate for the person that's speaking, so I'd ask people to please keep that in mind. There were four lapses in the last hour alone.

AN HON. MEMBER: Four over there.

MADAM SPEAKER: Not necessarily.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for tonight. Tomorrow is Opposition Day, and the House will sit from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

I will now ask the House Leader for the NDP caucus to provide us with the business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the NDP.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, tomorrow after the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Bill No. 39, the New Graduates and Apprentices Retention Act, and Bill No. 40, the Oak Island Treasure Act and Special Places Protection Act. With that, I ask that we do now rise to meet again from the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on October 22nd between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 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 tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The topic tonight was brought forward by the honourable member for Inverness, and the wording is:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Liberal Government act to prevent further erosion of health services at the Northside General.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

NORTHSIDE GEN. HOSP. - HEALTH SERV.: EROSION - HALT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: It gives me pleasure to rise this evening to speak to this topic, to prevent further erosion of services from the Northside General Hospital. Madam Speaker, being the MLA for Northside-Westmount, that Northside General sits in, I've seen over the years a number of different services that have eroded. I know that lately there has been some talk about closures to the lab and closures to the ER.

In a question during Question Period last week, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about a letter that had supposedly gone to the Minister of Health and Wellness from the doctors on the Northside, looking for what the letter had said and what the response to that letter was.

The Minister of Health and Wellness responded that he didn't have that letter, Madam Speaker, and I came to find out on the weekend that he didn't have the letter because the letter was given to the member for Victoria-The Lakes, and he probably hadn't gotten the letter yet. So I want to apologize to the minister for that because he has committed to come down and speak with the lab people and the people of the Northside which I think is a great thing and he has asked that I be present at that meeting so I think it's good if that happens.

If I may, in the Speech from the Throne from the government this year, in a little excerpt from that Speech from the Throne it says, "My government is committed to ensure the focus in health care is placed where it should be: on front-line care." It goes on, "Improving access to needed health care services" is what they plan on doing.

I noted that in saying that, the emergency rooms in Cape Breton have been closed quite a bit in the last year. Closures to the emergency room in Cape Breton accounted for 72 per cent - almost three-quarters of the closures of the whole province have been in Cape Breton. That's 156 days and 156 nights, over five months of closures in the emergency rooms of Cape Breton. Of that, 1,028 hours of those closures unexpectedly were at the Northside General Hospital - unexpectedly, not planned closures, unexpected closures. That's 42 days on top of the rest of what happened on those closures.

We have the second highest closures on the Northside of all the hospitals in the province. As I said, 42 days of unexpected closures and countless other closures that have happened that were planned. That means a number of days with a lack of care for the people of the Northside who need emergency care and access to it quickly and timely and can't get it.

Let me give you an example. My former mother-in-law, my poor mother-in-law who passed away last year had numerous trips to the emergency room. She was a sick lady, she lived with us at home before she moved into the guest home before she couldn't be cared for. We would call an ambulance if she was sick enough to take her to the Northside General and one evening we called the ambulance, she was having difficulty breathing - fortunately the ambulance service on the Northside in Cape Breton has been excellent, still is.

When they came to get her, we asked where they were taking her, she couldn't go to the Northside General, it was closed; they were diverting from the Cape Breton Regional Hospital because they couldn't handle the volume of people that were in the emergency room there. The lady was going to have to go to Glace Bay. That's 45 minutes away from where we live on the Northside. People on the Northside don't deserve that type of treatment. That's time emergency care could be taking place in an emergency room in the hospital.

When young families come to live on the Northside or start their life on the Northside they want to know that there's health care available for them. They want to know there's emergency care, they want to know there's lab services, they want to know there's operating room care. We have one of the best health care systems in the province and the doctors on the Northside and the health care people on the Northside, in my opinion, are second to none. I worked with a lot of them, I had the privilege of being able to observe a lot of them in their roles as doctors, nurses, as people who work in the lab and X-ray. But without the resources there, they're not able to do their job.

