



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine I'm going to provide the Speaker's Rulings on the outstanding three points of privilege.

The first point was raised on October 16th by the honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board who complained that the honourable Interim Leader of the NDP had misled the House in quoting from a briefing note during Question Period on October 15th. The point was raised the next sitting day, so there are no issues of timeliness, the matter having been raised at the earliest opportunity.

The minister complained that the Interim Leader of the NDP made the following quotation from a briefing note: "This might suggest that GTC led to an improvement of about 55 persons per year while GRR led to an improvement of about 542 persons per year NOT leaving the province." She pointed out that other statements in the document led to a contrary conclusion.

I have reviewed Hansard for the day and the actual quotation was only part of that read by the minister in her complaint: "The GRR led to an improvement of about . . . 542 persons per year not leaving the province."

I have looked at the briefing note tabled and observed that it does not contain the phrase quoted by the Interim Leader of the NDP. It also contains the analysis referred to by the minister questioning the conclusion.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Interim Leader of the NDP misled the House in quote (Pt. of priv. by Hon. D. Whalen [Hansard p. 1077, 10/16/14]) Not a *prima facie* question of privilege.

I conclude that the quotation by the Interim Leader of the NDP was accurate; she did not make it up. It is in the document. The fact that the minister's briefing note contained other material is something the honourable minister could have brought up in the House without resorting to a point of privilege. An allegation that another member has intentionally misled the House is an allegation of contempt of the House, and is an extremely grave parliamentary matter. It should not be used to make points that can be addressed through the normal course of debate.

The Chair - that's me - is not going to get into editorial reviews over proper interpretation of documents quoted from in debate.

I find that this is not a *prima facie* question of privilege.

The second point of privilege was raised on October 21st by the honourable member for Kings North who complained that the honourable Minister of Agriculture had misled the House on October 8th with respect to an interview he had given some time before that date. The particulars of which interview the minister might have given were not set out in the debate on October 8th, but the member for Kings North tabled a transcript of a September 30th interview when he raised his point of privilege on October 21st.

Members will recall that when the member for Kings North raised his point of privilege, I pointed out that the statement complained of having been made almost two weeks earlier and that an essential element of a point of privilege was that it be raised at the earliest opportunity. That was why I asked the member when he had become aware of the facts he was relying on. The member advised that the information he was relying on had come to his attention on Thursday, October 16th, which was five days before he raised the point in the House.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Agriculture Minister misled the House in statement in debate {Pt. of priv. by Mr. J. Lohr [Hansard p.1213, 10/21/14]} Delay in raising point; not a *prima facie* question of privilege.

The matter was not raised at the earliest opportunity. The authorities are clear that even a delay of one day can be fatal in raising a point of privilege and that is the case here. Therefore, I am not entertaining it.

That being said, I believe the material submitted did not establish a *prima facie* question of privilege. Again, it seemed that what was raised was a disagreement of facts between members. A disagreement over whether the minister said something in an unspecified interview, when he may have given several on a high-profile issue, is hardly a matter of grave importance. This type of debate should not be raised as a matter of privilege for this House to consider.

The third point of privilege was raised on October 23rd by the honourable Interim Leader of the NDP, who complained that the Premier had misled the House on October 21st with respect to his characterization of the federal NDP's vote on a matter in 2006. I find the matter was raised at the earliest possible opportunity, even though it was dealt with on the second day after the alleged matter.

The honourable Interim Leader of the NDP had given me notice on October 22nd that she would be raising the point when the House sat in the afternoon. At the beginning of the sitting on October 22nd she approached the Speaker's Chair and asked if she should wait until the next day, given the horrific and tragic events that were unfolding in Ottawa that day. I exercised my discretion and agreed it would be appropriate to wait.

In raising her point, the Interim Leader of the NDP complained that the Premier had said that “. . . in 2006 it was the New Democratic Party that voted against a national child care plan . . .” She advised the House that the vote on the budget that contained the national child care plan had actually been held in 2005, and the NDP had voted in favour of it. She advised that the NDP's negative vote in 2006 was actually on a budget in which the national child care benefit replaced the national child care plan.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Premier misled the House in comments on NDP vote in 2006 (Pt. of priv. by Interim Leader of the NDP [Hansard, p.1365, 10/23/14]) Not a *prima facie* question of privilege.

Once again, I have to caution all members about using points of privilege to raise points of debate. To characterize the Premier's point about “a plan” in a particular year as being incorrect because there had been a vote on “the plan” in a different year, while conceding that there had been a vote on something directly related in the year he did mention, strikes me as a real quibble, and is certainly a disagreement between members over facts. This does not raise a *prima facie* question of privilege.

In conclusion, we've had three points of privilege raised, one from each caucus in this House. None of them have been valid points of privilege. As I have stressed, questions of contempt of this House that are raised as points of privilege are reserved for grave allegations. This is the type of point that is not to be used for "gotcha" points during debate or to offer retorts for something that is disagreeable said by other members in debate.

I raise this now as I was told by the Chief Clerk that yet another member had thought they had caught a misstatement by a fellow member and said they planned to raise another point of privilege. Fortunately this did not happen, after consultation with the Clerk, but I am concerned that members, particularly those of us who are still relatively new to the Assembly, not get started down the road of the wrong path of misusing points of privilege in this way.

I note that in each case I've ruled on, the members accused of intentionally misleading the House rose and stated clearly that they had not intended to mislead the House. As the previous Speaker said in his ruling on April 23, 2013, a member who states that they had not intended to mislead the House over a matter is to be taken at his or her word, and such a statement will usually conclude the matter.

I have given this House more detailed rulings today in the hope that we can see an end to this sort of practice. Thank you for your attention.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 6 - An Act to Amend Chapter 342 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Petroleum Resources Act.

Bill No. 18 - An Act to Amend Chapter 3 of the Acts of 1987. The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act.

Bill No. 22 - An Act to Amend Chapter 8 of the Acts of 1993. The Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act.

Bill No. 25 - An Act to Amend Chapter 211 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Housing Act, and Chapter 213 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Housing Nova Scotia Act.

Bill No. 26 - An Act to Amend Chapter 33 of the Acts of 2008. The Animal Protection Act.

Bill No. 49 - An Act to Improve Economic Development in Nova Scotia.

Bill No. 50 - An Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I beg leave to table an annual report from January to June 2014.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 474

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Health and Wellness, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Canadian Patient Safety Week aims to increase awareness of patient safety issues and to share information about best practices and patient safety at national, regional, and local levels; and

Whereas the theme of Canadian Patient Safety Week encourages all health care professionals, patients, clients, and residents and their families to ask questions, listen carefully, and talk openly about concerns; and

Whereas this year's focus is hand hygiene, which is the primary means to reduce health care-associated infection, and when demonstrated by leaders the compliance of others can improve by up to 70 per cent;

Therefore be it resolved that October 27th to 31st be known as Canadian Patient Safety Week in the province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 62 - Entitled an Act Respecting Shared Services for Crown Corporations, Government Departments and Public Sector Entities. (Hon. Labi Kousoulis)

Bill No. 63 - Entitled an Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Regulations with Respect to Necessary Home Repairs and Renovations Due to Medical Disability. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: We will do as many as we can, concluding at 2:15 p.m.

The honourable Premier.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY - RULE CHANGES

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank all members of the House, as we move to a new way of doing business this week. I am sure all members enjoyed the opportunity to spend yesterday in their constituency offices responding to the needs of the constituents.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, yesterday we had our first Law Amendments Committee meeting last night, which was encouraging. As well, today we are moving into Statements by Members. We will begin the first of our 50-minute Oral Question Periods which will go Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, is a new thing for this House, and I think we all should be encouraged by that fact that media get an opportunity to know when Oral Question Period is going to be, as well as Nova Scotians get an opportunity to know when they can tune in.

It is my sincere hope that this is not the end of the changes that are going to take place in this House. We need to do serious work when we look at the committee structure here, to ensure we modernize our way we do business.

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

HARPER, MASTER SGT. NEIL - MEDAL OF BRAVERY

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in recent days we have all been reminded of the bravery and dedication of the men and women who serve in the Canadian Forces. Last week Master Seaman Neil Harper was awarded the Medal of Bravery from Governor General David Johnston for just such a courageous act.

On September 12, 2011, Master Seaman Harper put his life at risk to stop a diesel fuel leak aboard HMCS Iroquois. With little thought for his own safety, Master Seaman Harper entered a confined enclosure and using only readily available materials deflected the high-pressure leak away from a hot engine. His quick action and grace under pressure averted a significant risk of fire and loss of life.

I ask all members to join me in offering Master Seaman Harper a heartfelt Bravo Zulu for his heroic actions. I will table that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens Shelburne.

FIREWOOD - ACCESS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my statement is in regard to the basic need of access to firewood which, for centuries, has kept Nova Scotians warm throughout the cold winter months and reduced their energy costs. In May of this year I

requested an emergency meeting of the Resources Committee to deal with the lack of access to Crown lands for wood suppliers because of an awkward, clumsy permit system that leaves firewood suppliers across Nova Scotia to go begging at a sawmill in order to get access to wood fibre used for home heat. This is fundamentally wrong, a flawed process.

Mr. Speaker, the Bowater lands were purchased for the public to have more access to Crown lands for recreational use and commercial fibre. This Liberal Government has used their majority power to block this emergency meeting that was requested. This minister has refused to meet with the firewood suppliers this summer to get a better understanding of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Your time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

GREECE: AXIS OCCUPATION (1940) - REFUSAL

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, on October 28th, 1940, at 4:00 a.m., Greece's Prime Minister was given an ultimatum to allow Axis forces to occupy strategic parts of Greece. Prime Minister Metaxas' response was a defiant "Óxi", which translates to no. He also responded with "Alors, c'est le guerre". Facing four armies simultaneously, Greece managed to resist occupation from the Axis forces for a remarkable 219 days. This was an enormous feat for such a small country that shed over 10 per cent of its population during the war.

October 28th is a national holiday in Greece and celebrated in Greek communities around the world. A quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt:

"On the 28th of October 1940 Greece was given a deadline of three hours to decide on war or peace but even if a three day or three week or three year were given, the response would have been the same. The Greeks taught dignity throughout the centuries. When the entire world had lost hope, the Greek people dared to question the invincibility of the German monster raising against it the proud spirit of Freedom."

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MACLEOD, ALISTAIR: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Rinn Alasdair MacLeòid dealbh choileanta air dualchas nan eilthreach agus air gach caochladh a thachair riutha san t-saoghal ùr. Tha fios

gun d'thug seo fuasgladh dhan sliochd ann a bhith tuigsinn mar a bha suidheachadh an teaghlaich fhèin.

Duine dùrachdach agus bàigheil a' rinn dealbh air eòlas fhèin ach a thug buaidh air mìltean às gach cearn is cultar. Chaidh a chuid leabhraichean eadar-theangachadh gu seachd-deug cànan.

Gum biomaid san Targh seo a'cur urram air an duine à Dun Bheagain an Siorramachd Inbhir Nis agus ga mholadh airson beatha ionmholta.

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

SOUP CAFÉ - DANIELLE SAWADA

MS. LENORE ZANN: The SOUP Café in Truro, which stands for Supportive Opportunities for Unemployed Persons, had a fundraiser where patrons could purchase a handmade pottery bowl of their choice for \$25 filled with hot soup. These bowls were made by students at Thrown Together Pottery and Art, whose owner, Danielle Sawada, was looking for a way to bring together her passion for pottery with an organization like SOUP. All proceeds from the fundraiser went directly back to the SOUP Café and I would like to thank Danielle Sawada for her creative approach in bringing funding to this very worthy cause.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we proceed with Members' Statements, a little bit of a housekeeping note; because of the extensive Speaking's Ruling that I provided, with unanimous consent of the House is it agreed that we will start Question Period at 2:00 p.m.?

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Question Period will start at 2:00 p.m.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

SULLIVAN, LISA/FREEMAN'S REST.: BUS. ETHICS AWARD - NOMINATION

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a Fairview community member for her activeness in our community. Lisa Sullivan is Freeman restaurant's operations manager but unofficially she is known throughout the community as a champion of everything Fairview. Freeman's in Fairview hosts around 100 community events throughout the year, everything from the Fairview Family Days to a Christmas tree

lighting. Her restaurant sponsors sports teams and encourages youth to be positively active within our community. Her goal is for everyone to see Fairview the way she does, a wonderful neighbourhood rich in history and potential.

Lisa and her team were recently nominated for an Atlantic Business Ethics Award making it to the top three of all businesses nominated across the Atlantic Provinces. It is people like Lisa Sullivan who keep Fairview strong and promote new business and new growth throughout our community. I encourage all members to congratulate Lisa Sullivan and her team at Freeman's restaurant.

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

BOND, CEILIDH: CPL. CIRILLO - STANDING GUARD

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, since Saturday, 15-year-old Cape Breton Cadet, Ceilidh Bond, has been standing guard outside the cenotaph in North Sydney for a few hours each day. As a member of the 1917 Vimy Ridge Cadet Corps of Florence, Bond is a Cape Breton Highlander Army Cadet.

Corporal Cirillo was a reservist from Hamilton, Ontario, serving with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of the Canadian regiment. The young cadet has spent her time remembering and honouring Corporal Cirillo, she is also planning a future of brave service as a military paramedic.

In the face of unspeakable, paralyzing shock at the senseless murder of a young soldier, Ceilidh Bond is setting an example for Cape Bretoners and all Canadians, lest we forget.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, before my statement I wonder if I might have your permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

N. WOODSIDE COMMUN. ASSOC. - ANNIV. (20TH)

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, if I could ask the members of the Legislature to draw their attention to the east gallery where we have over a dozen students from the Halifax Independent School who are joining us here for this afternoon's proceedings. Clearly I know all of my colleagues share my interest in young people and their learning

the proceedings of this House and proceedings of government so I would ask that we all give them a warm welcome to the Legislature this afternoon. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for the past 20 years the North Woodside Community Centre, in my riding of Dartmouth South, has been an extremely important pillar of our community. It has provided recreational and educational opportunities for all of the people of Dartmouth; in fact I was pleased to attend its 20th Anniversary celebrations just this past Sunday. In 1994 residents of Woodside came together to create a sense of community identity and that's what led to the establishment of this association in the former home of the North Woodside Elementary School.

The North Woodside Community Association is led by generous volunteers, Mr. Speaker, and together their programming enhances access to recreation, to social opportunities, and education for local residents of all ages and ethnic groups. This centre is home to a number of community groups and it has done wonderful things to enliven the Woodside area. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this House recognize the North Woodside Community Association and the volunteers for all of their efforts.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

PARLIAMENT HILL SECURITY TEAM: SERV. - THANK

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, last week in Ottawa, Canadians were faced with an unprecedented series of events, a painful loss of a young soldier at the national cenotaph, an armed siege at Centre Block, and nationwide shock. But Canadians were also reassured as politicians of all Parties stood shoulder to shoulder with our Prime Minister who said that "Canada will not be intimidated."

The Parliament Hill security team stands guard each and every day in our national Parliament. On behalf of the PC caucus of Nova Scotia, I would like to thank these unsung Canadian heroes and thank them for their service to our nation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MCINTOSH RUN COMMUN. ASSOC. - TRAIL SYSTEM

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the wonderful community I live in and the people in this community who see the potential of its natural beauty.

The McIntosh Run Watershed Association had been imagining a trail for years across the backlands of Spryfield to Herring Cove. Through the dedication and hard work of the MRWA this is now going to become a reality. The association held an open house on October 15th to reveal Phase I of the trail system. With the support of the local and

provincial governments, they are now ready to start breaking ground on the trail. The complete trail system will provide about 30 kilometres of trail and will be built over the next several years. The trail will provide a chance for our residents to experience the natural beauty of the area and enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle.

I encourage all members to join me in congratulating the McIntosh Run Watershed Association on their amazing accomplishment of turning their vision into a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

DEYOUNG, LILY/COLEMAN, SHAWNA - MENTAL HEALTH FUNDRAISING

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, Lily DeYoung and Shawna Coleman have joined forces and are offering a fun twist on fundraising for the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, and have created quite a buzz. Clothing from Marj Hatherly's Consignment Shop in Tatamagouche will be featured on the runway by local models, and the garments will be auctioned after the show. Starr Dobson, CEO of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, will be the guest speaker and MC for this much-anticipated event.

Jazz music to set the mood, chances to score gently worn fashions or win the 50/50 draw will seal the deal as ladies line up to support the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia and enjoy their day.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ARENBURG, ERIC - ME TO WE TRIP

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my statement would be on Me to We.

Me to We is an innovative social enterprise that offers socially conscious and environmentally friendly products and life-changing experiences.

Eric Arenburg, a student at West Hants Middle School, travelled to Nicaragua in July as part of a Me to We initiative to help children receive an education. Me to We is an organization where you can go to countries around the world to help build schools for children who do not get the opportunity to go to school. Eric has always been passionate about helping others and sponsored his first child when he was just seven years old.

I'd like to congratulate Eric Arenburg for taking the initiative to make a difference in a community where children do not have the same opportunities he has.

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

ARMED FORCES/RCMP/PARAMEDICS/FAMILIES - SUPPORT

MS. PAMEYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind members of this House of the critical role families of our Armed Forces members, RCMP, police, paramedics, and first responders play in Nova Scotia.

This week, no doubt, we have all thought about the family and friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who have come to grips with the fact their loved ones will never come home. We have thought about the family of Kevin Vickers and other police, RCMP, security, and Armed Forces members who put their lives on the line to seek out those who pose a threat.

As Remembrance Day approaches, I encourage all members to connect with family and friends of not only those who have lost but those who support their loved ones as they go to work every day protecting the safety and security of others. I ask that this government continue to come to the table with programs that support the families of our Armed Forces members, RCMP, police, paramedics, and first responders, as they send their loved ones to work every day praying for their safe return. It is critical that they know that they have the support of government and of all Nova Scotians, both in our thoughts and in our actions.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for that member's statement has expired.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

MCKENNA, FRANK - SHALE GAS DEV.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby rise in my place to recognize recent comments made by former New Brunswick Premier, Frank McKenna.

Mr. McKenna, a Liberal, says Nova Scotia faces dire economic consequences unless we move forward with shale gas development. According to Mr. McKenna, good governments take control of the agenda, communicate, make decisions, and lead. If these markers are to be used to measure good government, the Nova Scotia Liberals would certainly be receiving a failing grade.

Mr. McKenna should be commended for the foresight he has shown in championing this issue and for challenging governments in the Maritimes to do the hard work and lead. Let's hope that the Premier and his government take up this challenge before it's too late. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

COMMUN. SERV. GROUPS - IMPORTANCE

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the government of the importance of our community service groups and their ongoing support for families and communities. The food banks of Halifax, and indeed the entire Province of Nova Scotia, are a mainstay for many families; 21,760 Nova Scotians were assisted by food banks in 2013, 8,555 of these were in the HRM.

It is a fact that the food banks rely on the generosity of individuals, businesses and service groups to keep their shelves stocked. Churches collect on a weekly basis from their members. Student and youth groups hold food drives and grocery stores have boxes to receive donations.

Beacon House Food Bank, located on the Cobequid Road, has been operating since 1985. One of the regular supporters since the 1990s has been the Lions Club of Sackville. The world's largest service club, the Lions Club - there are 1.35 million Lions Club members . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for that Member's Statement is expired.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

FRECKLETON, DAVE - LEADERSHIP

MR. TIM HOUSTON: I am pleased to rise in my place today and recognize Dave Freckleton. Mr. Freckleton is best known as the principal of the Stellarton Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, but lesser-known facts are that he is a man of vision, thrives on challenge, is active in his community, and is a volunteer extraordinaire.

Pictou County has recently taken a hit with large layoffs, but Dave believes we have a lot to offer, that we have to work together, and that the college has to serve our community. He has been working to create specific training programs for upcoming jobs that will be coming on stream shortly, which will help our families and our workforce stay right here in Nova Scotia and, indeed, in Pictou County.

I want to thank Dave Freckleton for keeping his finger on the pulse of Pictou County, and the leadership he has shown professionally and as a volunteer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ATVs - USAGE/REGULATIONS

MR. BEN JESSOME: I would like to bring forward a topic of attention to some members of my community with regard to the use of ATVs. Hammonds Plains-Lucaville is primarily residential and the use of ATVs, in particular unregistered vehicles, has raised concerns.