When you go to the emergency room because there's a lack of family doctors and there's long waits, people will go to other facilities. That's time that's valuable time when you have an emergency. The Northside General has already lost a paediatric unit, a maternity unit, an intermediate cardiac care unit. Lab services and surgery are rumoured to be next. The reason I'm told the lab services are rumoured to be next is they're talking about going to point of care testing machines in the emergency room, which would mean two people from the lab would work 12-hour shifts or 8-hour shifts each in a day and from midnight on it will be the responsibility of the nursing staff to take the blood and get the testing done on these machines so the person can get a reading on their health care.

Our nurses are overworked now and they're going to be required to do the work of the lab but the complicated testing that can't be done at these point-of-care machines is going to be put in a taxi and sent to the Cape Breton Regional Hospital for analysis. That puts a lot of pressure on the gentleman in the taxi to get the specimen there, and the results will take a little longer time, when we already have that equipment at the Northside General, and we already have the staff to do it.

Madam Speaker, I had a meeting with people from the provincial lab association earlier in the Spring, and what I was told was the reason they have a shortage of medical lab assistants, medical lab technicians in the province is because they can't produce them quickly enough. Fifty per cent of the people are retiring in the near future and they can't put enough out to cover that loss of lab assistants that is going to happen. So they have to try and make arrangements - around the province, I'm told - to make sure that the lab technologists, the lab people they have right now, will be able to cover the amount of work that is needed, so they are going to have to do something differently.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Health and Wellness at that time and I asked him to try and look at increasing the spaces in the community college to see if we can produce more lab people, so we wouldn't have to face this shortage of lab technologists, lab assistants, and we'll be able to meet the demands in our health care system in the coming years.

Nova Scotia Community College - I haven't talked to them personally, but I think they would be open to it because I've talked to them about other positions and other courses that they put on, and they operate on a need-to-have basis. If they need more

spaces, they put a program on. If there is a need or a want out there, continuing care assistants, if there's a shortage, they'll put a course on.

So I would hope that we, as a government, would be able to try and increase the spaces for the lab technicians and the medical lab people in these facilities so that we don't further erode our health care, we don't lose the lab services that we have at the Northside General now, and put that burden on the people at the regional hospital or the other hospitals in our area, which is an extra burden, Madam Speaker, a burden that they can't already handle. I know when you go to the Regional Hospital when the emergency room is closed on the Northside, you have to wait a longer period of time. They are trying to take people into a small area with a big group of people, so a bottleneck happens.

You get into the situation where the population, if they get sick, don't know if they should go to the emergency room we have, or take the chance and take the extra 20 minutes to travel to Regional Hospital and hope that they are not going to be diverted from there to another hospital. That is valuable time in the care of our citizens and our society. I know the people on the Northside feel like everything has always gone to the Regional. If there are any cuts to be taken, the cuts are taken at the hospitals on the Northside, or the Glace Bay Hospital or the New Waterford Hospital.

Madam Speaker, that's not fair to the people on the Northside. The same as the people at the Regional Hospital say, everything now goes to Halifax. The people on the Northside deserve to have the health care in the facility they have there already. We have it now but because of lack of people, and lack of people in some of the other institutions, and lack of, I'll say, funding to produce more people in the health care system, the people on the Northside are suffering, Madam Speaker, these people who don't have transportation who wouldn't have the transportation to get to another hospital. We've lost other services already and I hope that the government . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. Your time has lapsed.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

MS. PAM EYKING: Madam Speaker, ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to health services they need is our priority. An important part of having access to health services is having proper medical equipment to preserve good patient care. We work very closely with our district health authorities to ensure that proper patient care is being met for people across the province. In fact, the Cape Breton District Health Authority identified an area that needed improvement because of its difficulty in recruiting lab technologists. We all know the importance of lab services.

Changes to the Northside General Hospital Laboratory Services, specifically the introduction of point-of-care testing will result in a more collaborative approach with our

hospitals in our community. This investment will help ensure that Cape Breton is able to continue to provide patients with lab services in the community.