We, as legislators, have a duty to strike a balance: incorporating the safe use of off-road vehicles, respecting those whose nearby properties have the potential to be impacted, and to ensure that all vehicles are properly licensed. Furthermore, we have the responsibility to ensure that adequate regulatory agents are present to enforce all associated safety and other requirements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

CANADA: STRENGTH/RESILIENCE - REMEMBER

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Canada's three federal Leaders joined in solidarity last week in the wake of the shooting on Parliament Hill that left Corporal Nathan Cirillo dead. All three Leaders reassured Canadians that we, as a nation, will not be intimidated. They reiterated that the attack drew us closer and made us stronger.

All three Leaders paid tribute to the brave men and women who protect Canadians: law enforcement, security services, and our Canadian Forces. They spoke for all of us when they said the determination, professionalism, and heroism of these brave Canadians will not be forgotten.

Today, I remind all Nova Scotians of the strength and resilience of our great nation.

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

FALL RIVER AND AREA BUS. ASSOC. - MANDATE

MR. BILL HORNE: I rise today to highlight the Fall River and Area Business Association, FRABA for short. This association of 100-plus members consists of business owners and others who live and/or work in the Fall River and surrounding area. FRABA's mandate is to promote, support and be a voice of businesses in the community. FRABA also provides opportunities for training and networking for all of its members. FRABA actively volunteers and supports many local community groups such as the Lions, Scouts and seniors. FRABA also awards a \$1,000 bursary to a Lockview High School grad entering a post-secondary business education.

The Fall River and Area Business Association is a prospering organization that serves both its members and the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PEARL MIST - PICTOU CO. CRUISE SHIP COMM.:
ATTRACTION - CONGRATS.**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the historic Town of Pictou was host to two cruise ships in October. The ships docked at Pier C and the passengers disembarked to explore the rich culture of Pictou County. Bus excursions to the farmers' market in New Glasgow and the Museum of Industry in Stellarton were offered, or the passengers and crew could enjoy a stroll on the boardwalk in Pictou. The pipe band, fiddles, and Highland dancing were enjoyed by all.

Pictou County Cruise Ship Committee members should be commended for their hard work in attracting the *Pearl Mist* to Pictou County. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

LUN. CO.: LIFESTYLE CTR. - OPENING

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I was recently invited to participate in the grand opening of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, located in my riding of Lunenburg West. This project is the result of community fundraising, private and corporate donors, and the support of all levels of successive governments. Over many years and many committees, those who have taken an active role in making the vision a reality now can enjoy the community engagement happening at the LCLC on a daily basis.

The Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre boasts an NHL-sized ice surface, three pools, a fully-equipped library, a multipurpose room, and several meeting rooms that are used by many community groups and organizations. This facility truly has something for everyone. The residents of Bridgewater and Lunenburg County are proud of this facility and the opening was well attended.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate one and all for the success of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre and to thank them for their many hours of volunteer work to bring this wonderful addition to our community. Thank you.

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

**FOSTER, MR. KAREEM/POSTLETHWAITE, CPL. MICHAEL
- MEDAL OF BRAVERY**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, two heroes from Sydney, Nova Scotia, received the Medal of Bravery from Governor General David Johnston last week. On December 15, 2011, Kareem Foster and Corporal Michael Postlethwaite rescued an elderly

woman from a burning apartment in Sydney. After being alerted to the fire, Mr. Foster and Corporal Postlethwaite entered through a broken window and found the elderly woman in need of assistance. After they carried her outside, Corporal Postlethwaite re-entered the building to search for other possible victims. He was forced to retreat as smoke and flames engulfed the house.

The courageous and selfless acts of these two men saved a life. Mr. Foster and Corporal Postlethwaite deserve the gratitude of all Nova Scotians and all members of this House.

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

NOVA SCOTIA - NATURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the great abundance of opportunity that Nova Scotia possesses in her inherent natural resource industries. Nova Scotians have been abundantly gifted with a global perch on the rim of the great North Atlantic that makes us the envy of the world. Close to our trading partners in Europe across the pond and seeing the great opportunities of Asia through the Suez Canal, our province is perfectly positioned to be a major force in global trade and energy development and distribution for decades to come.

We are a marine economy in this province, Mr. Speaker. That is our glorious history: harvesting the ocean for its great fish, sailing worldwide with our locally-built ships - a tradition which is continuing in a major, modern manner with revitalization of the Halifax Shipyard bodes well for our future economy.

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

HAMM, HON. JOHN - 1ST BATTALION N.S. HIGHLANDERS (NORTH): HON. COL. - APPT.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my friend and predecessor, Premier John Hamm, on his appointment as Honorary Colonel of the First Battalion Nova Scotia Highlanders. The military history of this unit is found in traditions that date back more than 200 years.

This honour was bestowed on Premier Hamm on Sunday. Premier Hamm is a lifetime supporter of the Canadian military. He intends to use his three-year appointment to help bring new recruits to the battalion.

In light of the recent terrible actions taken against our military last week, I know this appointment will hold special significance for Dr. Hamm. I wish him the best of luck in

this new role and for showing the community the benefits of service to country. I know he will bring leadership and enthusiasm to the Nova Scotia Highlanders.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

TIR: LONG ISLAND/BRIER ISLAND - WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring notice that on October 22nd staff from the Department of TIR and I met with residents of Long Island and Brier Island to discuss new initiatives for winter road maintenance. Last year I received several complaints that the current sand-only application for snow-covered roads did not work well and other options should be considered.

The unfortunate contamination of wells from salt storage facilities in the past was the cause of the ban. This salt ban had been in place since 2007. During the summer, staff from TIR did a detailed assessment of well types and locations and was mapped by all people in the area. This assessment information and a plan to move forward towards applying the salt in the brine solution mixed with sand was presented to the citizens for discussion. The local residents gathered at the meeting accepted the new plan. I am pleased to say that road safety and protection of the environment are paramount with this government and it's good to see that a solution was found to address both.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

COMEAU, SUE: ACTIVE LIVING - YOUTH AWARENESS

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Sue Comeau, a resident of Halifax for her commendable efforts to raise youth awareness of the importance of active living. A certified exercise physiologist with a Master in Exercise Physiology, she writes books, screenplays, and articles to raise youth awareness of health issues. Her book, *The F.I.T. Files: Balance it Out*, is the first in a series designed to empower children to make smart choices about their health and physical fitness.

Sue Comeau's dedication to coaching and teaching youth is an outstanding example of leadership in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CABBAGE: PRICE - ADDRESS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update members on a situation of great concern in my constituency: the price of cabbage in our province. Currently cabbage is coming from Quebec for about \$5 for a 50-pound bag. It's impossible to make a profit at that price. I know because I have tried. The Quebec grower pays about \$1.60 for trucking

and 60 cents for the bag - more if it comes in a carton. That means they receive about \$3 a bag.

Our growers believe they are dumping their surplus in our market and forcing our cabbage growers out of business to protect prices in their main market, New England. I call upon our Department of Agriculture to speak with growers like Art and Mike Woolaver of Basinview Farms in Blomidon to get the facts on this situation and address it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

SMALL BUS.: N.S. - SUPPORT

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about attitudes in Nova Scotia. In order for Nova Scotia to move forward we need to change our attitude toward the private sector. The private sector will be moving this province forward. This government's job is to build a foundation where business can succeed. With the tax review and policy review, we are doing this. I can stand here with confidence that this government is doing what needs to be done to make this province succeed.

What Nova Scotians and Opposition Leaders can do is encourage Nova Scotians to support small businesses, to shift their buying patterns and buy 10 per cent more from local businesses, to stand up and support your local entrepreneurs. To say thank you for believing in this province - we know this is not an easy job but you are making a difference. We know that you are instrumental. So please support your entrepreneurs.

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

TIR - ARGYLE-BARRINGTON FLOODING: MITIGATION - FUNDING

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update members on the flooding that happened in my constituency last Thursday. The area received more than 144 millimetres of rain over two days.

As you can imagine, my constituency office has been receiving many calls from residents, from the Pubnicos to Baccaro Point, who experienced flooded basements and washed out driveways. Many culverts and ditches failed, simply because the volume of water was too great for them to handle.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the great work that my local TIR bases are doing in order to rectify some of the problems and I call on the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to provide areas most affected with the resources to mitigate as much of this damage as possible. Thank you.

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

BOWATER LANDS - MANAGEMENT

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize the innovative and transparent process used in managing lands in western Nova Scotia. The lands of the former Bowater Mersey company were purchased by the province to be a working forest. That has always been the intent of government. While we hear inconsistent statements by the NDP about what should be done with the western Crown lands, the Liberal Government has approached the new design with balance and clarity. We have the member for Chester-St. Margaret's making statements about how the last government wanted the land untouched and then in Question Period the member for Queens-Shelburne asking if the minister would open up Mersey lands for firewood.

Government has a responsibility to ensure that economic, environmental, and social concerns for these lands are balanced. Fifty per cent of the western land will be under protection, 15,000 hectares will be managed by the Medway Community Forest Co-operative, and about 12,000 hectares will be Mi'kmaq forestry initiatives. All forest harvest areas will be shown on maps, posted online for public review. There is obviously competing interest when it comes to land use; this is why the minister has struck an independent committee with no vested interest to make a set of recommendations.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's statement has expired.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DOWNTOWN DARTMOUTH - REVITALIZATION

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for a moment about downtown Dartmouth. That's an area of my constituency that has been transforming right before my eyes over the past several years. It's an area that many people will recognize has had several setbacks in past years, but through recent investments by community partners and from residents, that area is already realizing its potential once again as a commercial and a community hub.

Downtown Dartmouth is a place for families to live, to work, to play, to grow. It's home to thriving new businesses led by entrepreneurs both young and old; it is a mix of innovative restaurants that source local ingredients; and it's also a place where our community regularly gathers, where residents can be active and live healthy lives. It truly is, as the motto suggests, All Together Downtown Dartmouth.

I would welcome all members of this House to bring their families, to cycle along our waterfront and our harbourfront, to enjoy a treat at many of our cafes and local restaurants, and to shop at the retailers and galleries along Portland Street.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the hard work of everyone in promoting downtown Dartmouth. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

SENIORS: NEEDS - ADDRESS

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the needs of seniors in my riding. I have calls from many seniors on fixed incomes who are worried about heating their homes or even being able to maintain their homes. I'm working with a local non-profit organization in my riding to further identify the needs of our seniors and how we can address these needs. As our population ages it is important to have social and economic programs in place to meet the specific needs of our seniors.

One small step that I am taking is to create a seniors' information flyer outlining the programs and resources available through our provincial government programs. Many are unaware that there is help available. I will also continue to work closely with our non-profits to provide more seniors' programs in our riding. I encourage members to join me in evaluating the needs of our seniors, and look forward to addressing their needs. Thank you.

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

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY - PROMOTION

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the members of the importance of promoting physical activity in our communities. I recently had the opportunity to speak at Baddeck Academy at an event that celebrated Victoria County's physical activity strategy initiatives. Victoria County has been implementing the physical activity strategy, which encourages an active and healthy lifestyle through participation in daily physical activity.

Research is clear: physical activity benefits our health. I encourage all members to engage in physical activity daily and to promote that practice amongst their constituents. I ask members to support initiatives that help Nova Scotians meet daily physical activity recommendations, whether it's support of trails or outdoor spaces that encourage people to get physically active outside or support of recreation programming and facility upgrades. We require the commitment of all levels of government, communities, and stakeholders . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Time allotted for that member's statement has expired.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

FIREWOOD: PURCHASERS/SUPPLIERS - CONNECT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I know that firewood is a concern for the member for Queens-Shelburne; it's obviously a concern for our department and our government as well. There are folks out there in the private sector that are selling firewood. I wanted to table this ad for the member opposite.

We're doing our best to coordinate folks who need firewood with those who have it, and I wanted to share this advertisement for block or split wood with the member opposite. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

EDUCATION & INNOVATION - IMPORTANCE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Education and innovation: these are the two key words we find over and over in the Ivany report, a report that delivers a message to all Nova Scotians in the starkest of terms - it's now or never. The One Nova Scotia commission describes one of the biggest barriers as being "an attitudinal environment that subtly discourages entrepreneurship and initiative at a time when it is badly needed to revitalize local economies."

It's time we got innovative in our approach to shifting this attitude of resignation from the status quo. I believe we can and must begin in education. From school board trustees to teachers, to school administrators and counsellors, we need to enlist their energy and leadership in fostering a progressive and positive attitude about Nova Scotia for our high school students, replacing "heading out west" with the language of possibility and initiative in Nova Scotia. Innovation must be our emphasis in universities throughout the province so that these tremendous assets of this province are our single biggest investment in innovation. Education . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for that member's statement has expired.

Barring no more members' statements, with the unanimous consent of the House, we have two choices: we can either recess until 2:00 p.m. or we can move on to the order of business, Government Business.

We'll recess until 2:00 p.m., when we will begin Oral Question Period.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[1:55 p.m. The House recessed.]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

HR COMM. - FOI COMMISSIONER: APPEARANCE - BLOCKED

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, today the Liberals, on the House of Assembly Human Resources Committee, used their majority to block a request to have the freedom of information commissioner appear before a committee of this House to answer questions from members of the Legislature. This action directly contradicts the words of the Premier as he used them in describing his own Speech from the Throne where he said: "Putting Nova Scotians first begins with an open and accountable government." I will table that for the benefit of the House.

My question to the Premier is, how is blocking access to the freedom of information commissioner an example of open and transparent government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. What happened today at committee, unbeknownst to our Party; maybe the New Democratic Party knew; the Progressive Conservative Party brought forward this to the agenda. It was not shared with other members of the committee. I would encourage them to share that with the caucuses, they could go back in and determine whether or not the FOIPOP officer can sit.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the whole point of the committee this morning was to set the agenda where all Parties, as the Premier well knows, come forward with agenda items for future meetings. I'm happy to hear the Premier's answer - if he has no problem with the freedom of information officer appearing before a committee of the House he now has an opportunity to say so.

I would like to ask the Premier, leadership starts at the top, will he instruct the Liberal members on this committee to reverse course and allow, of all things, the freedom of information officer to freely answer questions of a committee of this Legislature?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind all members of this House that every member in this House was duly elected to represent their constituencies. Unlike the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I have no intention of telling my members what to say, do, or think.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to remind you that we can't get too deep into committee of the House here.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the Premier had a chance to express his own view as to whether the freedom of information officer should be free to come to a committee of the Legislature and face questioning. I still am not sure where he stands himself on this, but the fact of the matter is actions will speak louder than words.

Is it the policy of the Liberal Government to allow the freedom of information officer to appear before a committee of this House, yes or no? And if it is, will he see to it that the actions follow those words?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue to allow the committees of this House to do their work, and I encourage all members of every committee to bring forward their ideas of who they may want to see before those committees and then the members of those committees will decide who appears.

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

PREM.: LARGE CORPORATIONS - TAX DEALS

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

On March 2012, the Premier said that governments shouldn't be trying to make Imperial Oil competitive by taking money away from the municipality and giving the company a tax break if it's not prepared to give every other business owner in Nova Scotia the same break. But last April the Premier changed the law to give Imperial Oil a \$1 million tax break, and today we've learned the Liberal Government has laid the groundwork so the Irving shipyard can also get a municipal tax break.

My question to the Premier is, why is the government changing laws so large corporations can get tax deals that aren't available to every other business owner in the province, as he asserted should be the case in 2012?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party is talking about. HRM requested that we make an amendment to the charter, as the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party would know. We have made no such tax deals with large corporations. Everything this government has done has been done in the best interests of all Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Premier. Prior to the election, the Liberal Party spent thousands of dollars on ads promising an end to tax breaks for corporations. In the last week the Liberal Government announced a \$30 million tax rebate program for large manufacturers and now they're allowing the Irving shipyard to get a municipal tax break as well. My question for the Premier is, why did he have a change of heart when it came to big business tax breaks?

THE PREMIER: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I think what the ad that the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party was talking about a year ago was that we were going to end handing out free money to corporations, which is exactly what we did when we came to office.

Mr. Speaker, I know the honourable member represents part of or all of Irving shipyard. If she does not believe that the Irving shipyard should get a tax break, she should speak directly to the Mayor of HRM because they are the ones who are going to deliver it to them, if they get one, not us.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I guess when a previous government or governments do these kinds of things, it is corporate welfare; but when this crowd does it, it is creating conditions for business to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, one year into his mandate, when it comes to economic development, the Premier has shown where his allegiance lies. Under the Liberal Government the small business tax rate has not changed but he has given tax breaks to large manufacturers, Imperial Oil and now Irving. My question to the Premier is, why has he abandoned his election promise to place small business owners at the front of the line when it comes to government incentives?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question and I want to inform her and all members of this House that we have doubled the small business loan that is distributed on behalf of government by the credit union, from \$25 million to \$50 million. We have also increased from 75 per cent to 90 per cent the guarantee that government would back small businesses across this province. We continue to provide apprenticeship opportunities for young Nova Scotians who are working primarily in small businesses across this province.

We are continuing to do what we said we would do in the election campaign, which was work with small businesses from one end of this province to the other.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition with one supplementary - a reminder.

PREM.: SHALE GAS BAN - SET ASIDE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this is fun. A former Liberal Premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna, spoke on Friday about the importance of developing our shale gas onshore resources to develop our region. He said in his speech, which I will table, “. . . much more could be done by opinion leaders to demystify the extraction industries.”

The former Liberal Premier of New Brunswick knows a lot about economic development, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier, will he now set aside his ban on shale gas, in light of what Mr. McKenna is saying, show real leadership and get on with the job of trying new ways of creating new jobs in this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the former Premier Mr. McKenna for actually saying exactly what this government is doing, which is going from one end of this province, reaching out to stakeholders to ensure that we fully understand the ramifications of fracking in this province and we are going to do so in an open and transparent way. If we ever frack in this province, it will be done in an open debate, not the way it is structured today, where the minister can do it on his own.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I really encourage the Premier to take a look at the speech I just tabled because nowhere in that speech does Mr. McKenna say the right thing to do now, with all the economic hardship around us, is to ban one of the new ways of creating new jobs in our province, including shale gas. In fact what he did say, and I'll quote directly, is that good governments “seize control of the agenda, they communicate, they make decisions and they lead.”

Banning new ways of creating jobs is not leadership Mr. Speaker. Mr. McKenna is actually calling on our region's leaders to lead the development of this new opportunity. He is a proven leader. Why won't the Premier take his advice?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the honourable member that I have read the speech. What former Premier McKenna said was that we need to go out and continue to communicate to ensure that everyone fully understands the ramifications of fracking, what would happen. That is exactly what this bill provides. The Minister of Energy is doing so.

We are going to continue to engage Nova Scotians; we are going to continue to consult, Mr. Speaker, and we will move forward making sure that not only do we drive good economic development decisions but we'll do so, at the same time protecting the environment.

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

PREM.: OFFSHORE RESOURCES - DEVELOPMENT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I really do wonder if we read the same speech because Mr. McKenna actually said, "We cannot refuse to exploit our resources and continue to believe that we can balance our budgets, pay our doctors and social workers and other civil servants and continue to fund a social safety net." That's what Mr. McKenna said in his speech. That is why he's advocating for development of our onshore shale gas resources.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, does he agree with Mr. McKenna that developing our onshore resources would help pay for the social services we need - yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, Mr. McKenna was talking about resource development. I want to remind the honourable member, there are \$2 billion being invested in the offshore of this province by Shell and BP. May I remind the honourable member that there is a tremendous amount of mining that is taking place in this province, and will continue to do so. We will do it in a responsible way.

What the Minister of Energy has said, and what we are going to continue to do, is make sure that we consult Nova Scotians, that we fully understand the activities that are taking place in this province, and we are going to do so in a responsible way. If we are going to manage and we are going to exploit the resources - to use the Leader of the Official Opposition's words - we are going to make sure we do so protecting the environment at the same time.

MR. BAILLIE: They are actually the words of Mr. McKenna, who was speaking very specifically about onshore shale gas development, and I just find it very interesting that we have a government that supports the offshore, as we all do, where we have risks, where we have regulations, where it's working, where real jobs are created, but they won't let the exact same thing happen onshore, despite all the unemployment that we see around us.