The point-of-care testing equipment being implemented in the Cape Breton District is aligned with the provincial lab diagnostic imaging initiative and it is currently being implemented at a number of districts in the province. Point-of-care testing, or bedside testing, is a lab testing performed outside the lab in close proximity to the patient. It is usually a hand-held device or small portable equipment that often provides immediate results.

Point-of-care testing is subject to the same quality rigour as testing performed in the lab. For some essential tests, where results are required on a more urgent basis, point-of-care devices will be available at the Northside General so that testing can be done on-site by either lab technologists or other health professionals, providing almost immediate results to clinicians.

Point-of-care testing is about being able to provide safe, high-quality care using the resources we have available, Madam Speaker. I think this is a great example of a district working collaboratively within its community to come up with a solution that benefits not only potential patients at the Northside General Hospital, but to better serve the community at large.

I think it is safe to say that our health care system in general needs to be able to adapt to the changing needs and challenges the way the Cape Breton District has done in this case. I know that there has been concern that changes at Northside General Hospital will compromise patient care and impact the future of this hospital. I would like to be particularly clear and say that patient care is not at risk with the addition of the new point-of-care testing equipment, nor are there plans to close this important community hospital, and there are no layoffs of employees as a result of this change.

There will be no change in the services to the public. Blood and other samples will be taken in your home, hospital, or clinic, just as before. The Cape Breton District Health Authority has made, and continues to make investments in our buildings, equipment, and services at various hospitals, community health centres, and clinics across the district. All of the facilities in this district, like those across the rest of the province, are very busy and used to capacity.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate what we are doing to address physician recruitment and retention. This remains an important topic and is a priority for us. The province created a Physician Recruitment and Retention Action Team that has provided advice, including how we can move forward with a rebate for new medical graduates; this program is being rolled out this Fall. Nova Scotians have also told us that they want access to a broader range of health care services, and we continue to work on establishing more Collaborative Care Teams in the province.

This helps us give regular access to physicians, nurses, paramedics, and our health care providers, for more Nova Scotians. Our work in these areas will not stop and we will continue to work to address these issues. As members of this House know, we are taking a bold new approach to health care through the reduction in the number of authorities from 10 to two, which will have a broad and positive impact on how health services are delivered to Nova Scotians.

Having a leaner governance model and an ability to plan provincially will allow the system to increase focus on patient safety and quality. By consolidating nine district health authority boards into one employer while maintaining the IWK as a separate entity, we will create a simpler system with less administration and that, in turn, means more consistent, high quality and accessible care for Nova Scotians. The goal is to enable a provincial approach to health services that puts people first, promotes health and wellness, provides safety and quality care, and creates accessible, effective, streamlined and sustainable provincial health services.

I am happy to say, Madam Speaker, that the minister and the deputy minister will be coming, when the Legislature is finished sitting, to Cape Breton to visit the hospital to see first-hand the concerns that they have and meet with them and deal with what we have going on down there. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I'll say a few words on this. The only thing I regret about the resolve is it just says Northside General because I think this impacts all the small community hospitals across the breadth of the Cape Breton District Health Authority and some of my comments will spread beyond Northside General, in particular the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital that is just over 51 years old. They will be affected by the point-of-care testing and I would take my time today to put on record that we will see people, who are otherwise employed at that hospital for blood collection and testing services, go to the regional hospitals.

Madam Speaker, the idea of putting services in one area is not new but the reality is that when you see the erosion of services in small community hospitals, these are services that will never again be put back there. Once you go down that slippery slope of taking things out, they will never be replaced, whether it is the acknowledgement of closure or whatever.

I want the House to realize that - some of the comments I heard earlier - the pride which the government takes in moving to one superboard, if the people in my community, in New Waterford and area, or the people in Glace Bay, and in particular to this resolution on the Northside, if they are having a hard time convincing people 15 or 20 miles down the road of the wrongness of a decision, how are they going to get it through to somebody who is 400 kilometres down the road, Madam Speaker? It is really perplexing to think that will

be solved by moving the people who can rectify that situation, the decision makers, further away if you will, but for some reason this government seems to believe that.