Mr. McKenna said in his speech, "People feel that it is a choice between shale gas and drinking water. This is a complete lie but is constantly repeated." Mr. McKenna knows there is a safe and responsible way to develop this resource and create jobs. I'll ask the Premier, does he agree with Mr. McKenna that this can be done safely, or not?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that is exactly the conversation that the Minister of Energy is having with all Nova Scotians. I want to remind the Leader of the Official Opposition there is a responsibility, there is a duty to consult with the Aboriginal communities across this province. I want to remind all

members of this House, we have fracked wells in this province and this government is dealing with the fracking waste that was being ignored by previous governments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

ENERGY - SAVINGS: RATEPAYERS - RECEIVE

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. As everybody in this House well knows, winter is fast approaching and high energy prices can put a strain on family budgets and force people to choose between heat and eat. There seems to be some hope on the horizon. Nova Scotia, which historically depends on fossil fuels, recently we have seen oil prices - and I'll table this - oil prices fall to record lows, levels unprecedented in the last three years. I want to ask the Minister of the Energy, when will these huge savings for Nova Scotians be passed down to ratepayers?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: It is actually a very timely question because we are in the middle of the Fuel Adjustment Mechanism hearings at the moment, and one of the things that we are trying to look at is what the impact will be on next year. We know that while we don't use a lot of oil for rates in terms of electricity generation, there is some use at Tufts Cove. We don't anticipate there to be downward pressure on the prices of natural gas in the New England and Maritimes market, so obviously that won't be as much of an impact, but we are looking at the possible impact on drop in coal prices.

MR. CORBETT: To the Minister of Energy, in April his government said, and I'll table this, Mr. Speaker, "Ratepayers can expect to see an overall reduction in their power bill of four to five per cent. . ." Today's oil prices - and it is across the fossil fuel market that we see prices tumbling because the reality is they are linked to one another. So I want to ask the minister one simple question, when will ratepayers get to participate in these new windfall prices that Nova Scotia Power is currently enjoying?

MR. YOUNGER: The rates are going down on January 1, 2015. It is unfortunate that the NDP and the Tories voted against that, but that's what it is. We will ensure that ratepayers benefit from not only inaccurate speculation by Nova Scotia Power - when that happens as Liberty has suggested on natural gas prices but quite frankly, on any fossil fuels prices, that they get passed on to ratepayers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: DEEP PANUKE - ROYALTY REVENUE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. According to a CBC article, as early as mid-July the Minister of Energy was made aware of planned maintenance on the Deep Panuke offshore platform. I can table that. In

September, the minister tabled her fiscal update and booked a \$5 million increase in petroleum revenues.

So my question today for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is, was this planned maintenance of Deep Panuke taken into account when the Department of Finance and Treasury Board raised the expected royalty revenue?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I understand that all of the costs were taken into account. When we do an update, the Department of Finance and Treasury Board confers with all departments and brings up all the information that we know as of that date.

MR. HOUSTON: The planned shutdown can have a significant impact on the production at Deep Panuke, and yet the government banked on increased petroleum revenues despite knowing of the planned maintenance. Here we sit today and the maintenance has been unexpectedly extended. So for every day that Deep Panuke is off-line, the province's royalty revenues are impacted.

My question for the minister is, given the current status of the Deep Panuke, should Nova Scotians expect lower-than-projected offshore revenues and therefore an increased deficit?

MS. WHALEN: As I said, we had already accounted for the information that we had available at the time. I'm going to let the Minister of Energy say something.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: As the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said, it was taken into account. It was a planned shutdown, and if at the end of the day they actually produce more gas to make up in the winter, we would actually benefit on the finances, because it is in part based on the royalty price or the commodity price, and the commodity price is higher in the winter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - HST: BUS. - EFFECTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is also for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Mr. Speaker, the fact that we pay the highest HST in the country is holding Nova Scotians back. In fact, for the August 2013-14 period, Nova Scotia ranked dead last in retail sales growth in Canada. Our 2 per cent growth is dismal compared even to our neighbours in New Brunswick and P.E.I., where it was over 5 per cent.

My question for the minister is, does the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board agree that paying the highest HST in Canada hurts business and hurts ordinary Nova Scotians?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite knows very well why we have that 15 per cent HST. It's because each cent that comes off the HST costs \$195 million to the revenue of the province. We're running a very deep deficit, and we need the revenue from that HST. I believe that it's an important factor in our province's functioning.

MR. HOUSTON: What a difference three years can make, I guess. Mr. Speaker, in November 2011, criticizing the hike in HST, the now-Premier rose in his capacity as Leader of the Official Opposition and said, "... people have less to spend because of this government's poor decision on raising the HST." He then asked the following question, "... will the Premier now admit that his HST increase is hurting businesses and making life less affordable for Nova Scotian families?" I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, just three short years later, will the minister admit to this House that the Liberal decision to maintain the highest HST in Canada hurts Nova Scotian families as much today as it did three years ago?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for his question. We just ran a campaign, Mr. Speaker, where we were upfront with Nova Scotians and told them we could not afford an HST tax cut at this moment in time. We all know we are running a substantial deficit in this province, and Nova Scotians made a decision: they were not going to take a billion-dollar tax cut that was promised by the Progressive Conservative Party. They were going to bet on a government that was going to be upfront with them.

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

LAE - EMERGENCY RESPONDERS: PTSD - WORKERS' COMP.

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question today is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Mr. Speaker, the NSGEU represents emergency responders, including police officers, social workers, correctional workers, firefighters, and nurses. These are all people you need by your side in time of crisis. Today the NSGEU issued a press release, which I will table, calling on the government to ensure all emergency response workers receive the help they need from Workers' Compensation when they develop post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education through you, when will emergency responders see that change?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. In fact, the Workers' Compensation Board recently changed their policy on workplace stress and has improved their coverage at this time. Any time we make any change to our policies at the Workers' Compensation Board, it does have ramifications and

so any decision to proceed with those would have to be made after due consultation. Thank you.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, there are those emergency responders who aren't covered because of the policy currently with WCB. In the last seven months, 24 first responders have committed suicide across Canada and we cannot wait any longer. I would like to ask the minister, when will the Minister of Labour provide automatic coverage through Workers' Compensation for emergency responders who have been diagnosed with PTSD due to accumulative exposure to traumatic events?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite would know, the Workers' Compensation Board has recently changed its procedures around this particular issue. There is expanded coverage. Any time we go to change our coverage, it has a financial impact on the Workers' Compensation Board's bottom line. As we know, there is a huge unfunded liability. We have been making considerable efforts towards dealing with that but it is not something that will be solved overnight. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

LAE: HAZARD ASSESSMENTS - REGULATIONS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. The document resulting from the 2007 inquiry into the death of Captain Donald LeBlanc at the Englishtown ferry recommended the province, in consultation with stakeholders, draft new regulations for formal, documented hazard assessments. It states that it should establish a reasonable and realistic standard for when a hazard assessment ought to be done, the form it ought to take, the process by which it is completed, and what it ought to include. I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

It has been seven years since the inquiry was completed but still regulations have not been passed. My question to the minister is, why haven't the regulations been passed to protect workers' safety?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. We have actually been working very closely with our fishing communities, our offshore industries to improve safety. We know that for many of our folks who work on the water, the number one issue is drowning - that is the number one cause of death. We are working with our fisher folk to get them to wear their PFDs and we are working very closely with them doing man-overboard drills. There is actually a lot going on at this time. Thank you.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, according to the Workers' Compensation Board's 2013 Annual Report, in 2013 there were 34 workplace deaths in Nova Scotia, and I'll table that. The recommendation coming out of the provincial inquiry states the Department of

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's hazard assessment document may be something which other government departments could adopt and which may also serve as an example for private sector employees who wish to maintain the highest possible standard of workplace safety.

My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to reviewing the recommendation and update Nova Scotians before the end of the House sitting?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would note that it appears that governments of all three stripes have been in office since that particular report came forward. What I can tell the minister is that we are deeply committed to making Nova Scotia the safest place to work in all of Canada.

I would like to note that we are making great strides this year; so far our number of acute deaths has dropped considerably from last year. That doesn't mean that we are going to relax our vigilance. In fact, what needs to happen is there needs to be a sea change that Nova Scotian workers and employers all need to contribute to our increased safety at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

JUSTICE - C.B. CORRECTIONAL CTR.: FIRE - SERIOUSNESS CONFIRM

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Justice. Last week a fire at the Cape Breton Correctional Centre facility sent four employees to hospital for smoke inhalation and 28 inmates were evacuated from three different areas of the jail. One employee says the situation could have produced fatal results.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Justice, how serious an incident does she consider this situation to be that I have just described?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to my colleague for that very important question. Any incident that puts the safety of our staff or offenders at risk we consider to be very serious.

MR. CORBETT: Again to the Minister of Justice, according to her own department, serious incidents, including purposeful damage to correctional facilities, as well as major disruptions and disturbances require emergency police services to respond. Now the police did respond in this case as a matter of fact, as did other emergency vehicles, and long before her time, Mr. Speaker, there was also an incident at that same facility where when first responders did respond to an incident there, they were held hostage.

So I want to ask the minister, it has been a week since this incident took place, the Department of Justice major incidents updates webpage continues not to mention it. So through you, Mr. Speaker, if this government is supposed to be so transparent, why is this minister not posting details of this incident for the public?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the question from the honourable member. We are conducting an internal investigation. As well, the Cape Breton police are also conducting their own investigation. I can tell the honourable members there were no offenders injured. There were four staff who had smoke inhalation and went to the hospital, but they were not admitted at all.

We do have regulations on the website and, pursuant to those regulations, there were no injuries of this sort that required us to report these.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PSA SCREENING - MIN. ADVICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: In Monday's issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal, the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care recommended that the PSA test should not be used to screen for prostate cancer. This recommendation would be confusing to many Nova Scotia men who have been encouraged to get a PSA for early detection of prostate cancer after the age of 40.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness, can he update the House on the advice he will give doctors in Nova Scotia regarding PSA screening?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: To the honourable member - at the present time it is a report that is now available, Cancer Care Nova Scotia, and the Prostate Association in particular are maintaining that a PSA test has value and will stay in place in our province. (Applause)

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much (Interruption) It's true, first answer of the session, it's great.

Despite the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care recommendation, Prostate Cancer Canada believes that the benefits of PSA screening far outweigh the risk, and early detection saves lives. They continue to recommend that when men turn 40, as I suggest there's a number of men over 40 in this House of Assembly, they should get a PSA test.

So again, knowing the minister's commitment, I know the Premier has been co-chairing the Wakeup Breakfast on a number of occasions, so my question to the

minister is, what advice does the minister have for men in Nova Scotia when it comes to PSA testing?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know that men in their 40s now ask to have this test available to them; that is the current thinking. The tests will be available to men in Nova Scotia. At the present time there is really no need to change the practice - certainly the report will be reviewed, but I can assure you and all men in Nova Scotia that the test is there.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NORTHSIDE HOSP. - CONCERNS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. We've heard a great deal from my colleagues, the MLA for Cape Breton Centre and the MLA for Northside-Westmount about the situation at Northside General Hospital. In the *Cape Breton Post* today we're learning municipal councillors are also calling on the Minister of Health and Wellness to explain the escalating ER closures, change to blood collection practices, and staffing shortages.

I would like to ask the minister, what is the Minister of Health and Wellness doing to address local concerns about the Northside General Hospital?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important for myself and the deputy to review all of the concerns that have arisen over the past year at Northside General and, as soon as the House rises, we will do that on-site investigation.

MR. WILSON: Well, in other words, we'll delay until the House is finished and then we'll find out what we're going to do about it. Before the Liberal Government was elected we had volunteer health boards who would be the advocates for local hospitals like Northside, New Waterford, and Roseway.

My question, through you, Mr. Speaker, is, since the minister has fired the volunteer health boards, who is he relying on to speak up for patients outside of Halifax?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, one of the very clear lessons that I've learned since becoming the Minister of Health and Wellness is that all Nova Scotians speak about the need for certain services, but they also speak about the importance of good health delivery in the province, and I have all the confidence in the current board administrator, George McLellan. We've also heard from physicians and staff at Northside General. I'm getting a very good picture of what is taking place and if there's a need to make changes at Northside, they will be made.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - NORTHSIDE GEN. HOSP.:
CONVERSION - DETAILS**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The concerns about changes to the services provided at the Northside General Hospital are mounting each day. Doctors have expressed concern about the growing loss of services; they fear the hospital is going to be transitioned into a long-term care facility. While Cape Breton is in desperate need of spaces for seniors awaiting placement, the Northside General is not a desired location, as the services remain important for all residents.

The CEO has indicated there are no plans to make that transition, but the front-line workers are not convinced. So my question to the minister is, can the minister confirm there are no plans to convert the Northside General into a long-term care facility?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite - all facilities in our province undergo changes. We know that lab services in all nine current districts have undergone some degree of change, so that's nothing new that is happening there. But in terms of the future of the hospital, the array of services to be offered, I don't see, in the short term, a change. There may be a need for more clinicians and support services to make sure that all of the services have all of the requirements to make sure it's delivered safe and on time.

MR. ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The anxiety over the Northside General Hospital has spread from health care professionals to members of council and the public. Councillor Clarence Prince voiced concerns about what he is hearing and expressed a need for the minister to speak to residents directly. He said, "If these changes are examples of improved care, the minister of health has to be notified that we think otherwise. At the present time I believe these policies are an embarrassment to the provincial government and an insult to the residents of our community." I'll table that report, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister commit to holding a public forum when he visits the Northside so residents of the Northside finally get some answers?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, at the present time my commitment is to go to the Northside when the House rises and to get a full assessment from the key stakeholders who are delivering the health care, I think, as the first voice of what the concerns are, what the needs are, and together we will find solutions for the problems that exist there.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: MENTAL HEALTH WAIT TIMES - REPT. TABLE

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

Stats Canada shows Nova Scotia with a suicide rate of 13.9 people per 100,000 in 2009, the third-highest rate in Canada compared to the national rate of 11.5 per cent in 2009.

Mood Disorders Society of Canada report from 2009 shows 27 per cent of Nova Scotians have had contact with the health system one month prior to dying by suicide, while 55 per cent had contact one year before. Mental illness is the second-highest leading cause of disability and premature death in Canada; 114 people died from suicide in 2013 here in Nova Scotia, and I will table that. Will the minister table a comprehensive report from the Department of Health and Wellness on mental health wait times in Nova Scotia that we are presently facing?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, he has identified one of the perhaps biggest ongoing concerns with regard to mental health and the interventions that are necessary when people are at a desperate point in their lives. We know that needs attention; we also need to let the public know about wait times and a current statistical picture of that. Indeed, we plan to put those online and we are just weeks away from doing that.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Health and Wellness, an editorial in *The Chronicle Herald* on August 20th told of a young lady suffering from post-partum depression and asking for mental health help. She worked in what she described as a helping field, having worked in shelters with men, women and children, however, she was turned away at the ER when she asked for mental health assistance. My question to the minister, is the minister aware of how many individuals suffering from mental health problems are being turned away from Nova Scotia hospitals?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that statistic but if it happens in even one case, it is one too many. We know that our doctors, a number of them now, have taken training on at least that primary care component to deal with especially depression, anxiety and also some of the psychoses that turn up in a doctor's office. I think as that training increases and goes across primary care, we know that we are at a point in time where all clinicians must be educated and know how to start the process of treatment and caring for somebody who is a potential suicide victim.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

DIS: SHARED SERV. - FTE REDUCTIONS

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services. Earlier today in talking to the media, the minister was talking about issues around shared services. He told the media in particular that there would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$50 million to \$60 million in savings through this scheme. I want to ask the minister what percentage of those savings do you anticipate being achieved through FTE reductions?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the majority of the savings on a shared services piece will come through procurement. Our government has identified that there is a large savings opportunity in procurement and the bulk of the savings will be there. As time goes on over the course of five or six years we will find efficiencies as we collapse departments under Internal Services and that is where we will have a reduction in FTEs. We expect the current reduction, over that period of time with no layoffs, is approximately 200 and all will be done through attrition.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, again to the same minister, we have seen in the past the Liberal Government trying to balance the books on the workers and just to go back to their last time in government, how they drove 1,000 nurses away. So, I want to ask a very simple question - it seems like I hit a nerve - if the Liberal attrition plan didn't work in the past, why will it work today?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. The reason this plan will work today is because it is going to be thoughtful and it is going to be over the course of five years. I would like to remind the honourable member that shared services was actually an NDP initiative and this was started two years ago. If the honourable member remembers, their initiative had 800 layoffs and moving 800 people.

Mr. Speaker, we saw how that government handled moving 40 people and caused great anxiety and frustration in the Department of Agriculture. This government will handle shared services in a very respectful way to our workforce. It will be a seamless transition and we will book the \$50 million to \$60 million of savings.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: AUTISM SUPPORTS - PROVIDE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, last week my colleague asked the Premier a series of questions about the government's plan to provide services for children and adults with autism. He asked the Premier about their failure to act upon promises in the Liberal election platform. Families want to know that this government will honour their commitments and show a clear plan of action to provide the necessary supports.

My question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain whether or not her department is monitoring the goals in the Autism Action Plan?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member - we certainly have made a commitment to look at how we provide services and supports to anyone on the autism spectrum, whether it is a pre-schooler, whether it is somebody in the public system, or whether it is an adult. We have made a commitment to go through the 53 recommendations there; in fact, cross-department meetings continue because the responsibilities within those 53 recommendations do cover more than one department.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the minister said that her department is not waiting for the report, that they are taking action. The report was completed in 2011 and we are waiting to see a complete progress update so the families know the direction the government is taking - we have not seen a single update since the last 12 months.

My question to the minister, can the minister provide an updated progress report on the Autism Action Plan before the end of this session?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the support for autism in our schools certainly began long before this person became minister. I will give credit to the previous government for looking at providing supports through autism consultants at the department, autism consultants in the schools, and training for our teachers.

We didn't wait, the previous government didn't wait, and we will continue to provide the supports that those people need.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ENVIRON. - BOAT HBR. TREATMENT FACILITY: MIN. - TOUR CONFIRM

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Environment. We all know that on his desk one of the biggest files he has, if not the biggest, is the Boat Harbour treatment facility issue and my question is simple: I would like the minister to tell us, yes or no, has he toured the facility?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Yes.

MS. MACFARLANE: That makes me so happy to hear that (Interruption) No, really. We didn't see any information out there that indicated he had toured it and had a visual of it. It's a big issue, it is complex, and it's delicate, so I thank him for touring.

My next question is, as we know, hand in hand goes Northern Pulp, and I'm wondering if he has had the opportunity to meet management there and tour Northern Pulp as well - yes or no, please?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity. The mill management team has asked me to tour the facility in the past - this was actually back in the Spring. I provided some parameters around completing that tour, which included extending an invitation to representatives, as well as Pictou Landing First Nation. They've never come back to me with a commitment to bring those people along. So to this point I haven't actually toured the facility, I have met with management.

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

ENVIRON. - FLY ASH (TRENTON): TASK FORCE - COMPOSITION

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Environment. In 2013 residents of the Trenton area were told that the Minister of Environment, along with the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Health and Wellness were committed to forming a task force to examine the effects of fly ash from Nova Scotia Power's generating plant on the environment and overall health of residents.

My question, through you to the Minister of Environment is, who is on this task force, have they met yet, and how often do they meet?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for question. I don't recall any commitment for something referred to as a task force. Certainly there was a commitment for the departments to work together and, Mr. Speaker, the ministers, each of us, have met and discussed - as well as members from our respected departments at the staff level - we have met, I know myself I've met on at least two occasions with representatives from the public group, really moving forward, expressing their concerns on this particular issue. As indicated, certainly it has been an active issue that we have been looking at and the conversations have continued within our departments.

MS. ZANN: Well, I will table the article where in fact there was a commitment from the Ministers of Health and Wellness, Environment, and Energy all committed to speaking to Nova Scotia Power and having a task force formed to look into the issue. I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, residents of Trenton continue to be fearful of the omissions coming from the Nova Scotia Power plant in their community. They say that air quality is a huge problem in the region and they want their concerns addressed. So can the minister please tell us when the task force will, in fact, be formed, will they start consulting with the residents about the quality of their air, and if in fact he has discovered changing the allowable limits of the industrial approval?

MR. DELOREY: Thank you again to the member for the question. I haven't had a chance to see the document tabled but again I would suggest that the article likely makes

reference to a task force not as something that came from the government and our language. I will take a look at that to see what the parameters are or who was making the commitment or the statements around that task force.

With respect to the air quality, certainly I think the issues and concerns of residents of Pictou County pertaining to air quality is well documented, not just around the notion of the Trenton plant but also Northern Pulp, as an earlier question has come up. Mr. Speaker, I assure you that this department, the Department of Environment, is taking those concerns very seriously, as we consider the air quality omissions across the board, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: MENTAL HEALTH/VIOLENCE ISSUES - ASSISTANCE CONFIRM

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Class composition, potential violence, and mental health issues are the most important concerns as the 2014-15 school year ushers in a new year. My question to the minister is, has the minister's department provided any additional assistance to help teachers cope with these issues?

HON. KAREN CASEY: A very important question. Classroom teachers are dealing with a lot of complexities in their classroom and to answer the member's question, we have worked with the Department of Health and Wellness to provide 23 mental health clinicians. Those people will be providing supports for our students and also for the teachers who are providing professional development so our teachers are better able to respond - first of all to identify and then to respond - and to reach out and get the professional help that they need so that they can provide whatever level of support the students in their class may require.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, teachers are known for their incredible work and they make a difference for students, however teachers across the province continue to cope with class-size issues at the upper elementary, junior, and senior high levels. Will the minister address the serious issues classroom teachers face each day with respect to large classroom sizes in Grades 7 to 12?

MS. CASEY: To respond to the member opposite with respect to support for teachers and how we can help them better identify and provide support - as recently as last week, Mr. Speaker, there were 800 teachers who were in the city receiving professional development so they could better, as I said, identify and provide support for students who are having some level of anguish, mental health, whatever those concerns might be.

We certainly are taking those steps. With respect to class size, I do want to remind the member that this is the government that identified the need to put a cap on class sizes so that teachers would have a manageable number of students in their class. We began that

with the Primary to Grade 2 initiative this year with 20 students, and I'm pleased to say that 94 per cent of the school classes were able to cap their class size.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired. I'm exhausted. (Laughter)

Great jobs, guys. Almost 20 questions, so good on you.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: In fact, it was 19 questions. To put that in perspective, that is more than we have ever achieved on Opposition Day when we had an hour-and-a-half Question Period. (Applause) As a result, we're reconsidering the rule changes. There weren't supposed to be this many questions. (Laughter)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 45.

Bill No. 45 - The Black Cultural Society Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I'd like to move second reading of Bill No. 45, an Act to Amend Chapter 101 of the Acts of 1977, the Black Cultural Society Act.

These changes were asked for and passed by the board of the Black Cultural Centre. Amendments will include: replacing a one-year term with a three-year term for board members; provide staggered terms of having two members serve a one-year term, and two members serving a two-year term initially; remove the clause which sets up the board's first executive committee; reduce the current eligibility to serve six consecutive terms of office to two consecutive terms; and reduce the 11-member quorum for the board of directors to seven. It also allows for participation in meetings by electronic means.

This is a change that the Black Cultural Centre has been asking for, for some time. Unfortunately, they didn't have the ad placed in time last year to follow this through.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 45.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 45. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 61.

Bill No. 61 - Onslow Cemetery Company Trustees Incorporation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 61.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 61. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 58.

Bill No. 58 - Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act.

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 58, an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2003, the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone in this House would agree that apprenticeship is incredibly important to the growth of our industries, our economy, and our province. A successful apprenticeship system means more productivity and it means more jobs for our daughters and sons. There's no question, we need skilled workers in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia's new Apprenticeship Agency, led by industry, is working to ensure that our system is responsive to our trades and our workforce, and that our apprentices get the training they need to achieve their certification. To do this we need to work with them to help remove some of the barriers our apprentices face.

Today's workforce requires highly refined skills, something apprentices rely on employers to teach them. We need to increase employer participation so that more apprentices can access these skills.

We also know that today's workforce needs to be mobile, which is especially true for those working in the skilled trades, so we need to improve access to outside opportunities for training. That's why we're making changes to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act. These amendments will help more apprentices complete their training more quickly and at less cost.

Nova Scotia apprentices who pursue on-the-job training in another province will no longer have to register in that province. Instead they can remain registered here in Nova Scotia, allowing them to start their training more quickly. This saves them from paying extra fees and writing more exams.

The amendments also ensure that classroom, on-the-job, and trades training are recognized meeting a government commitment. These changes will also allow the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency to make agreements with other provinces to ensure the apprentices' experience and training is recognized and that the training they receive meets a quality standard.

The agency will be a home base for Nova Scotia apprentices, tracking and logging their technical training and workplace experience. Right now, only about half of the apprentices registered in Nova Scotia actually complete their certification. These changes will improve the completion rates of Nova Scotia apprentices by making it easier for them to get the training they need to complete the program more quickly.

We know Nova Scotians want to stay and build a life here. In fact, I spoke with some young people at the bill briefing last Friday and they all plan to continue their trades' journey here. I chatted with a second-year NSCC pipe trade student who will be looking for that essential hands-on training he'll need to get his Red Seal. I also spoke to a recently

certified journey person who's already looking to find out what she can do to help train that next apprentice.

What I saw in all of them was optimism. They see opportunities right here and they want to be part of them. They also want to get the word out to young Nova Scotians about how rewarding careers in the skilled trades are. They're doing their part and we're helping them by making the kinds of changes we need to keep young Nova Scotians here where they can get good jobs, put down roots, and build their lives.

These amendments will help apprentices get the training they need more quickly and at less cost, so they can qualify for the good jobs available in Nova Scotia now and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a decent bill; however, it would be much better and would make more sense if the government could accompany it with a real plan to create jobs. According to the government this legislation will allow apprentices to get training more quickly and at less cost.

This is a good thing. However, enabling this mobility will make it easier for Nova Scotia tradespeople to move out West. While this bill will also make it easier for Nova Scotia tradespeople to come back, this hinges on there being jobs in Nova Scotia to return to that would pay at least comparable to what they would make in western Canada. In order to support this policy the government has created additional bureaucracy. The budget for the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency is approximately \$11 million this year alone.

Unless Nova Scotia sees significant job creation in the near future, this policy will likely not provide a good return on investment for the Nova Scotia economy. This comes back to a fundamental challenge for apprenticeship in Nova Scotia. There is not enough economic activity in the trades to provide sufficient apprenticeship opportunities to all Nova Scotians. This is the fundamental problem that needs to be addressed. While it will make it easier for Nova Scotia tradespeople to be mobile, without sufficient growth in the trades industry in Nova Scotia there would be little incentive for tradespeople to return, despite the new regulations that make it easier for them to do so.

It is worthwhile to make it easier for apprentices, especially making training and certification easier and less costly. In the future, we would hope to see it be easier for apprentices to be educated, trained and have opportunities right here at home.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate. (Interruption) There you go, I didn't look over there.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to talk on Bill No. 58, the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act, and I'll make it short.

Apprenticeship in my opinion is probably an underutilized way to achieve your Red Seal certification. It used to be, with my parents and grandparents and great-grandparents that that was the only way you go and you would get your certification. You would learn a trade, it would be handed down from family member to family member and that's kind of how you became a plumber or an electrician, a mechanic and numerous other things.

The big advantage for the apprenticeship program is it allows for males and females alike to transition and change careers and still be able to learn a trade, but also to be able to provide income for their family. It's also a great way, as I said, to pass down knowledge. Some of the things you learn under apprenticeship are the hands-on experience and some of those things you can't actually learn from a book, you need to actually have somebody there who has been through it, and they will teach you how to react and how to do certain things.

I think the last set of numbers I looked at, when it came to apprenticeships in Nova Scotia, we were hovering around 50 per cent of people who enter into apprenticeship programs actually complete it. I guess the question is: Why is it around 50 per cent when we have such a huge need for plumbers, electricians, carpenters, roofers, pipefitters - and the list goes on and on?

I guess the big reason is the massive amount of red tape that an apprentice has to go through in order to get certified. Business is not taking on some of these apprentices. I read something through the Department of Labour and Advanced Education that Nova Scotian apprentices, it actually takes them two years longer than the national average to complete their apprenticeship program. That is startling and it seems to me like it's not efficient.

What this bill will actually do that will help take care of some of that red tape is there will be no challenge exams. Hours that our apprentices work anywhere in Canada can now count in Nova Scotia, including pre-apprenticeship hours - I repeat, including the apprenticeship hours which, from my understanding, were never included before in the past. These are big things to help anyone, not just young Nova Scotians, but Nova Scotians who want to transition from career to career into a different trade. These are encouraging things, these are things that we want them to be able to take part in, and these are more reasons to get people into a skilled trade.

When I talked about the red tape earlier - and I promise you, Mr. Speaker, I'm almost done here - one of the things that we kept hearing is having to re-register as an apprenticeship. That won't have to happen anymore, they can remain registered here in Nova Scotia. It will allow for faster, cheaper and less red tape, so we are taking the apprenticeship program and we are making it - as I said earlier and I'll repeat it - faster,

cheaper and less red tape. I think that is what everybody wants when it comes to the apprenticeship program.

In closing, I would just like to say that I think this is a fantastic step forward. It will encourage more people to get into apprenticeship. It will encourage not just young Nova Scotians, all Nova Scotians, and it will also encourage people to come home and know that when they do come home, their hours will count and they won't have to go through the red tape of the past. With that, I thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise now to close debate on Bill No. 58. I would like to let my honourable colleague know that we are working to increase employer involvement in the apprenticeship system. Our CEO and chair of the board are currently travelling the province talking to employers to alert them to the changes, to the fact that we now have an apprenticeship agency so that employers can understand the value they can receive from taking on an apprentice.

I would also like to let the member know we have doubled the money in the apprenticeship stream of the START program and we have heard great response from employers on that. We have 600 people who have actually moved through that program and it is getting accolades.

I would like to note that one of the things I particularly like about this bill is that it enables an apprentice who has to go away - the member for Halifax Atlantic is quite right that our apprentices are taking on average of about two years longer to complete their apprenticeships. It is not because our young people require that or that they are doing remedial work, the issue is attaching to an employer and staying attached to an employer through that entire period. If an employer has a contract that ends, they may not be able to keep an apprentice on.

We are trying to make it possible for those apprentices to continue their apprenticeship journey without interruption so they can complete their apprenticeship and come back and be here in Nova Scotia. The fact that their records are held here means that they will have a relationship with Nova Scotia and they know that they will be able to come home and have their hours counted.

With that, I now move to close debate on Bill No. 58.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 58. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 59.

Bill No. 59 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59 be read for a second time.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to an amendment to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. This change provides authority for council to enter into a property tax agreement with the owners of heavy industrial properties. Our government is pleased to bring this change forward so Halifax Regional Municipality can provide a competitive operating environment for heavy industrial businesses, which can lead to additional economic benefits for the municipality and its citizens.

With this amendment, HRM will be able to negotiate tax agreements that recognize the uniqueness of heavy industrial businesses and the use of their property, while coming to a mutual agreement on property taxes. Through regulation, the provincial government will identify the definition of heavy industrial properties so that it is clear what the circumstances are for this change.

The provincial government recognizes there are situations where it may be difficult to assess the value of a heavy industrial property. As a result, this can lead to time consuming and expensive appeals involving both the municipality and the business. This change allows HRM Council to provide stable and predictable taxes eligible for properties with approval of a municipal bylaw. We are making this amendment because we believe the municipality is in the best position to determine the circumstances where eligible, heavy industrial property owners will pay the taxes identified in an agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we are not the only jurisdiction that recognizes this and that it can be difficult to value some properties based on criteria under the assessment Act. A property tax agreement for specific use assets in certain industries is commonly applied across the country. We understand that the time can be of the essence and by making this change to the legislation, HRM will be able to react in a more efficient manner.

With that I conclude my remarks and I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: This is certainly a topic that we talk about a lot in this Legislature - how do we stimulate economic development in the province? Being a jurisdiction where we do have very high taxes right across the board, I am not surprised to see legislation like this coming forth in the Legislature.

We do know that companies make decisions about whether or not they are going to expand operations, and we think of Michelin as one example of a company that is already in Nova Scotia who from time to time looks at their operations and compares them to other operations they have around the world. I know from speaking with them and people who work there, there is essentially competition within that company and when they decide to invest in a jurisdiction, it is based on the best business case that can be put forward by that jurisdiction and it is put forward, Mr. Speaker, by people who are working for Michelin in that jurisdiction. Again, I'm not surprised to see something like this come forward. It is certainly HRM's business to decide these kinds of things. I can see that logic.

I also know that it does still raise questions, and as I mentioned in the House the other day, we have a new government and I think one of the things that this government highlighted during its election campaign was the idea of no more handouts to big business. I remember seeing ads with investments that were made at the time by the previous government and in those advertisements that I and many Nova Scotians saw on television, they had lists of the investments that were made and saying that those were bad decisions. I can think of the paper mill in my area and I know that's running today - and thank God that it is - because we know that there are many people working there and I shudder to think what the economy would be in the Strait Area without that mill. So that is an example of an investment that was, if I can try to choose a soft wording - that was looked down upon, I think, by this government when they were running in the election.

I guess we all understand that there has to be some negotiation with business and it is not always cut and dried, but I do know that the public does get concerned about tax breaks, especially for big business. I think they are a little more open to small business breaks but what we often hear from small businesses is, why aren't these breaks available to my business? I know that is something I have heard many times when I visit local businesses in my area.

So the questions arise, Mr. Speaker, do the tax breaks actually work? Are Nova Scotians in favour of this type of economic development even if it is something that HRM is deciding? The other thing - and I know the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has made efforts by posting information on a government website, about investments - one question I would like to put on the record, is there a way that we can identify when we achieve break-even? There are sometimes millions of dollars in concessions given to companies that are operating in Nova Scotia, and I'll even think about this for the paper mill in my area. I know they're doing well, I'm happy to see that.

If they keep on track I think Nova Scotians will recoup that investment that was made there. I think it's certainly valuable for people to be able to track these things and not for political reasons, but for Nova Scotians to be able to perhaps restore their faith in this whole idea of giving some breaks to businesses that locate here. If they do, we know we get jobs from that and we get tax revenue from that, and that's all good for the province.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to say too much more. I do look forward to watching Law Amendments Committee on this bill to see if there will be presenters, whether it is from the municipality- and I'm sure they will be supportive of this; in fact I think they've championed this to the government. I'll be interested to hear more from them and from businesses that may be categorized as heavy industrial properties, and certainly from any other Nova Scotians who wish to come forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place to speak on Bill No. 59, which is an amendment to the Halifax Charter. As we know from the minister and the previous speaker, this is an amendment to the charter that will allow for the Halifax Regional Municipality to enter into a negotiation - which, as I understand, is already quite far along in the process - to give a particular rate of tax for the Irving shipyard, which I am very proud to say is in the constituency I represent.

What concerns me is not so much the intention of this bill, but what concerns me is the hypocrisy of the government with respect to bringing forward this. Mr. Speaker, I didn't call anybody a hypocrite, which I think is unparliamentary, but hypocrisy, to the best of my knowledge, is something that can be asserted - perhaps not? And the Clerk says "No." Speaking out of both sides of one's mouth, Mr. Speaker - not permitted either? Wow. Well this definitely is a case where the government members on one side of this Legislature, and specifically the Premier, took a very different position in Opposition than what this bill represents.

Let's be absolutely crystal clear about the position that the government took when they were in Opposition, and the Premier specifically took when he was in Opposition, with respect to tax breaks that saw reduced revenue from municipal government for heavy industrial operations like the Irving Oil refinery. The position he took is very clear, and it's on the record - unless all businesses had the same benefit and were treated in the same way, with the same regulatory specifications, then it was not fair, it was not proper and it was corporate welfare to large industry and large corporations. He campaigned not only during an election, but for a year and a half prior to an election, on the basis that he would end this practice in government.

Yet here we see before us today a bill that does precisely what the Premier campaigned against and said he stood opposed to and that he would put an end to, and there

is a name for that. There are words in the dictionary that will describe that particular activity, but parliamentary convention prohibits me from actually articulating those.

But, Mr. Speaker, we all know what those words are that one could use to describe that kind of behaviour, and that's precisely what I feel about the particular bill that's in front of us with respect to the Premier's breach of his campaign promises to the people of Nova Scotia. How the people of the province will feel about this I don't know, we will have an opportunity to see if any members come to our Law Amendments Committee. That is their opportunity to come and talk about this bill.

I'm not going to belabour the point. I want to say that we all recognize that throughout our municipality we have small-, medium-, and large-size businesses, and all of these enterprises bring benefits and sometimes challenges to our province. They provide employment opportunities and revenue through corporate tax and also the personal income tax that's generated by the jobs that are associated with these various enterprises. They also quite often are part of a much larger business supply chain that has a significant impact on the financial revenues of the province and the GDP of the province, and for that we are all grateful.

They sometimes have, perhaps, negative impacts in terms of the footprint on the environment or other issues that need to be dealt with, like occupational health and safety issues and labour relations issues. We need to always be mindful that our support for employment and investment doesn't come at any cost and that we have very strong regulations in place to protect our environment, to ensure that there are sustainable practices to the industries and our province, and that they are good employers and they have safe workplaces and these kinds of things.

We also, Mr. Speaker, need to be very mindful of what it means to be a good corporate citizen, if there is such a thing. There are people who would believe that there isn't such a thing as corporate citizenship, but in the lexicon of a market economy, corporations are legal entities, they have certain rights and obligations as legal entities, and there is an expectation of how a good corporate entity would behave in your province. Certainly paying their fair share of corporate taxes is one of the things that we would expect, just as we would expect that a Premier and a Party that campaigned to end corporate welfare did, in fact, mean that. Apparently that's not the case.

The Premier today in Question Period said, oh, this has nothing to do with me, corporate tax breaks - these will be municipal tax breaks. Well, give me a break, Mr. Speaker; we are all a little more sophisticated than that. We know that the enabling legislation to allow HRM to make the corporate tax breaks for Irving or any other large industrial enterprise resides here in this Chamber, which is why HRM has come to our provincial government and asked to make the necessary change. (Interruption)

Well, I hear the Minister of Energy over there chirping about how he hasn't breached any campaign promise he made, but I would remind him that we all looked at the Liberal platform. Quite clearly, the chapter on economic development talks about ending corporate welfare and refocusing the government's endeavours on economic development into the small business sector. This does anything but that. This is quite contrary to what they promised the people of the province that they were going to do. It's probably not something they want to be reminded of, that this is in fact the antithesis of what they promised to do, but this is something that is incumbent on the Opposition Parties to point out.

Again, there are many words that could describe it, none of which we are permitted to say, but there is a certain element here of saying one thing in Opposition - campaigning, promising the people of the province through an election campaign, raising people's hopes and expectations, and I think feeding into the kind of belief that people have, that you can run a province with small, medium, and large businesses without any incentives for large corporations. There are people who would think that that wasn't only a naïve commitment from the government but that when they made the commitment, they were well aware it was a commitment that couldn't be kept.

Well, the member for Halifax Chebucto is surprised. It was a commitment he intended to keep, and he's quite shocked now that his own government and his own Premier are introducing changes to allow for corporate tax breaks. He's speechless. Perhaps he will be getting up to talk on this bill, and he will tell us why the Premier and the members of the Executive Council have decided to change their minds about corporate welfare and corporate tax breaks, and why now, one year later, they've discovered something that they were totally unaware of and in the dark about a year ago. Also, their newfound admiration for the Irvings and their newfound attachment to the shipyard project. I remember at one time I think the Premier described it as just a parking lot on the harbour in the North End of Halifax.

It's hardly that, Mr. Speaker. This is a place where today there are 900 people working in our province, and that particular enterprise is being transformed into the most modern shipbuilding facility in North America. As I said, it's located in the heart of Halifax Needham, my constituency, and I'm very proud of the fact that there's a large industrial enterprise in my constituency that contributes to the economic health and well-being of this province, just as I'm proud of many of the small and medium-sized businesses that exist in my community.

I used to like to stand up when I was first elected to this Chamber and say that I was probably the only MLA who could say, we make ships and beer in my constituency. But we do. We make ships and beer in the north end of Halifax. It's a fabulous constituency to represent. We have many small- and medium-size businesses that make many, many interesting and unique products that contribute to the health and the well-being of this province. I'm very proud to say that I, and the Party I belong to, believe in providing a fair

and balanced approach to all the enterprises in our province that contribute to the economic health of the province.

So with those few remarks I will take my seat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I thought after listening to that fairy tale that I would stand up and provide a few remarks. To start with, and I would direct the members' attention back to Hansard at the time of the Imperial refinery deal. We stood up and said - in fact I said, and she can go back and check Hansard on this - that what should happen is that the municipality should be given the authority to decide whether they wished to do a property tax break, it should not be forced upon by the province.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, when we were in Opposition, I, and the Premier and many other members, stood up and spoke in favour of the legislation that was done with Liverpool which allowed Liverpool - sorry, the Regional Municipality of Queens the ability to make a decision on whether they wanted to do a property tax thing.

The same for Richmond, Mr. Speaker, we stood up repeatedly in this House and spoke about the fact that the province should not force property tax rebates to companies, but if they wanted to do that, if municipalities, the democratically elected people at the municipality who were responsible for property tax wanted to make those decisions, they should be given the authority to do that. That's exactly the commitment and the promise that this government is living up to with this request from the Halifax Regional Municipality.