Now part of the issue, as I understand it from the district health authority folks, they are saying there is a lack of lab techs. As the previous speaker, the member for Northside-Westmount talked about that issue, it's about training. There is not a better example in any level of education in this province than the Nova Scotia Community College for its ability to be nimble and react to labour's needs.

We're not reinventing the wheel here, we are saying look, there's a shortage here, let's go in and fill that gap. They are good paying jobs. Why wouldn't we go and talk to them? Why aren't this government and the leadership at the Cape Breton District Health Authority talking to people who have their feet on the ground there, the lab techs in this case, why aren't they talking to them about a resolve? Why is that top down? If it's top down in Sydney, imagine what it's going to be like when it's all done out of Halifax.

I can only speak first-hand about hospitals in my area, but for the breadth of everybody across in this House that have community hospitals, I would be very afraid of what can happen, because this week or this month, we'll say it, is a shortage of lab techs. Where does the next line come from that we have a shortage in, as opposed to going out and trying to fix the shortage? I can go back to the previous Liberal Government, when there was a shortage of doctors back in the 1990s, but what did they do? Did they go out and put more seats in Dalhousie? No, they took them away. They took seats away, Madam Speaker.

If I am a little bit hesitant to say that their form of graduate retention for doctors is going to be the save-all, I will at best reserve judgment on that. I really have a hard time saying with any guarantee that that will come forward, because I believe it will not.

For the life of me, I understand streamlining, I understand when you have to do things that are to scale and so on, but to say that getting rid of techs is a good thing - and that's not what the management of the Cape Breton District Health Authority is saying. If I am understanding them properly, they are saying it is because there's a shortage of lab techs. It's not because there's a shortage of work in North Sydney or New Waterford or Glace Bay or any of those areas. It's a shortage of workers.

Well, let's deal with that. Let's deal with the shortage of workers. Let's not cut back services in areas where it is most needed. I don't think it comes as a surprise to anybody, either, that these areas have a high population of seniors. Now, again, the member for Northside-Westmount talked about personal issues about his mother-in-law and so on, but I'm sure there are hundreds of those stories out there. He gave that testimonial, if you will, Madam Speaker, because it's first-hand and he could speak with some directness about it.

I would like to think that that was an isolated case, but in practice around this time, it's not isolated. What we really need are services in the community, especially for seniors. They're the ones who have a hard time, whether it's getting to it if they're by themselves - because what we have now, Madam Speaker, is the phenomenon in areas like, again, I'll speak about my area in Cape Breton County, that is seniors living by themselves who have become somewhat marooned, if you will, because that family apparatus that was around for years has now been almost wiped out.

What has happened is, if you have someone who is a senior, who is in their 70s or 80s, they may have had a son or a daughter, who maybe would have been in their late 50s or so, and then the grandchildren moved down and those greater family supports. But Madam Speaker, we've seen an out-migration that we have not seen ever before, I would say, in those parts of Cape Breton. I think it would stand true in many parts of Nova Scotia, where the people who are probably still able to give comfort and aid to their senior parents have moved out West to be with their young children who live out there. So these folks are by and large by themselves.

So where do they go? Do they panic and call a cab for \$30 or \$40 to get to a hospital? These issues are not being resolved by cutting time in labs or cutting times to emergency rooms, this government has had a year and has not opened one CEC, not one.

What I would ask for, rather than celebrate their differences and their ongoing dispute with health care workers, I'm asking this government to come up above the fray, call a truce, talk to the front-line health care workers and find out how we can resolve issues of training and jobs and get our people, whether they're young or old, the medical services they need, deserve and depend on. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired, as has the time for the late debate.