We are following exactly what we said and exactly what I stood in this House and said we would do. Mr. Speaker, what we said we would do in the election is we would get rid of the large grants that the previous government termed as loans. The Premier and the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism have taken away that chequebook, have taken away those grants, have taken away the loans that the NDP used to call - have taken away the grants that the NDP used to call "loans," but were forgivable loans.

I often wondered, Mr. Speaker, how I would go to my bank and ask for a forgivable loan, just like the NDP used to hand out to big corporations in this province and this government got rid of them - we got rid of them just like we said we would.

Mr. Speaker, that member can stand up in this House and talk all she wants to about trying to make it seem like we were against exactly what the Halifax Regional Municipality has come and asked for. That is absolutely false because we stood in this House, and I am on the record, the Premier is on the record, and other members are on the

record, saying municipalities should be given the authority to make those decisions of their own accord, in their own Chambers - and that's what this legislation does.

Mr. Speaker, let me leave it at the fact that she stands up and says that we were against the ships project. Every one of the members in this Legislature, everyone from all three Parties, had the Ships Start Here stickers on their windows, we were all down there - almost all of us from all three Parties were down there. We unanimously passed the resolution in support of that project.

Mr. Speaker, what we opposed was handing out a grant and calling it a loan, trying to convince Nova Scotians that a grant was, in fact, a loan when it was not, it was handing out free money without any guarantees and that's what it is about. So we have done exactly what we said in Opposition on this file and the others, and I commend the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism for taking that lead and the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Relations for dealing with this issue with the municipality in exactly the way we said it should be dealt with before.

One last thing, Mr. Speaker. In Question Period that member stood up and said that we suddenly created a tax break for Imperial. No. In fact, the legislation the Minister of Municipal Affairs tabled and we passed in the Spring took away the NDP tax break that they had put in legislation and we allowed it to be set by assessments. Thank you very much.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: It's a pleasure to stand. I want to first begin by apologizing for anybody who just heard the Minister of Energy and what he professes is going on in the province today. I do apologize, because I have been in this Legislature for over 11 years and what a change in position, what a change in tune from the Liberal Government, from when they sat on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It is a change. Day after day they were on their feet not supporting any initiatives that supported businesses in this province, and it is interesting to hear them today. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid has the floor.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is interesting, as I sit here listening to some of the comments from the Minister of Energy and some of the chirping that we are hearing as the Opposition is standing and talking about the amendments to the Charter for Bill No. 59, because it wasn't that long ago - just over a year ago - that they were on this side of the House and they spoke against almost every investment that went towards businesses in this province.

We know the Premier, for example - and my Leader just tabled something that I don't think I need to table again but I will if I have to - after the previous government supported Imperial Oil and the refinery in Dartmouth-Eastern Passage, and the Premier said, "We think the premier should be looking at taxes all across the board by treating every business the same . . ." That is not what they are doing here, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that on one side of the House they say that they need to look at taxes for all businesses, that they should be treated equally. We know this amendment to Bill No. 59 will not do that.

We heard from the municipality in recent reports and media coverage that they have been negotiating with Irving for almost a year, I think, but we haven't heard anything from the government on their position on this. They are very quiet. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, as I read media, especially *The Chronicle Herald*, every day I read it and I see, tucked away, usually in the Business section, a little tiny clip on some investments that have been made. I think today I read one recent investment from the federal government, but the provincial government investing also.

But it is interesting, no name of the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, and no name of the Premier, because they want to pretend that they are not investing in businesses, because that is what they said when they were in Opposition, but they continue to invest in companies, which you have to, Mr. Speaker. To make this province competitive, to try to get some of our young people who have left our province, you need to support businesses in Nova Scotia: large businesses, industrial businesses, and small businesses.

We saw last week during Small Business Week, a huge \$30 million tax cut to large corporations, during Small Business Week, Mr. Speaker. Why didn't we see tax cuts for small businesses last week? We didn't. We were proud as a government to reduce the small business tax, every year we were in government, and they did not do the same thing now that they are the government. They want to give a \$30 million tax break to large corporations during Small Business Week. Timing says a lot. I think their timing on that one (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. There will be plenty of time to speak on the bill.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid has the floor.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I would agree, maybe we will see some of the members stand up and talk on this piece of legislation, on the amendments to the Charter, on Bill No. 59. We know that government needs to continue to support industry. We need to continue to support businesses so that we have a good environment to attract businesses, to have workers remain here in Nova Scotia. We see, far too often, our young people leaving the province to go elsewhere. It is so ironic, so ironic that for at least a year prior to the last

election, they stood on every occasion, criticising the government for doing almost the same thing they are doing here - pretty much.

You know the difference, Mr. Speaker? The previous government was open. They told Nova Scotians what was going on, what they were investing in. Here we don't hear anything. It was presenting the bill on a Friday, a small report later that night - I think it was allnovascotia.com that indicated there was more behind this amendment to the Charter than most people would think; of course on Friday, no Question Period until this week; at least this week we'll have some Question Period on Friday - of the real intention of this piece of legislation.

They should just be open and transparent. That's what they said when they were on this side of the House - that they would be open and transparent. Well, it shouldn't take the investigation of a reporter to really come out with the true reason why this change is happening. I appreciate the reporter who did the investigation. He's a good reporter. But the government wasn't transparent. I know the Minister of Service Nova Scotia wasn't here prior to the last election, but he ran on the commitments that the Premier and the Liberal Party brought forward to end corporate handouts to businesses.

Yet daily, weekly, I see in the paper, the government, taxpayers' money is still going toward supporting businesses in this province. We see this piece of legislation, an amendment to Bill No. 59 that will allow the municipality to enter into negotiations for property tax agreements that will support industries, talking about heavy industrial and business properties here in the Province of Nova Scotia.

So they say one thing on this side of the House - and I think I could probably go to Hansard and they said the same thing about other previous governments - but when they get to government they change their tune, they change their position. That's exactly what they've done on this piece of legislation. They said one thing over here and they're doing another thing there. So it will be interesting to see how they explain to Nova Scotians why they're changing their position.

They advocated that they would not support large corporate handouts for businesses in this province. Time and time again they said this. But with Bill No. 59, we know that this is not the case. I hear a lot of comments from across the way. I know the Minister of Energy can't get up on his feet again - he has already had his chance to speak an hour - but there are about 30 other, or 29 other, members over there.

I know the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is probably going to get up now. We've touched a nerve over there. He's going to try to explain how this is different than their stance when they were in Opposition. I want to apologize for Nova Scotians having to listen to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism in a few minutes, because he's going to try his hardest - he may yell, he may point over to the Opposition Party now, but the truth is the truth. In Opposition, the Liberal Party

said they would stop supporting businesses in this province with handouts and tax relief, yet Bill No. 59, amendments to the Halifax Charter, will do exactly that. It will allow the municipality to look at huge industrial businesses or industrial properties to try to negotiate a change in their property taxes.

With those few comments, it'll be interesting to see what government members have to say. It would be nice if those in Executive Council stand on their feet and try to explain why the change of position, all of a sudden now that they're in government, in the government ranks, that this is any different than what we've seen in prior governments, even when the Progressive Conservatives were in power. There's a need for government to interact with industrial businesses in our province, to make sure businesses have an opportunity to provide the jobs that they can to bring Nova Scotians back or to give those jobs to newly-graduated students.

We have to have a good environment here in the province for these young people to continue to live here and provide a living for themselves and their families. It will be interesting to see how we go forward on this. I look forward to the process moving forward to hear from anybody who has concerns with it to come to the Law Amendments Committee, and I look forward to those comments. Thank you.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The member for Sackville-Cobequid stated that the NDP supported small business by reducing the taxes on small business. Although the taxes were reduced, the NDP also reduced the threshold, capturing more taxes from small business. That is not in support of small business and I think the House needs to know the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It is not a point of order; it's a disagreement of facts.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted one minute to thank the Minister of Energy for being supportive of Charter changes for Halifax; Halifax should have the right to do their Charter. CBRM is looking for a Charter and I'm hoping that the Minister of Energy, the member for Dartmouth East, will also help support CBRM in their Charter drive, and I hope he can convince his colleagues that that's a good thing. Thank you very much.

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, after hearing the members - first the Interim Leader of the NDP and then the member for Sackville-Cobequid, I felt it important that Nova Scotians clearly understand what is taking place here and to provide a bit of a

history lesson which my colleague, the Minister of Energy, previously provided. We were members in Opposition when the previous government brought forward legislation which was going to provide the Imperial Oil refinery with a reduction in the amount of municipal taxes they were supposed to pay.

That deal was negotiated by the NDP Government and the refinery, not the municipality. Yet it was the municipality that was going to lose on those potential revenues from that deal. That's what happened there.

Now, the government prior to that, the Progressive Conservative Government was actually in power when the Municipality of the County of Richmond approached me and approached the government as to whether they could be given the authority to enter into an assessment deal with the proposed Bear Head LNG facility. This was a duly elected municipal council which came forward asking the provincial government to allow them the ability to have that type of a tax agreement.

That was supported by all members of the House because it was a municipality asking to be able to do this. That is the same situation that brought us Bill No. 59; a duly elected municipal council, mayor and councillors came forward to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and said, we would like you to give us the ability to be able to enter into a tax agreement with heavy industrial users within HRM. This is nothing near to what was done by the previous government.

We work closely with our municipal partners, we respect the fact that they have been duly elected the way we have been duly elected, and we respect the fact that they should be allowed to carry out the matters under their jurisdiction. Bill No. 59 will do exactly that for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

I want to address a few of the other comments that were made by the member for Sackville-Cobequid in that he was shocked that whenever there are investments made by the Government of Nova Scotia that ministers are not part of the press releases. That's what life was like under the previous government: it was a lawn sign, it was a slogan, it was a backdrop with whatever slogan of the day they could think of, it was photo ops, it was ribbon cutting; it was every slogan you could think of.

During the last campaign the Premier said he would put an end to that. The Premier clearly said he would take the chequebook away from Cabinet, from unelected members in the Premier's Office negotiating deals on behalf of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, and that is exactly what our government has done.

When we make investments now as a government, who's quoted in the press release? Nova Scotia Business Inc., Innovacorp - the independent, arm's-length agencies that we have entrusted to make investments on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia. That is why you do not see ministers being mentioned in those releases because it is our

independent, arm's-length agencies that are making these investments on behalf of Nova Scotians.

At no time did the Premier, the Minister of Energy, or any of the members that sat in Opposition suggest that the government should not support business. What we suggest is that we had to stop the practice of having four individuals within the Premier's Office going out and negotiating directly with companies and picking the winners and picking the losers and writing the blank cheques. We said there had to be transparency, so what did we do? The first bill that came in was to set up a new website that any Nova Scotian can go on now, as I speak, and see exactly where the Government of Nova Scotia has invested their money. That does not exist in any other province in Canada. That is transparency and that is what we promised the people of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, what upsets the member for Sackville-Cobequid, who is listening intently, is that we are doing exactly what we told the people of Nova Scotia we would do. Bill No. 59 is a request by the Halifax Regional Municipality to enter into a tax agreement with certain industrial users. I believe the mayor himself has spoken loud and clear that this should not be seen as a tax break. Instead, it is a tax agreement that is meant to create some certainty in the assessment in a property that is not typical of other properties.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, for working closely with the Halifax Regional Municipality. We see all our municipal partners as exactly that, they are partners, they are duly elected. We will continue to work with them. We will continue to do what is in their best interests and, at the same time, in doing that, it is not a secret deal; it is not being done within the Cabinet confines. The bill is being brought here in front of all Nova Scotians for them to see and the decisions from here forward, once the bill passes, will be done by the duly elected Halifax Regional Municipality. Merci.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the House for really energizing the afternoon. Thank you, it's a privilege. We will try and keep that level of energy so that we are attentive to the orders of the House.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues on both sides of the House have spoken to this subject matter. I just want to outline some of the comments. I'm not going to repeat my colleagues but I think it is important, really, to recognize the objectives of this piece of legislation. I want to clarify that this piece of legislation came from the Mayor and Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

I want to share with all members of this House the work that we have done over the last 10 months to engage our municipal leaders, both elected and senior officials, to build a bridge and relationships between the provincial government and municipal governments. Yesterday, last evening, I met with the Mayor and Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality, completing 54 of 54 municipalities in the province. The discussions we have partaken in have really laid the groundwork for an understanding of the objectives and needs of municipal governments from Yarmouth through to Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you from those discussions, it has been a valuable learning experience for me, not only to get to know my colleagues at the municipal government level but to work with them. I want to remind members of this House that the previous government did not pursue those types of relationships with our municipal leaders. As a matter of fact, the previous Premier was known to interfere in municipal government matters. I want to tell you here today that this Premier does not interfere in municipal government matters. The Premier has specifically asked me to build relationships with municipalities to ensure that we understand their needs and that as we move forward, we work together to identify and resolve those issues.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there remain outstanding issues but I can tell you that face-to-face meetings serve a much better purpose than a simple phone call. It is absolutely essential that we engage our municipal partners in their environment, on their grounds, to speak and hear and listen to their issues. That is the work that our department has done, that this government has done over the last 10 months.

Mr. Speaker, some of the comments that were made earlier, I want to touch base on some of them. My colleagues on both sides of the House have used the terms or words such as “investment” and “support for employment” and “support for employment and investment” and that’s exactly what this type of legislation is intended to do. We are allowing our municipal partners, in this case HRM, to make decisions in discussion with large industrial properties not as a tax grab but, as the mayor of HRM said yesterday publicly in the media, “to generate revenues for HRM,” and, as my colleagues have said in this House today in their comments, “to drive economic development.”

The Interim Leader of the NDP spoke specifically and identified the Irving shipyard as the most modern shipbuilding facility contributing to the economic development of our province. I want to thank the Interim Leader of the NDP for being so eloquent in describing the objectives of a charter agreement or an amendment to the charter that allows industrial properties to drive the economic development of this province.

The Premier has said on many occasions, it’s not for governments to drive economic development and create jobs, it is the responsibility of business. In these circumstances, HRM has come to us and asked for that opportunity, for enabling legislation for them to engage the corporate sectors within their community to drive economic development. The elected officials and the mayor of HRM are not going to

compromise the revenues of the municipality. They're challenged every day, as are 53 other municipalities across the province.

I know through the good work that they're doing and the discussions that our department and staff have had with their staff, those objectives will continue. Many have said, and the Ivany report has identified the need for Halifax to be successful; inherently, every other community in the Province of Nova Scotia will be successful. These are the objectives, this is the intent of the legislation, and it's our desire to work with HRM to ensure they reach those objectives.

The member for Sackville-Cobequid spoke about open and transparent practices. Although the Halifax Shipyard has been referenced here in this discussion today, this is about large industrial properties, and as we go forward I anticipate and I think my colleagues will recognize the tremendous opportunity that lies for this province and particularly with the support of HRM. Whether it's the Halifax Airport Authority or pending opportunities with Shell or BP, or any other industrial entity that wants to lay their footprint in Nova Scotia and within Halifax Regional Municipality, it's important that we as government support that.

The Premier has spoken to this on a number of occasions, how important it is that we as a provincial government support our municipal colleagues. That is the objective of this piece of legislation.

I want to assure the members of this House, because there has been some suggestion that some of my colleagues may not have supported this particular piece of legislation. There was tremendous work within our caucus to engage each and every caucus member in this discussion. On three occasions we engaged the caucus with representation from staff so they clearly understood the opportunities and the objectives that HRM was pursuing in the request for the amendment to the charter. I want to assure this House and the people of Nova Scotia that this caucus is unanimous in the support of this piece of legislation. (Applause)

I'll close with a couple of comments that my colleague for Inverness shared, and he spoke about the opportunity for investment and objectively asked sound questions about what we can expect and how we go forward. He asked if Nova Scotians would support this type of economic development, and I want to acknowledge my colleague for identifying this as an economic development opportunity. I would suggest to my colleague, given the reference to the Ivany report over the past number of weeks and months, Nova Scotians are looking for economic development, Mr. Speaker, and that Nova Scotians would support the ability of HRM to prosper recognizing that inherently the rest of Nova Scotia prospers.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague also spoke about the opportunities to recoup on the investment. The amendments to the charter will do just that, the ability for HRM to engage any industrial sector within their community for the purposes of creating jobs and creating

revenues is exactly what the Ivany report has identified and it's exactly the expectations of Nova Scotia from Yarmouth through the Valley through metro, western Nova Scotia and up through to Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments I will conclude my remarks and ask to close debate on Bill No. 59. I want to thank all members on both sides of the House for their input this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 59. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 24.

Bill No. 24 - Civil Service Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I'm pleased to rise today to move Bill No. 24, an Act to Amend Chapter 70 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Civil Service Act, for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about recognizing members of our military, more specifically our veterans. Men and women who have served and who have retired; some of them are folks who are young, who get into the military at an early age and are retiring at 45, 48, 50 years old still looking to be employed. This is about giving them a preference, if qualified, for employment opportunities within the Civil Service.

I want to be clear on this though, this is not about displacing workers in the Civil Service or not going through the bargaining unit as currently exists within government, within Civil Service jobs today. It is about only adding to opportunities for those who have served our country and in light of recent days and weeks past, we really have an idea and appreciation for how much members of our military do every day in this country and

abroad for us and this bill serves to benefit them, I guess if you want to use that word, or potentially benefit those that are qualified if they're looking to continue employment here in Nova Scotia and that would be our goal - as opportunities.

We see them already in jobs like commissionaires; there are a lot of former military personnel who work in those particular positions so this may be a little bit different. At the same time it does speak to the fact that many of these ladies and gentlemen that have served this country do desire to work for many more years following the retirement from their service, Mr. Speaker. That's really what this bill is about and I look forward to hearing from other members of this House and their thoughts as it moves forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today in support of the spirit of Bill No. 24 proposed by the honourable member for Hants West. This bill will update a section of the Act which was first introduced many years ago as a means to provide options to those who served as they returned home.

Today many of our service men and women who are returning from tours of duty or are serving our country in whatever manner are still young, capable individuals who are well trained and who understand the values of public service. While they may be finishing up their service in military uniform, many of these individuals have much to offer us in many other ways. Joining the Public Service is one way they can continue to serve the citizens of this country closer to home and from a different point of view.

The events of the past week have put a spotlight on our Canadian Forces. The tragedies have caused many of us to pause and truly reflect on what some of us take for granted. These men and women put their lives on the line for us in more ways than we may have expected, and this just weeks before Remembrance Day, a time when we honour all of the men and women who have served and who continue to serve us each and every single day of the year. It is with great gratitude, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support this bill.

The bill was first introduced many years ago as a means to honour our veterans who have a solid history of service by providing them with continued opportunities to serve. This bill will be updated and be reflected in this new legislation. I thank you for the opportunity to speak on Bill No. 24.

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

The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I want to thank the honourable minister for his comments and support, obviously, this bill moving forward. I move second reading of Bill No. 24.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 24. Would all those in favour of the motion, please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Would you please call Bill No. 60.

Bill No. 60 - The Smoke-free Places Act and Tobacco Access Act.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I move this bill for second reading. I am honoured to rise in the House to speak to my colleagues and Nova Scotians listening in about the importance of tobacco legislation I tabled last week, to further protect Nova Scotians from the health risks of smoking. Bill No. 60 will amend the Smoke-free Places Act, and the Tobacco Access Act to regulate e-cigarettes, water pipes and flavoured tobacco in Nova Scotia. This regulation is important to help protect Nova Scotians not only from the direct health risks associated with these products, but also the potential for these products to erode the smoke-free culture we have worked so hard to establish for the health and safety of our people, and especially young Nova Scotians.

It has been 12 years since the Smoke-free Places Act was passed by this legislature and with it amendments to the Tobacco Access Act. At that time we had a well-entrenched culture of smoking in Nova Scotia. You will recall the blue haze that filled the air at establishments such as restaurants, bars and many others. I certainly remember some of my early flights from Gander to Toronto to go to school - by the end of the flight, you couldn't see the front section of the plane. So those days are well behind us.

That smoke not only filled the air, it filled the lungs of smokers and non-smokers alike. This culture was putting Nova Scotians' health at risk. It needed to change and it did change, and now we have more of a non-smoking culture. Since the Smoke-free Places Act came into effect in 2002, Nova Scotians can now enjoy smoke-free, indoor public places such as bars, restaurants, movie theatres, and work places.

Through this legislation and changes to the Tobacco Access Act, through other actions in our Tobacco Control Strategy, and through a great deal of work by dedicated members like Smoke-free Nova Scotia, the Canadian Cancer Society, or Cancer Care Nova Scotia, the culture has changed in our province. We have moved toward a smoke-free culture that creates a healthier environment for our citizens. In 1999, for example, 30 per cent of young Nova Scotians age 15 to 19 smoked, and 29 per cent of adults smoked. By

2012 we brought that down to 11 per cent for youth and 15 per cent for adults. This success must continue.

We are determined to ensure a smoke-free culture for the sake of our population's health. But Mr. Speaker, there are new threats to that culture on the market. Flavoured tobacco, e-cigarettes, and water pipes are emerging products and practices that, if left unchecked, could reverse our good work in tobacco reduction.

Let me address a few points about each of these. E-cigarettes don't have the same effects on the lungs as regular cigarettes, so there's a tendency to see them as a healthier option. Many people say they've used e-cigarettes to quit regular smoking. I don't want to dispute the experience of individuals, and I applaud their efforts to quit smoking. It's a healthy decision to make, and I recognize that it's a challenge, too. However, Health Canada has not approved e-cigarettes as smoking cessation devices.

Mr. Speaker, I want my fellow members to understand why. Health Canada does not seek out products to approve as smoking cessation devices. It takes applications from manufacturers and considers them for approval. E-cigarette manufacturers are being bought up by tobacco companies, so it's no wonder that none of them have applied for Health Canada's approval of e-cigarettes as smoking cessation devices.

In addition, early research shows there are potential health risks from inhaling e-cigarette vapour. Recently, the American Heart Association classified e-cigarettes as a cessation product of last resort. Perhaps most importantly, e-cigarettes look a lot like regular cigarettes. Their marketing glamorizes smoking, and research shows they lure young people to move from e-cigarettes to regular cigarettes.

E-cigarettes have the potential to make smoking popular again, reversing the smoke-free culture we've worked so hard to establish in our province. Therefore, Bill No. 60 will amend the Smoke-free Places Act and the Tobacco Access Act to essentially treat e-cigarettes in the same fashion as regular cigarettes. They will not be used in indoor public places, they will not be sold to minors, they will not be sold in pharmacies or other places where tobacco is prohibited, and they will not be displayed or advertised in retail settings.

This bill will also address the public use of water pipes, which are traditionally known as hookahs. We are addressing them for many of the same reasons as e-cigarettes. They are a potential health risk with the vapour that is inhaled. Even in some countries where this tradition originated, there are now warnings of health risks.

In Nova Scotia, a number of establishments have opened in the past couple of years where water pipe smoking is a main feature. They are typically frequented by young people. So again, we have a product with potential health risks that popularizes the act of smoking, particularly among young Nova Scotians. In order to protect Nova Scotians'

health by preserving our smoke-free culture, this bill will ban water pipe smoking from indoor public places, just like cigarettes and e-cigarettes.

Flavoured tobacco is a gateway to regular cigarette smoking, especially for young people. Mr. Speaker, this is intuitive. When tobacco comes in traditional candy flavours like bubble gum, chocolate, and cherry, you know it's going to attract kids. There is research to back this up. Preventing young Nova Scotians from getting addicted to cigarettes is a priority. While changes are coming to toughen the federal Tobacco Act regarding flavoured tobacco, they still won't go far enough.

Through this bill, we are amending our provincial Tobacco Access Act to ban the sale of flavoured tobacco in Nova Scotia. We plan to exempt menthol because it has been on the market for decades and it's not marketed to youth. Our concern is with the explosion of candy-flavoured tobacco that is clearly being marketed to young people in an effort to get a whole new generation addicted to smoking, addicted to nicotine. Other jurisdictions have also chosen to exempt menthol and to focus on candy flavours that lure youth to try smoking.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize these amendments will have implications for some businesses, although most will not have large-scale changes to make. To help them adjust, there will be a six-month period between passage of this bill and proclamation when the changes take effect. I want to thank businesses around the province for their excellent track record of compliance with our tobacco legislation to date. I have every confidence that they will comply with these amendments as well.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the rationale for these changes is not quite as straightforward as the tobacco legislation we established 12 years ago. Back then we were only dealing with traditional tobacco products, cigarettes and cigars. We know that first- and second-hand smoke harms our health so we banned smoking in indoor public places and changed how tobacco was sold with an emphasis on point-of-sale marketing.

With e-cigarettes, water pipes, and to a certain extent flavoured tobacco, the problem is more complex. It's not just about the direct health risks; these products threaten to erode the healthy smoke-free culture we've created to make it easier for Nova Scotians to quit smoking or not even start in the first place. While the problem is complex, Mr. Speaker, the rationale for regulating these products is simple. We must protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians by continuing to promote a smoke-free culture in this province.

We've been carefully reviewing the research and advice, and keenly following the discussions and actions across Canada, the U.S., and other countries, to address these products. I'd like to thank our staff for their many hours of research and thoughtful deliberation before making recommendations on the best approach to take. The path we've

chosen for Nova Scotia is reasonable and comprehensive; it is in line with recommendations made by the World Health Organization.

While we have all three of these new and emerging trends being banned in different jurisdictions both in Canada and the United States, we are actually leading the way for other Canadian provinces to take a comprehensive approach to reducing the harms of tobacco. I was proud to table this progressive legislation, Mr. Speaker, and I will be prouder still when it is passed and proclaimed to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians from the harms of smoking.

Thank you and with that, I look forward to further debate on Bill No. 60.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: It is indeed my pleasure to stand today and speak for a few moments around Bill No. 60. We need to know, and I think to take our jobs very seriously, that it's important that as a Legislature and as government - we do everything that we can to promote health and wellness for Nova Scotians. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that this bill does that.

While there is still much unknown about e-cigarettes, what we do know is that we do not want them in hands of our children or of our young people. We do not want young people to get in the habit of smoking e-cigarettes only to move on to real cigarettes after, sort of the gateway smoking that we probably used to see in our areas in high school when there were always the kids that would go outside and have a smoke. I know there are a number of them around here, I'm just looking around.

So now kids are vaping. You know, there have been a number of occasions where I've gone to public events and find it a little disconcerting to see someone vaping in a middle of an event with children around and you kind of look at it and it's like, wow, is that allowed or should that not be allowed? I can wholeheartedly agree with this government and wholeheartedly agree with the Canadian Cancer Society that it should not be allowed.

As the minister alluded to, this is a measure the Canadian Cancer Society is very supportive of and of course brought forward to all caucuses. Considering how much success they had with their own anti-smoking campaigns, of course it's welcome news that they are also a part of this announcement.

The minister also talked about the experience we have had over the last 12 years. I can say that in 12 years, to think that we are even at this point is absolutely phenomenal because it was only 12 years ago that a PC Government at the time banned the power walls, talked about smoking in public places and banned it. Oh my goodness, who would think all these businesses would have completely ceased to exist, that bars would never be able to

sell another drink, that gas stations and other sellers of these products would never be able to keep their doors open. Here we are 12 years later and that is exactly the opposite.

At a matter of fact, I can say that I do enjoy stopping in at some of these locations now and appreciate the fact that I don't have to be bombarded with second-hand smoke or the power walls that once used to be in front of us.

At that time, this province had a terrible record for smoking, and I can say that the government of that day along with its partners, along with his support with some opposition at the time, was able to bring our province from worst to first. The smoking cessation program that was brought forward was one that worked because it worked with a whole bunch of partners and was able to truly address the situation that was before us.

Youth smoking rates are always a concern and while they have declined in the last decade, it is important that we continue to do everything that we can to continue that trend. I am pleased that this government will issue an information booklet to vendors and convenience store operators so that the transition is smooth and that all individuals are aware of what this legislation will mean in practice.

This is where I talk about the avalanche of emails that we have been receiving in our constituency offices. I don't recall even having that kind of interest or response when the first actions came in place. There have been a number of emails - I am sure that all members have received - about smoke shops or about vape shops, about e-juice and all these things. We are learning all kinds of new words when it comes to this.

The fact is there are a number of businesses that have set themselves up over the last couple of years because of the lack of clarity around what these products are. They knew they were working in a bit of a vacuum. They knew that there were regulations around it, but looking at the experience of a number of governments over the last 12 years, I think they probably could have seen the writing on the wall, that these products would eventually get scooped up in the anti-smoking legislation that this province is so proud of.

I will not apologize for supporting this bill. I know when this completes, and it will be sent over to the Law Amendments Committee, we will be hearing from a number of those businesses that have set themselves up. All I can say to them is, well, you kind of knew this was going to happen. If this is going to keep my children from smoking, or my grandchildren from smoking, then great because I come from a family that had smoking parents and I think I talked about it on the floor of this Legislature a number of times. I can probably say by the time I was 15 years old and off driving on my own that driving the family car on a Sunday afternoon meant I smoked two packs of smokes. It means I had second-hand smoke through my lungs. Mum and Dad have absolutely apologized for that because the information that they had was different than the information that we have today.

It was widely accepted that smoking was the thing to do and look through it. I can also say because of that, I have asthma today. I have to have a regular regime of puffers. Is it because of that second-hand smoke, or not? I don't know. I know it probably didn't do me any good, didn't do any good for my brothers, but then again we were running around in the backseat of the car because we didn't have car seats or seatbelts either.

Because of our experiences, we should learn from those experiences, to make sure that our children or the children that we love should not be experiencing the same things. That's why this makes sense today, to take this out of the hands of those who will maybe let it happen, because they are glamourized - they have the flavours that our children would find interesting. I mean, a bubble gum vaporizer - doesn't that sound cool? It's bubble gum, Mom and Dad, why can't I have that? When they're old enough to make their own decisions, they'll probably be grabbing that as well.

This is the right thing to do for the health of Nova Scotians, but many are worried that cessation methods are being threatened. That's sort of the secondary thing. We have the business issue of a number of vape shops, I guess is what we call them, and then we have the people who say, well, I use it as a cessation tool.

What I'm going to call on the government and the minister to do - I think it's important that the government make it clear that this legislation does not intend to limit the options that people use to help them quit smoking. I know the minister was very clear on that as well. There are not a lot of those companies that have come forward and said, listen, this is a smoking cessation tool. They've had the opportunity to register themselves through the federal government. But if it works for them, I'd hate to take it away from them, if this is what gets them to a smoke-free lifestyle. So just for the government to make that a little more clear, that it's still going to be available, it just will be hiding behind that power wall - or that lack of power wall, I guess you would call it today - in the businesses across Nova Scotia.

It's also important to inform people that the goal is to keep these products out of the hands of all young people under the age of 19. Again, while we fully support this piece of legislation, we still have some questions that are unanswered, and look forward to hearing from presenters at the Law Amendments Committee. With those few words, I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward and look forward to supporting it through the process.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to stand to talk a little bit about this piece of legislation. I think we all would agree, as the former speaker - interestingly enough, the former Minister of Health - the Minister of Health and Wellness across the way, and of course myself as former minister - we all recognize the impact that smoking has on individuals, but as ministers, more importantly, on the health care sector and the

health care services needed for people after they become ill. Many, many of those illnesses are related directly to smoking tobacco and smoking over the years.

It's interesting. This isn't the first time we've seen legislation that will try to regulate the industry for flavoured tobacco. For the House and for those listening, I just want to quickly remind Nova Scotians - and Canadians, for that matter - that the federal government actually brought legislation in to try to deal with this. On July 5, 2010, they brought legislation in that would effectively - and I won't quote, because I wrote it off my cellphone, but the news release that they released at the time said, effective today, the sale of cigarettes, little cigars, and blunt wraps that contain specific additives, most flavoured agents, is prohibited.

So the federal government tried to bring some prohibition to the flavoured cigarillos, flavoured tobacco, flavoured cigars back in 2010. Part of the problem with what they brought forward to the changes to - I believe it was the Tobacco Act at the time - was that they weren't specific enough. They didn't put parameters around what they were trying to do that would allow the ban of those products.

I think the biggest mistake they made at the time is that in legislation they had the weight of the cigarette or the amount of tobacco, 1.4 grams or something like that, and what happened is - we have to all agree that the tobacco industry are wealthy. They're big corporations, and they were able to go around that. They changed the size of the tobacco, and we continued to see flavoured cigarillos and tobacco and cigars being sold across the country and around North America.

So with this legislation I hope - and I guess time will tell if there are enough parameters around the intention here of the government to try to restrict the availability of flavoured tobacco and e-liquids, or e-cigarettes and the vapour into law that we won't see the same thing happen. I hope that's not the case, but I guess time will tell.

It's important that we try to protect the young people, Mr. Speaker, because we have a good track record here in Nova Scotia from previous governments that introduced changes to the smoking rules in our province for example, what's available. I know the previous speaker mentioned him being part of a government that brought in the ban of the power walls that used to be in front of cash registers and that.

I know the former member for Dartmouth East, Joan Massey, who was elected in 2003 when I first got elected, was adamant and a strong advocate to get that done and I think at that time, Mr. Speaker, we had a minority government and there was give and take on support for legislation and budgets and that was the result of Joan Massey bringing forward that initiative that we see, I think, a significant change in the rules and the law that we have here in the province dealing with the sale of tobacco and the visibility that we have.

Of course now we know that they have to be behind closed cabinets other than those specific stores that sell just tobacco, so you see next to the Sobeys and the Superstores and that, I think they're called Smoke Shops or smoke house or something like that. For the record I don't smoke, Mr. Speaker, I don't go into those little things but the requirement is that they have to have an exterior door, and you can't get into the facility, those buildings, from the main shopping area.

It's my understanding from the briefing that we had that the new vapour shops we see opening up - there is a new one in my community - that if they restrict access, so those individuals over 19, they can remain open, they can showcase their products as long as there is going to be criteria, from my understanding, made up of what they can and cannot sell in that establishment. They can't all of a sudden start selling food and soft drinks and things corner stores do, Mr. Speaker. I know the corner stores will be able to continue to sell e-cigarettes if they want, but they have to be behind closed cabinets just like they do for tobacco products.

There is still an opportunity, I think, for businesses to exist in our community, to provide Nova Scotians with e-cigarettes. In my understanding it's still an early product, there is not a lot of information on it, there is conflicting information on it, I think we all have received, been inundated really, with emails around concerns, not only consumers but those who run these vapour shops - I believe that's the term they use, Mr. Speaker. They will be able to continue to operate as long as they conform to rules and I hope that the government comes out quickly with what requirements for them are so they can live up to maintaining, following the rules that will be changed.

It's good to hear that they'll give them, I think it was six months to make sure that they're following those changes in rules because we know in the past, for example, Mr. Speaker, I was in this Legislature when the decision at the time was to ban smoking in bars and in establishments, and it wasn't a complete ban. There was a requirement or ability for those businesses to build smoking rooms within the bar, and we heard from many who spent tens of thousands of dollars doing that, making sure they had the proper ventilation and then some of the concerns around that that came about for having these contained rooms within our restaurants and bars.

I was in a few establishments where they had the door to the contained room opened, Mr. Speaker, which kind of beat the reason for having a closed contained room, but also the safety of the workers who worked in some of the bars and restaurants - they were still exposed to second-hand smoke because they had to go into these rooms. But I found at that time that the government really quickly changed their mind and then said, no, there is no smoking inside establishments, which we supported, but there wasn't a lot of time for those businesses. They went out and paid a lot of money to have the renovations done in these establishments. So I am glad to see that there will be some time for these businesses to conform to whatever rules we have and the outlines we have.

One of the things that caught my eye on the changes that we are seeing - and I think the minister mentioned this in some of his comments - was that to a certain extent flavoured tobacco will be banned. The thing that isn't banned, Mr. Speaker, is menthol cigarettes. I am a bit perplexed by that not being banned. During my briefing with the department I asked, why would you not ban menthol cigarettes? That is a type of flavoured tobacco. There was a bit of a pause and I was told - and maybe the minister could elaborate on this a little bit when he closes debate - it is a long-standing product.

I'm thinking that is fine but it is still a flavoured tobacco. My subsequent questions were, well, is menthol defined in the legislation? What is it? Is it an agent, is it a chemical? The other question would be, can you flavour menthol, even though that sounds crazy, but can you have strawberry menthol tobacco or cigarettes? I am a bit perplexed on why we are allowing - I started off by saying that the federal government had done this back in 2010 and there was room for the tobacco industry to drive a truck right through it and circumvent the rules, can that happen with this? That's my concern. Will the tobacco industry find a way to continue to market flavoured cigarettes? I mean cigarettes don't taste too good, Mr. Speaker, but they have a menthol cigarette.

I am concerned with that and I hope the minister hears our concern and maybe gives a reason why menthol cigarettes are not covered under this legislation. I mean why would you need menthol cigarettes if you are going to ban flavoured tobacco because you are worried about young people potentially starting - and not even young people but older people. I know, listening to parents and grandparents and in-laws that the menthol cigarettes have been around for a long time, I would agree with that, but they were marketed towards women so they could follow the men who were smoking - and I won't say who in my family, especially the women who actually told me and admitted to me that they smoked menthol cigarettes, I couldn't believe it.

I'm concerned with that, why are we allowing that product to continue to be sold? My fear is that the tobacco industry will be creative, as they were back in 2010, when all they did was change the amount of tobacco in the flavoured cigars and cigarillos and they were allowed to continue to sell them. I hope the minister can give some clarity on that and why we are not banning menthol cigarettes. In my mind that is a flavoured tobacco.

I think we have come a long way in the last few decades. We have some great numbers and the province should be proud of the initiatives that were brought forward, Mr. Speaker, to try to reduce the amount of residents who smoke. We know there is a huge impact on the health of an individual who chooses to smoke. I want to see those numbers continue to fall, especially with our young people. I know that since the introduction of e-cigarettes and flavoured tobacco like cigarillos and those products, there is a heightened awareness for our young people to try these tobacco products.

The other concerning area I have is the flavoured chew, like Skol - is it tobacco too? I don't even know. (Interruptions) I have just recently been aware that many young people

are using that and I think there needs to be a great campaign to try to continue to make sure that our young people realize the risks of using tobacco products.

With those few comments, I look forward to this moving through the process. I hope the minister will explain why they've opted to exempt menthol cigarettes from being banned, and I look forward to hearing what Nova Scotians have to say about this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Opposition on the other side and to the minister for all the good comments they've given today on Bill No. 60. It's encouraging to hear the amount of support that we have in the Legislature here today, and I would just like to reflect on a few things that I, myself, personally think should be noted.

First off, I'd like to point out that I did ask a question, and I don't think I would have been refused, but technically, if I wanted to stand here today and give my talk and have an e-cigarette at the same time, I believe I could do it. That's an astounding thing to think about right now, that I could stand here in the Legislature with an e-cigarette in my hand, or my friends behind me with one in their hands. From what I can understand from asking the Speaker initially - I think we might get a little ruling on that tomorrow - but I would just like to point that out, that that's where we're going today.

Why we're going in that direction is for a couple of different reasons. I think the biggest reason is the ingenuity that we're seeing with the tobacco industry itself. This conversation probably wouldn't have been going on a few years ago, because the inception of e-cigarettes at that point in time wasn't even here. And that begs us to ask, what's next? I'm getting a barrage of emails on this, the same as everybody else is. I know there are a lot of fears and concerns out there from people of what we're doing and stopping doing. To me, there has been one word that has been used many times when the minister got up and spoke. I heard it a few times on the other side. That word was "culture."

There's only one way that you can fight the tobacco industry, and that's by changing the culture. This regulation is just a step. I'm sure in a few years' time we're going to see other things that are going to be out there that we're going to have to challenge.

Let's not forget one thing. I know it's to stop adults, but the main focus that I'd like to speak on is our youth. They're the ones who are really impacted by these new, innovative ways that we're seeing the tobacco industry getting those people that are going to be their future clients on the hook. That's the flavoured tobacco, the e-cigarettes, and these new, innovative things do.

We're here as legislators, more than anything, to protect our youth and our young people. I think that's more of what this legislation does. The department that it comes out of is called Health and Wellness, and I think it leans more on the side of wellness. A lot of times in our health industry we're faced with fighting the results of inadequate legislation and inadequate protection of our people - \$4 billion a year, our health care system. I think that anything that we do up front such as this to stop our health care system from eroding is money well spent and legislation that should be well taken into effect.

To me, anything that also stops the normalization of smoking, anything at all, is again, a big step in that area. I guess I should put the disclaimer out there - and I'm probably going to get into a little trouble at home about it, because not only am I a proclaimed non-smoker that used to be a smoker, but my wife is in the same world and is actually in the position right now - I think the fourth time of her life - fighting to quit that problem that we have in our society. I've seen her use e-cigarettes, and if anybody thinks that that's a way to quit smoking, I would say I would rather see people use things like hypnotism. I'd rather see them use things like patches and Nicorette gum.