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:20 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)
TABLED OCTOBER 16, 2014**

RESOLUTION NO. 305

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the Admiral Digby Library and Historical Society recognizes exceptional contributions of volunteer work in the Digby area annually with the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award; and

Whereas this year Angela O'Neil received the 2014 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award from Mayor Ben Cleveland; and

Whereas Angela O'Neil has a long list of contributions to the community including service to the museum, Digby Pre-School Co-op, Admiral Digby Horticultural Society, Digby County Federation of Agriculture, Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, Digby Board of Trade, Maude Lewis Arts Society and Digby and Area Theatre Society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Angela O'Neil for receiving the 2014 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award and thank her for her outstanding contributions to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 306

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire departments are made up of individuals who show their dedication by contributing hard work, skills, frequently risking their lives and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas Maitland and District Volunteer Fire Department celebrated 40 years of service on July 13, 2014; and

Whereas Maitland and District Volunteer Fire Department's past fire chief Albert Hannah was presented with a Certificate of Contribution for his help in ensuring the safety of his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Albert Hannah for his many years of service to the Maitland and District Volunteer Fire Department.

RESOLUTION NO. 307

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (The Premier)

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

Whereas on Wednesday, October 15th, 2014, the North Nova Education Centre hosted the fourth annual Chignecto-Central Regional School Board Elders Conference on Social Justice with a keynote speech from the Chief of Pictou Landing First Nation, Andrea Paul; and

Whereas the theme for the Elders Conference is, We're Not Afraid, and will help to bring awareness to social justice issues, while seeking to address these important societal problems through education; and

Whereas the Elders Conference will also bring together student and staff delegations from all Chignecto-Central Regional School Board high schools to enjoy and celebrate the culture of our First Nations through song and dance;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate North Nova Education Centre for hosting their fourth annual Elders Conference and wish them continued success in helping address issues of social justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 308

By: Mr. Eddie Orrell (Northside-Westmount)

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

Whereas hundreds of people filled the Holy Family Church at the end of August to say thank you and goodbye to Ryan Patrick Gillis who died in a motor vehicle accident in Alberta; and

Whereas Ryan suffered for years with drug addiction and finally conquered his demons, becoming a motivational speaker who helped struggling addicts; and

Whereas Ryan was just starting his calling, helping addicts and their families in Canada and some third world countries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remember Ryan Gillis and recognize how he transformed his own life and dedicated it to others.

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)
TABLED OCTOBER 21, 2014**

RESOLUTION NO. 354

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas one of the last one-of-a-kind independent music stores in the Maritimes, Moe's Place Music Sales, has been taking care of the musical needs of the residents of Windsor for approximately 14 years; and

Whereas Heather Donohue and Jake Smith took over ownership of Moe's during the summer and held a grand re-opening on October 18th to celebrate the expansion of the store with a move to a larger location; and

Whereas entertainment during the celebration included Charlie A'Court, John Tetrault, and Bloody Diamonds, while customers were treated to special giveaways and cake;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Heather Donohue and Jake Smith on becoming the new owners of Moe's Place Music Sales and wish them great success for years to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 355

By: Ms. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Susan Henderson of Greenwood Road won a silver medal as a member of Nova Scotia's women's hockey team in the 55+ Games that took place August 27th-30th in Strathcona County, Alberta; and

Whereas this was the first time that women played hockey in the 55+ Games; and

Whereas Susan grew up playing pickup hockey in Thorburn and appreciated the opportunity to play the sport again;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly congratulate Susan Henderson on her silver medal win and wish her luck next year when the 55+ Games take place in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 356

By: Ms. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Jayne Murphy of New Glasgow won a silver medal as part of Nova Scotia's women's hockey team in the 55+ Games that took place August 27th-30th in Strathcona County, Alberta; and

Whereas this was the first time that women played hockey in the 55+ Games; and

Whereas Jayne loves hockey, a sport she just began playing at the age of 44;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly congratulate Jayne Murphy on her silver medal win and wish her luck next year when the 55+ Games take place in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.