I can remember one time - there are not many husbands who would pack their wife into a car with two other people, and all three of them had pillows - the other two were men, by the way - and they would head off to a session in the middle of the evening, and I am sitting there looking. I just put my wife in a car with a pillow and two other men and what was she going to do? She was going to a hypnotism session on quitting smoking. I thought that would get your attention.

But those are just the things that go on in people's lives to quit this and these new e-cigarettes, these new flavoured things that we see out there are threats, not only to our children but to our health care system.

We talked a little bit about the establishment and the hookah bars and the institutions that we have. I know there are existing establishments in the metro area, I have asked - actually I was going to go have a look at them myself - but from what I understand one of them might get me in trouble with my wife if I did go there. But there are only a couple of them and that isn't their primary source of income. That is not what keeps them going, it is just an add-on. I do not see where banning this is going to be in any way, shape or form a threat to current entrepreneurs and establishments that we have. There is a six-month opportunity for them to transition into this and I am very confident this will not affect them.

Let's not forget that hookah tobacco also does often have tobacco in it, the shisha - I think that is how you pronounce it - and there is a lot of emerging evidence that there are herbal mixtures and flavours in there and humid tints, I believe they are called, that are risks and there is emerging evidence that shows that they are more of a risk.

I think the entry level is also something that we need to understand. We didn't touch an awful lot on statistics that have shown how prevalent the use of flavoured tobacco is with youth and how easy it is. We heard the member from across the floor speak about menthol and I would just like to touch on that. I don't think I'm going to stand here and defend the fact that we do have menthol but I am going to stand here and maybe explain that, traditionally, menthol cigarettes have been part of our culture and part of our society for a long time. I don't think you see them marketed, packaged and sold the same way you see the new emerging flavours. I think the menthol cigarettes are more something my grandfather used to smoke, and although we are not banning smoking all together, that kind of understanding and the research that has gone into that to leave them there, I can live with that today, myself.

I am not going to touch on all the different aspects of the bill. I think we all know this is about changing the definition and prohibiting the use of cigarettes and water pipes indoors. This doesn't stop the use of these e-cigarettes in your home. It doesn't stop the opportunity for people, if they feel that it is truly a smoking-cessation opportunity, to use it in their home. All it does is it stops them from being shown out front where they are sold, the same as every other tobacco product that we have.

I am just going to go back to my opening comments before I close. I don't want to go back over a lot of things but our health issue: we have a \$4 billion health problem in this province right now. I have to say that this is probably one of the - I know Bill No. 1 went through and that was an important step that our government made in providing better health care. I must commend our minister for showing another piece of legislation that is again going to help with the future of health care in this province.

That industry has been very creative. I think we always have to be on guard for that and we have to continually find ways to counteract what is going to be the next challenge for us in that area. Our children are our future and stopping that cultural shift - I don't know how many times culture was used - but changing that cultural shift and keeping that move that we have to keep the reduction ongoing and that cultural need to have people realize that it is not the best thing for them in the world is the most important thing that we as government can do. With those few words I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I rise today not as the Minister of Community Services or as the MLA for Dartmouth North but I rise here today as the daughter of a man that I loved dearly, a man who, when diagnosed with lung cancer on September 4, 1996, explained to me why he started smoking in the first place.

Born in 1937 he started smoking in 1947 at the age of 10 years old, and when I asked him why he would do that at that age, he very clearly told me because that is what my

friends did, that's what was normal at the time, that's what I saw when I went to the cinema and I saw the movies on Saturday afternoon, all of my matinee idols were smoking.

So on September 4, 1996, I was told that my father had lung cancer. He was operated on Thanksgiving weekend, the following month, and he died on my Christmas vacation, that Christmas vacation, three months after his diagnosis, two days after his 59th birthday. What that normalization of smoking did for that family left a daughter without the best friend she ever had. It left a grandson without his papa, and it left his wife of 37 years without her soul mate.

So anything that any government can bring forth in the Legislature, in any Legislature in Canada, that prohibits, bans, discourages, and supports the de-normalization of smoking is something that must be done. We have a responsibility as Legislatures. We have a responsibility as parents, and we have a responsibility to ensure that the health care system, which so desperately is affected by smoking in our society, is sustainable and supported.

With that I'll take my place and I am quite sure that my father is looking down, very proud today, thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I want to thank, especially, the two former Ministers of Health, for support to this bill, recognizing however that there are some issues that need clarification and very strong direction within them. I also want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for their thoughtful comments today and I will definitely, during third reading, after going to Law Amendments Committee to see where we are on this piece of legislation, make some further remarks around the bill and there is definitely a commitment to make sure that all Nova Scotians, and especially our vendors, know the way forward in terms of Bill No. 60.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill No. 60.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 60. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise here in the 62nd Legislature in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne delivered by our Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable J.J. Grant. This is my second Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Those members who were present last year when I gave my inaugural reply will remember that I spoke in the context of the overwhelming sense of history and province-building that I felt entering Province House for the first time. Those feelings have not subsided - each and every day I feel honoured to take this corner seat and follow in the footsteps of the members before me who represented the great citizens of Kings South.

Mr. Speaker, during my first year as an MLA, it has been my experience, as it was during the last campaign, to hear from citizens, stories about one of the fabled former members of the House, an MLA for Kings South, Harry How. Undoubtedly other members of the House share similar experiences in facing the legends of former MLAs. Thanks to the helpful assistance of our Legislative Library staff, I was able to read several of Harry How's numerous Replies to the Speech from the Throne. MLA Harry How certainly had no shortage of words to describe, through many anecdotes and digressions, the hopes and dreams and great accomplishments of the citizens of Kings South.

Though Harry served at a different time in a different context and a different Party, what I've heard most about Harry speaks to what citizens clearly value in their MLA: approachability, accessibility, an ear for the issues, and an ability to work within our Public Service and with other levels of government in solving problems. I've used these qualities as guideposts in my first year as MLA.

Madam Speaker, we often talk about our political ridings in urban or rural terms, with urban or rural challenges. The riding of Kings South is actually both. The bustling commercial centre of New Minas and the university town of Wolfville give Kings South an urban feel with urban challenges, particularly in the area of infrastructure renewal and small business development and, in the case of Acadia University, positioning itself as a centre of innovation.

At the same time, the riding is also a major centre for agriculture and agribusiness, including the rapidly emerging wine industry, which I will speak about a bit later in my remarks. Kings South is home to two First Nation communities, the Annapolis Valley First Nation in Cambridge in the west end of the riding, and the Glooscap First Nation near the Hants border in the eastern end of the riding. Just last month, I was delighted to participate in the first-ever powwow held at Acadia University with Glooscap Chief Sid Peters. Organized by two Mi'kmaq students, Mercedes Peters and Benjamin MacDonald, this successful event brought together our community, the university, and celebrated Mi'kmaq culture.

During this first year in office, I've been welcomed in the community halls in Lockhartville, Melanson, Gaspereau, Black River, White Rock, Coldbrook, North Alton, and in my home community of Wolfville, and it is in these community halls and churches that I have seen first-hand the result of citizens working together to sustain our communities. These experiences act as a compass for me when I come to Province House. The citizens of Kings South have equipped me with their hopes and dreams for this province and their faith that, collectively, we will make decisions in the best interests of Nova Scotians.

Madam Speaker, in Kings South, no issue tested the faith in our government more than the fracking debate. The citizens of Kings South overwhelmingly oppose hydraulic fracturing in our province. I know this from the many emails that I have received, the many conversations that I have had on the streets and at the farmers' markets, and along the rural roads of my riding, and also from what I witnessed at the public consultation held by Professor Wheeler in Windsor. I have no doubt that the decision on fracking was a difficult decision for our government. After all, leadership is entirely about weighing risk and reward. As the Minister of Energy has so clearly stated, we do not have a social licence to proceed at this time; more research and education is required.

Whether citizens were pro fracking or against it, the decision is one that challenges Nova Scotians as the Ivany report did, to turn our collective minds and energy towards decisions that will create sustainable communities in our province. This is a challenge that I discuss with the citizens of Kings South whenever and wherever I can.

As outlined so clearly in the Ivany report, businesses, all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, social enterprises and our universities must deliberate in making our decisions that on their own may seem to be specific to their organization, but when linked together, offered forward-thinking initiatives and these begin to take on a sum greater than their parts. In the whole, they become game-changing decisions.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture's decision in August to establish a new Nova Scotia wine development board is a case in point. This board has assembled leaders in the wine industry to provide advice to our government on necessary legislation,

regulation and policy to grow the wine industry. This is the type of shared commitment or game changer contemplated in the Ivany report.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia has the potential of being the Washington State of Canada's wine industry. Why Washington State? Well, Nova Scotia shares almost the same latitude as Washington State and similar climatic conditions. Just 30 years ago, there were only a handful of wineries in Washington State; today, there are over 800 wineries in that state. It is an estimated \$8 billion industry employing 4,000 people. It is the fastest-growing economic sector in the State of Washington. Their wine industry took off as a result of forward-thinking leaders, entrepreneurs, researchers and policy specialists getting together to establish standards, as we are doing with Tidal Bay, progressive regulations which we are beginning to examine; investments in research and innovation, as Acadia is doing with its wine institute; and by providing a supportive government context to allow the industry sector to grow.

Last Fall, early in the life of our new government, the Premier made a visit to Kings South. He and I met with people involved in the various aspects of the wine industry. The Premier's visit was followed by a succession of visits by the Minister of Agriculture to Kings South to meet with winery owners and fruit growers, and here's the interesting thing. As we see our wineries beginning to grab headlines and awards for the superior products they are producing, we are also seeing a significant growth in the visitors wanting to experience the wineries first-hand.

Madam Speaker, three years ago the wine tour industry in our province was just getting started. I am happy to report here today that the Wolfville Magic Winery Bus exhibited another year of strong growth, expanding their weekends of service and attracting more than 4,700 visitors to four wineries in Kings South, up from 3,400 last year. This growth was supported by a small marketing grant of \$8,000 to the Wolfville Business Development Corporation from the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. This is a good example of where small investments in sector development can help grow our economy.

Madam Speaker, coming up in November is the fourth annual Devour! Food Film Festival that will take place in Wolfville. It will feature five days of celebrating cinema, food and wine culture in what's described in the literature as Nova Scotia's culinary epicenter.

Last year Devour! attracted 4,000 visitors, and box office sales tripled. So colleagues, please mark November 12th to November 16th on your calendars to come to Nova Scotia's culinary epicenter for five days of great films and delicious food.

The Magic Winery Bus and the Devour! Food Film Festival are terrific examples of the concept of unlocking the potential of a sector. Unlocking the potential of our resources is also the approach the Minister of Agriculture is taking with our orchards. Earlier this

year, in an orchard in Kings County, the Premier, along with the Minister of Agriculture, announced that our government is investing \$2.2 million over six years in the orchard renewal program. This is in partnership with the apple growers, who will invest \$6.9 million in this initiative.

Throughout the Valley, we're seeing older orchards replaced with newer, higher-valued varieties that have higher export value around the world. Again, our government is using small, strategic investments in sectors, not individual businesses, to allow our small businesses to grow our economy and create jobs. These innovative decisions in the wine and orchard industry, involving partnerships between industry, government, and our research institutions, is the model that the Ivany report talks about as a game changer.

The agricultural sector and agri-businesses of Annapolis Valley can and should become the fastest-growing sector of our economy in Nova Scotia. You need no further evidence of the innovation momentum in the agricultural industry. If you need this, look no further than the six finalists in the 2014 Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Innovation Award, worth \$30,000. The Minister of Agriculture and I attended the celebration and award of that earlier this month. I applaud the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce for recognizing and promoting the innovation that is happening in our agricultural sector.

One of the great assets in Kings South in the innovation chain is Acadia University, the alma mater of my seatmate, Ben Jessome. Oh, sorry - the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville. Thank you. Also the member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

I have heard our Premier speak many times of involving our universities as strategic partners in innovation. That was the vision in August, when the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education brought to Wolfville an announcement of a three-year, \$150,000 commitment to the newly-opened Acadia Entrepreneurship LaunchBox. Our government's three-year commitment to the LaunchBox is a direct investment in innovation.

It is also an investment in our students, specifically those students who want to advance their ideas for small business and social enterprise within an interdisciplinary team of entrepreneurs, advisers, businesses, business faculty, community, and financial partners. Again, this model of investment - collaborating with partners and leveraging investments in knowledge like the Acadia Entrepreneurship LaunchBox, like our strategic investments in the wine industry and with our fruit growers - is what the Ivany report refers to as a game changer where we invest in business and, "Whose business models centre on growth, innovation, research and development, and external trade."

As I said earlier, the riding of Kings South can be characterized as both rural and urban in nature. The one common thread is a very active small- and medium-sized business

community. This is where the future of innovation, economic growth and employment lies. Last April, our Premier came to our credit union in New Minas to announce that our government would be implementing the election promise of increasing the provincial guarantee on term loans from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. The total available for the program lending was also increased from \$25 million to \$50 million. This invaluable program can extend its research into communities which may not have accessed it in the past. As well, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has also honoured our promise to small business owners that our tax and regulatory system will be reviewed.

In my first Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I spoke about meeting with business owners in Coldbrook, New Minas, and throughout the riding, and hearing the common complaint about governments thwarting their growth and success because of the burden of regulatory requirements. Minister Whalen visited Kings South earlier this year to hear first-hand from business owners in my riding. Business owners view the many rules, costly applications, and filings from different levels of government as a time-consuming and expensive barrier to their business success. The announcement by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board in February for this review is a really important aspect of promoting private sector growth and economic development.

I have focused my remarks to this point on the strategic economic decisions that have helped the riding of Kings South in this past year. While economic growth in Kings South occupies a great deal of my thinking, in point of fact, the issues that come through the door of my constituency office on a day-to-day basis often relate to our most vulnerable citizens. That is why my constituency assistant and I have put a great deal of effort in the last year into establishing a strong network of community service contacts whose expertise we draw upon daily for the many problems citizens face.

It is one thing to develop and offer useful government assistance programs as our government does, but accessing these programs can still be difficult for some citizens. Helping people navigate government assistance programs, or finding affordable housing, or resolving tenancy issues or facilitating for emergency food or shelter, or working with Nova Scotia Power on billing issues, or finding a physician - these are all day-to-day issues that confront our most vulnerable citizens for which I have found that the MLA office can play a vital role.

That is why I was very pleased that the Minister of Community Services could spend a day with me, one Saturday earlier this summer, visiting some of our key community service organizations and seeing first-hand the great work that is being done by these community-based organizations. I could speak positively about so many of these vital organizations like the Wolfville Food Bank, the Canadian Mental Health Association, The Portal youth centre, the Valley Community Learning Association and PeopleWorx, but in the interest of time, I will focus on one extraordinary organization in Kings South and that is L'Arche Homefires.

The L'Arche program, inspired and founded by Jean Vanier began in Wolfville in 1981 and provides a home, programs and support networks for people with intellectual disabilities. Today it is managed by one of the hardest working citizens in Kings South, Ingrid Blais. I say hardest working because in addition to overseeing all of the L'Arche programming, Ingrid is leading a campaign to create a new L'Arche home in the Anglican Parish Hall on Main Street in Wolfville so they can expand their programming.

Following a visit to L'Arche with the Minister of Community Services, I was also pleased that the Premier was able to spend some time at L'Arche to see how much support L'Arche has in our community for their great work. I want to thank the Minister of Community Services for asking me to make the announcement just two weeks ago at L'Arche, announcing the province's \$200,000 contribution to their \$2.4 million fundraising target for their new facility.

Their renovation project of the old parish hall not only will bring together their three day-programs into one building, it will make all programs accessible to the members of the L'Arche community who have physical disabilities.

Madam Speaker, the warmth in the room during the announcement was inspirational. L'Arche is really leading our collective goal of the transformation of services for people with disabilities. I should note that our government's contribution put the fundraising effort past the \$2 million mark, which leveraged another \$150,000 from an anonymous foundation. This was truly a great day for the individuals and families in Kings South who are part of the extended L'Arche community.

Madam Speaker, when we think about what is involved in keeping communities alive, it is not about just growing a sustainable economy, though this is essential, it is also about having a place, organizations, and services that contribute to the social well-being of our communities. It necessitates that as a government with finite resources we consider not only what investment to make in public services but how.

For example the renovation of the Wolfville School is viewed as an absolutely essential investment because of the steady increase in population that Wolfville is experiencing. I am pleased, and I think this is important, that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Annapolis Valley School Board are working to ensure that the renovation and planning is being driven to reflect the specific values and priorities of the Wolfville and area community.

Madam Speaker, in Kings South there is no finer example of a shared vision in a key public investment than Kings Transit. In June at the Kings Transit office in New Minas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Service Nova Scotia announced an investment of \$375,000 in Kings Transit and \$113,000 in Kings point-to-point transit. For more than 30 years Kings Transit has provided fixed route public transportation to link our Valley communities. It is a model of cooperation between governments, the model of governance

and shared investments strongly encouraged by the Ivany report. I am proud to note that we are the first government in over 20 years to provide funding to rural transportation.

Madam Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes talking about an issue of importance to the citizens of Kings South and an issue I raised in my inaugural Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne last year. In 2010 the Nova Scotia Land Review Committee, chaired by Rick Williams, released a report on how to preserve our farmlands. The Williams report was informed by consultation with farmers, developers, and recreation land users and it came at a time when there were a number of land-use conflicts arising on farmlands adjacent to our municipalities. This issue is referred to as urban sprawl.

Madam Speaker, rural sprawl is costing our municipalities much more than can be afforded and it needs to be considered if we are promoting the growth of small- and medium-sized businesses in Nova Scotia. There must be some long-term thinking put into protecting the land in Nova Scotia, that is capable of producing food. To protect our farm land we need to be encouraging the growth of compact, sustainable communities instead of rural sprawl. In Kings County, the No Farms No Food organization has been instrumental in our province to form a farmland trust and I commend them for this forward-looking initiative.

I have looked at this issue of land use from two angles, as an architect and through chairing two municipal planning advisory committees. Conflicts in land use for the siting of landfills, new development, agricultural uses, gravel pits, wind turbines, these conflicts abound in our province. I feel it is time to consider a land use framework for our province. With land use being the responsibility of our 54 municipalities, I believe there is a role for the province to lay out a framework which would reduce the burden on already stretched municipalities, and it would also reduce the regulatory risk for businesses. This business risk increases business costs

Madam Speaker, I now would like to say a few words about seniors. In particular I want to offer my utmost support for those working in the department with the Minister of Seniors, right now evaluating and updating our Continuing Care Strategy for seniors. This is an extremely important initiative of our government and the Continuing Care Strategy is an indication to our seniors that we will not forget them.

Madam Speaker, I hope, through this speech, you have recognized that Kings South is one of the growth centres of our province. I believe the interesting combination of rural and urban lifestyles, the centres of education at Acadia University and neighbouring Kingstec, and the home of the burgeoning wine industry in our province positions Kings South as a place where people want to move and to raise their families.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks today with a remarkable story, worthy of what we value most about Nova Scotia. Every day I am inspired by the

initiatives shown by citizens and communities in Kings South. There is no finer example than from the community of Black River. In 2005, this small rural community began fundraising to upgrade an old schoolhouse they were using as a community-gathering space that they were at risk of losing because of the state of the building. The citizens of Black River worked for six years to raise the funds and renovate the building as a community centre.

In March 2011, days after opening the newly-renovated building and before they could even get insurance in place, the building burned to the ground because of a faulty electrical connection to a composting toilet. It would have been very easy for that community to walk away from the ashes and get on with their lives. They did not. The fundraising restarted, the volunteers reactivated, the local businesses re-contributed and the wider community of Kings South supported their efforts by attending fundraising breakfasts and teas and dinners and events.

Impressively, in September this year the community celebrated the opening of a new community hall on the foundation of the old building. More impressively, Madam Speaker, is that they have opened those doors without any debt. If anyone questions the resilience of rural communities in Nova Scotia, please visit Black River Community Hall in Kings South.

Madam Speaker, the resolve of deeply committed citizens to what is necessary to strengthen their communities provides me with great motivation each and every day. I look forward to working with all MLAs on the complex, overwhelming and demanding issues that lie ahead for this Assembly. Finally, I would like to thank the citizens of Kings South for the faith and honour they have placed in me to represent their hopes and concerns in our Legislature. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, I'm quite pleased to rise this evening and speak for a little bit. It is a great honour and privilege to rise in my place on behalf of my constituents of Pictou West to deliver my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is always humbling to stand here and address you and other members of the Legislature where so many have stood since 1819.

Madam Speaker, it is almost a year later since I first stood in this House to speak and I can tell you that I am still just as nervous every time I get up. The last time I gave my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I saved what I considered the best for the last. I ended with thanking my two beautiful children Chloe and Jack but this time I want to thank them first. I want to thank them for being them, for being stronger than I have ever seen them before. In all honesty, in this past year they have transitioned into our new lifestyle better than I have in many ways. They are certainly more resilient than I am. Their unconditional love is all I need.

Madam Speaker, I know that this is all any of us actually needs, especially when struggling with adversities within this career that we are all in. We all know that, at the end of the day, what is most important are our loved ones. (Applause) This past year has been difficult in the sense that I've had to accept not always being there for Chloe and Jack, like I have been in the past. I never missed a dentist appointment, a soccer game - I never missed anything until I got involved in politics.

I've had to learn how to share them, in a sense, and to allow others to help me out and take some responsibility in helping Chloe and Jack with homework and driving them to their extracurricular activities - that has actually changed as of last Friday, because my daughter ended up getting her licence as we were speaking about that bill. So now I have a whole new worry. I would love to give a big shout-out to my two amazing kids Chloe and Jack and I want to thank, as well, my ex-husband, the father of Chloe and Jack. He is the best father ever and continues to be a dear friend of mine, and is always very supportive of me, and I just want to give a shout-out to him as well.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to thank my constituents for giving me this opportunity of a lifetime to represent them. Their unwavering support and encouragement this past year propel me to work harder and harder each day and to do the very best I can on their behalf. To my indispensable constituency assistant, Michelle Livingston, also known this past year as my therapist without a licence, I will forever be in debt to her for the amazing job she does and the friendship she provides. I am sure there are days when we communicate via subliminal messaging; we are now at the point where we finish each other's sentences. I want to thank Michelle for her loyalty and support, as well as the love and support I receive from her family.

Madam Speaker, my dad is one of the last few gentlemen I know - I guess there are a few (Laughter) - and the one person I know I can always trust. Although he can be absolutely my harshest critic, I know I will always get the truth and he will always love me. I thank him from the bottom of my heart for all that he does for me. My two brothers make me smile by just saying their names, Todd and Frankie. They are two of the funniest, funniest people I know and are always there to make me laugh and ensure I don't take life too seriously.

I wish to thank all the wonderful employees who work here in this House who are continuously very supportive and helpful. A couple of weeks ago, employee Paige Black stopped by at 2:00 a.m. to bring many of us an early morning coffee and greetings. She's a real gem and I miss seeing her in the House. I also wish to thank my colleagues and the PC caucus staff for their support in helping me to navigate through my first year in politics - they are most patient and understanding.

And, Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect a little on those MLAs who have endured some challenges the past number of months. I wish to acknowledge their strength and bravery, for it has provided much inspiration for myself,

and I know that all members of this House have been sending their well wishes and positive vibes to them for a healthy recovery. Of course our wonderful MLA for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, who has continued to show his jovial personality and sense of humour even through the adversity he is facing remains to be a shining light for all of us in this caucus. As our Leader said, I too want to personally give a shout-out to the member from Northside -Westmount. He has been most supportive to me during this past year, but I want to remind him that his many acts of kindness and support to the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg does not go unnoticed, and that I know how hard this transition has been for him as well.

Madam Speaker, a lot of people stop and ask me what it is like to be the only female MLA for the Opposition. People are curious as to why I want to get involved at this level when there is a lot of negativity surrounding politicians. Women only represent about 25 per cent of politicians, and it's not that I believe we bring anything better to the table, but we certainly bring something different and of equal value. (Applause)

The participation and representation of females in decision making are key factors to creating a balanced economy and environment. Women should play an active role in the process of democracy to ensure all gender equality, justice, and respect for human rights is served fairly. I believe there has been a visible increase of female politicians since the millennium, but we still have a long way to go to promote and encourage women to become more involved.

Globally there has been strong emphasis directed to increasing the female participation in politics towards social evolution. We can do better to create a positive action plan to increase the capacity of women to participate in politics and I do hope that I will play a role, today and in the future, to see this change come to fruition. I believe last week in one of my statements, I stated that we are no longer domestic engineers; we are much more than just that.

In Nova Scotia it took us until 1960 to elect the first female MLA, Gladys Porter. I smile with pride every time I walk into this Chamber and see her picture hanging on the wall behind me, but I still find it hard to believe that females are under-represented in municipal, provincial, and federal politics, considering we have had the right to vote since 1918 here in Nova Scotia and we make up more than half of the population.

We need to have faith over fear with our abilities to engage ourselves in the political realm and in other male-dominant vocations. We are worthy. Women tend to be under-represented in many non-traditional roles such as construction, lawyers, accountants, and the list goes on. Innately women are gatherers, men are hunters. Women tend to think and operate more from the limbic part of the brain allowing us more often than enough to be the voice of reason.

Women face numerous obstacles in achieving representation in governance and with the fear of being judged on many levels, they shy away from entering the political arena. Confidence is low and a statement my mom would always say to me is, never underestimate your currency, Karla. So to all the females out there, to anyone female who is listening, who is feeling unworthy or hiding from the fear of judgment I say to you, never, never underestimate your currency.

Madam Speaker, as I truly stated I am proud to stand here and represent Pictou West. I am proud to stand in this historic building and work to make Pictou West better, to make Nova Scotia better, but I am scared. I am scared for my children. Like all parents I want what is best for Chloe and Jack. I want them to be healthy, warm, and secure; I want them to receive a quality education; I want them to be happy and find success in whatever path they choose.

Madam Speaker, I am scared for the future of Nova Scotia. I am scared because right now in 2014 we have the highest debt in the history of Nova Scotia. The debt in Nova Scotia has reached \$14.8 billion. Madam Speaker, the government must find a way to deal with this debt and that includes all of us. We cannot in good conscience burden our children with this. Like all parents, the health of my children is my main priority.

Many people know that I live on Water Street in Pictou, right on the Pictou Harbour. I live basically one street up from the *Ship Hector*, and I've had a personally internal struggle for a very, very long time, Madam Speaker, because my home is the first place that is hit with pollution from the pulp mill.

Now Madam Speaker, I have sworn to always protect my children from harm whenever possible and yet I continue to live right downtown off Water Street. My son has woken me countless nights with a sore throat, watery burning eyes, and a nauseous feeling from the ominous smell from the mill; yet my daughter sleeps across the hall from him and is not bothered. I am hyper-aware of that but I'm also very hyper-aware and concerned for my son.

Madam Speaker, this past summer the Minister and Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness spent the night in Pictou. I believe this was quite an eye-opening experience for the ministers. What most of the members of this House don't understand is that people of Pictou County endure this type of pollution daily. I go out daily to my car and wipe off the black film of dust, but that is not the dust that I'm actually that worried about. It is more the Particulate Matter 2.5 that we can't see or smell that is getting into our lungs and potentially causing cancer. I have no idea what future effects the mill's pollution will have on my children, and I live with that uncertainty and guilt every single day. I feel trapped, like a lot of people in Pictou do.

This pulp mill must be cleaned up. The pulp mill must be cleaned up sooner rather than later. Since the mill's inception, I have had direct and indirect family members work there, and they still do, but I believe we have a moral commitment to protect health.

This is an issue that has divided a community and families. It is a complex issue. The pulp mill provides good employment with direct and indirect jobs. It keeps families together when otherwise one parent may be forced to seek employment out west. Families stay together, and money gets spent directly in our communities and beyond, benefiting small businesses. But at the end of the day, the pulp mill has not been in compliance with environmental regulations for a very long time. This is an issue that is threatening to divide the community, pitting those who worry about health and environment against those who gain employment from the mill.

For the record, I would like to read a column that was published in *The Pictou Advocate*, expressing my views on the issue:

"It is no secret that the Northern pulp mill needs to be cleaned up and people need jobs. As the MLA for Pictou West, I was elected to represent the views of my constituents. Since my election in October of last year I have heard loud and clear: Pictou County deserves clean air, Northern Pulp must be cleaned up, and residents should not have to choose between a healthy environment and jobs. Pulp mills and communities coexist in many areas including nearby St. (sic) John, New Brunswick. It is wrong that people feel they must 'pick a side'. We all want the same thing: a healthy, environmentally friendly thriving Pictou County. We need the direct and indirect jobs the Mill provides. However, this must be balanced with environmentally responsible practices. If we don't have our health, nothing else matters.

I have repeatedly stated that all political parties have played a role in the history of the pulp mill. All political parties have supported the mill financially. We cannot turn back the clock and do things differently, what we can do is move forward from here. We can pressure the Liberal government to enforce existing emission standards, and demand more immediate action from the pulp mill today. Our air quality and health must be a priority while maintaining jobs. This can be accomplished.

Understandably, emotions surrounding this issue are high. There are constituents who fear for their health, businesses who worry about their future, workers dependent on the mill wondering if their jobs are at risk and pensioners worried about their investments. It is my responsibility to represent all of my constituents which can be

challenging when the issue is so devisive (sic). This is what I think needs to be done:

- The pulp mill must be cleaned up immediately.
- Jobs must be protected while the pulp mill is cleaned up.
- The government must set emission standards to ensure citizens are safe. These laws must be enforced.
- There must be additional air quality monitoring sites with publically released results.
- The government cannot afford to look away any longer. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the health of Pictou County residents is not being compromised so the mill can continue operating.

I believe we are capable of accomplishing each of those steps. I believe we can see the economic benefits from the mill for many years to come if we do what is right and act now. It is the responsibility of the government and the mill owners to make this happen. Transparency is essential to building trust between the community and the pulp mill. There are those who believe putting up with the emissions coming from the pulp mill is the reality of living in Pictou County. I believe it is time for Pictou County to have a new reality and a new vision for the future. The 1967 vision of the pulp mill is no longer relevant. We need a new vision, reflective of our times, a vision where the pulp mill coexists with the surrounding communities with minimal environmental impact. It has been accomplished in other areas and it can be accomplished here too.”

This is why I have, with the endorsement of my colleagues, introduced Bill No. 2, the Clean Air Act. This bill will ensure stricter regulations and will force businesses to have efficient air monitoring stations with results made public. I believe the bill is one in which it states Nova Scotia is open for business, but we mean business when it comes to protecting people’s basic rights to clean air.

We talk about our various resources in Nova Scotia. But I believe our number one sustainable resources should be clean air, water, and environment and the rest will follow gracefully behind.

I know we can work together. I take comfort in knowing that the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party spoke highly of the PC Party when in government for doing the right thing by passing a Private Member’s Bill when the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party was in Opposition. The PC Party did the right thing because they know when you know better, you do better.

Like all parents, I want my children to have a quality education. They currently attend small schools in the Town of Pictou. How important are small schools to the fabric of our communities? There are several small schools in Pictou West. Each of these schools provides good solid education to the students and I am so proud of them and the teachers and the staff at these little schools. These little schools keep the children close to their homes in the elementary grades before letting them go off a bit farther to one of the two high schools in Pictou West.

We have heard from other members how important these little schools are to their communities and we have heard that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development recognizes the importance of these little schools in their communities and we heard how the minister has stepped in and provided assistance when some of these little schools were facing closure.

There is a lovely, vibrant community in Pictou West called River John, and the community spirit in River John is alive and well. Just this past summer at River John Days, I was out for a community breakfast and had to wait 40 minutes in a line that extended well down the street just to get near the building where the breakfast was being held. River John School is located in the downtown of River John and is struggling to stay open. The school has suffered some neglect the last few years, but with an amazing group of volunteers that have banded together they have formed the Save Our School Committee and began brainstorming on ways to keep the school and the students in the community.

I sincerely hope that River John School becomes one of the first successful hub model schools in Nova Scotia with the help, encouragement, and support of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

All children in Nova Scotia must have equal opportunities and receive equal assistance when needed. In Pictou County, we are fortunate to have the Roots For Youth. This is a place where homeless youth can receive guidance, support, a meal, a shower, laundry services, maybe just a chat, anything they need to stay in school to get an education, to stay on the right path to a future as a contributing member of society. Sometimes, youth need a place to turn in Pictou County and it is the Roots For Youth.

Last year they applied to the government for \$60,000 to keep the facility opened and to continue its work. They were turned down. Roots For Youth was denied \$60,000, but a similar facility in Yarmouth received \$360,000 - once a year for four years. Words fail me. How does one group get \$360,000 a year for four years? That amounts to \$1.4 million, yet the youth in Pictou County get zero.

My daughter one day told me during a debate we were having that if something means something to you, you will find a way, and if it doesn't, mum, you will find an excuse. There's absolutely no excuse in denying Roots For Youth in Pictou County this funding unless, of course, one feels the youth in one part of Nova Scotia are far more

important than youth elsewhere in Nova Scotia. I just don't know what else to say about that.

Like all parents, I want my children to be able to find jobs right here in Nova Scotia, good paying jobs. If they choose to leave this province when they get older it should be a choice, not a necessity. Every day I learn of more and more friends and acquaintances who are heading out West for work. The scary thing is I have realized that there are people my age heading out West. People with small children at home are without a parent for several weeks at a time or longer. Then I hear of people of my father's generation heading out West to work.

I'm learning of young people 19 and 20 years old heading out West for work. This is three generations of people leaving Nova Scotia at once for work. In fact I am also learning and know of friends who are retired who had hoped to stay in Nova Scotia to be with their children and their grandchildren but have also decided to head West to be with their family.

The way I see it, we are even losing people who are retired, those who are financially sound, paying their taxes, buying their groceries, investing in their communities and who certainly could afford to stay but have no family left to stay for, so they pack up and head West, too.

Madam Speaker, there are 9,000 fewer jobs now than there were at this time last year in Nova Scotia. How does this government plan to develop an immigration strategy to bring people to Nova Scotia when it can't even keep Nova Scotians in Nova Scotia? The government must have a job creation plan - 9,000 fewer jobs, three generations of people out West working and businesses are closing every other week.

We must make Nova Scotia more business friendly, we must eliminate the red tape, we must lower business tax, lower power rates to lower the cost of running a business. We must open Nova Scotia for business. Businesses in Nova Scotia are choking in red tape and regulations.

This is just not a Pictou West issue, this is a rural Nova Scotia issue. In fact it is also becoming an urban reality as well. Madam Speaker, we must make it easier for entrepreneurs and small business operators to function in Nova Scotia. This must happen if we are to turn our economy around. We must promote rural Nova Scotia and all of Nova Scotia. We are entirely too regulated.

I have a business owner who called me for help when an inspector stepped in and told him he could no longer do what he had been doing for four decades. Gordon Fraser of Millbrook runs a small farm business in Pictou West. He employs a couple of people and has been providing for his family in the farming industry all his life. Gordon has clients all

over rural Nova Scotia. Gordon has been told he must stop slaughtering turkeys for his clients because he is not provincially or federally inspected or certified.

Now Gordon doesn't sell turkeys. He provides a service to others who raise turkeys. I have personally dropped into Gordon's operation randomly and I can tell you that it is as clean as a whistle. It is okay for untrained people to slaughter their own turkeys in their backyard without any expertise, without any specialized tools, without a building, yet was told he can no longer provide this service.

Gordon and his clients are rightfully outraged. He has the support of the local agricultural community and the 4-H clubs. My office has received an unprecedented number of calls supporting Gordon and his business. The thing is that these are not only people who use Gordon's services but people who are sick and tired of being regulated to death.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotians are tired of regulations and high taxes and high power rates and everything else that says we are closed for business. Times are changing, people no longer want to be told what is good for them. People don't want to be regulated by marketing boards.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask that the members of the House please keep their volume levels down.

The honourable member for Pictou West has the floor.

MS. MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. People don't want to be regulated by marketing boards, people want choice, a choice to choose what food they want and from where. The Buy Local movement is sweeping the province and government must change some of these regulations and allow it to take hold. Rural Nova Scotia is surviving the only way it can, by supporting one another. Farmer markets with local produce, local meat and preserves, everything you can think of. Nova Scotians want a choice, we want to know where our food comes from and we want to know what we are feeding our families. Madam Speaker, if you ate today, you can thank a farmer.

It was my pleasure to travel to Antigonish and meet with some of the students from St. Francis Xavier University and speak again to Jonathan Williams, the executive director for Students Nova Scotia. The member also from the NDP, the member for Sackville-Cobequid also joined me and we also heard it loud and clear that these students are extremely frustrated with this current government's action to withdraw the Graduate Retention Rebate program. They deserve better and I hope Johnathan and his colleagues, along with current students enrolled at our many universities, have an opportunity to have their voices heard so that we may provide a more sustainable university system in Nova Scotia for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, a Nova Scotian who earns \$50,000 paid the second-highest personal income tax in Canada; Nova Scotia has the highest sales tax in the country; Nova Scotia has the second-highest corporate income taxes paid on \$400,000 in Canada; it shares the country's highest general corporate tax rate of 16 per cent; and has the lowest small business threshold in Canada at \$350,000.

If you were a new immigrant to Canada, would you settle in Nova Scotia, and if you were a new graduate, would you stay in Nova Scotia? These statistics say we are closed for business, and it is up to the government to change this. Government must turn things around, we all must help to change things around. We have a blueprint, we have goals set out in the Ivany report. Now government must implement regulation to spark new life into Nova Scotia, draw Nova Scotians home again, entice new immigrants to settle here, recognize the importance and reinvigorate rural life. Help, not hinder small and medium-size businesses, encourage and provide support and hope.

Nova Scotia is a beautiful province and Pictou West, with its beaches and parks is right in the heart of it. We have the potential to be a thriving province, but it will take real leadership to get this province on the right path.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to extend a big thank you to all the Pictou County constituents. Over the last few weeks I've attended many fundraising events from the Terry Fox Run to the Breast Cancer Run for the Cure, to a Walk for Parkinson's right down to a local fundraiser, or a few actually for individuals beating cancer. When I add up all the money raised just in the past few weeks for these various causes I have calculated close to over \$200,000 was raised. And these are very difficult economic times, but the people of Pictou West and actually the people of all of Nova Scotia, I'm always amazed at how much money is raised at these fundraisers, so a big shout-out to all the kind hearts in Nova Scotia for helping out those who are in situations that are less fortunate at the moment.

Madam Speaker, Pictou County is moving forward. My colleagues for Pictou Centre and Pictou East and I have just attended two weeks ago the 2020, it's actually called Pictou County 2020, and it was a night that provided much opportunity to engage all walks of life, for their voices and ideas to be heard, to have a sense of belonging, and to know that we all truly want to see Pictou County move forward - and we all know Pictou County can move forward.

We just entertained a number of cruise ships in the Pictou area, in the Town of Pictou, and I'm very proud to say that this is just a catalyst of many more that will be coming in the future.

I believe that's all I have to say, I thank everyone for listening, and I ask everyone to be kind and be well. Thank you. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. Tomorrow, being Wednesday, will be Opposition Day, so I will call upon the House Leader for the Progressive Conservative caucus to give us the business for tomorrow.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, tomorrow I'll be calling three bills as we have a little more time to debate some bills, so Bill Nos. 2, 53, and 55.

I now move that the House do rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet on October 29th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. (Interruptions)

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: With the new rules we're advised that it should actually be 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. whereas the late debate will take place at 5:30 to 6:00 p.m., but the actual House will just sit from 1:00 to 5:30 p.m. - the advice that we were given to say out loud.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The corrected motion is that the House now rise to meet again on October 29th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 5:55 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 475**

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 Footprints in Windsor, the only recovery centre of its kind in Eastern Canada, is now the first ReWalk certified training centre in Canada; and

Whereas Footprints recently obtained a ReWalk exoskeleton robotic suit that allows people living with paralysis to stand and walk in a controlled manner that reproduces natural leg movements; and

Whereas this is the first exoskeleton on the market that has been approved by the FDA for personal home use, after first completing a training program at the certified centre;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Footprints for being the first of their kind in helping individuals with paralysis get back on their feet.

RESOLUTION NO. 476

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 in 2014 the Rotary Club of Windsor celebrated a milestone in the history of Camp Mockingee, their 65th Anniversary Campfire; and

Whereas in the summer of '49, the Rotary Club took an empty field and 40 acres of land bordering a lake, transforming it into Camp Mockingee, a place for groups to use; and

Whereas there have been many changes from the original eight buildings, playing fields and lakefront, the camp is now a year round facility with a fully equipped kitchen, heated dormitories, washrooms with showers, along with six of the pioneer cabins for summer use;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Rotary Club of Windsor for 65 years of commitment to campers of all ages.