



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**Second Session**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2014**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:</b>	
Elections Nova Scotia - Anl. Rept. (04/01/13 - 03/31/14), The Speaker .....	1618
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:</b>	
No. 64, Limitation of Actions Act, Hon. L. Diab .....	1618
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:</b>	
Ackroyd, Rod: River Hebert - Relocation, Hon. J. Baillie .....	1619
Health & Wellness - Health Serv.: Rural N.S. - Erosion, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	1619
Sutherland, Dale: MacIntosh Case - Publication Ban, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1619
Cirillo, Cpl. Nathan/Vincent, WO Patrice: RCL Br. 19 (N. Sydney) - Vigil, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1620

Ross Farm Museum Learning Ctr., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1620
Lun. Doc Fest - Inaugural Event, Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	1621
Energy Poverty, Mr. L. Harrison .....	1621
Burke, John - Knighthood (France), Ms. L. Zann.....	1621
Chebucto Head Rd.: HRM/Prov. Repair - Solution, Mr. B. Maguire .....	1622
Jones, Scott - Rev. Darlene Young Commun. Hero Award, Hon. P. Dunn.....	1622
Firewood Access, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	1623
Firewood: Purchasers/Suppliers - Connect, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	1623
Lumberjack AXExperience - <i>Rick Mercer Report</i> , Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1623
Halloween Fest. (S. Woodside) - Organizers, Ms. J. Treen.....	1624
Pictou Co. Trails Assoc. - Short Line Trail Expansion, Ms. K. MacFarlane .....	1624
Commun. Markets - Role, Ms. P. Eyking.....	1624
Bourguignon, Derrick - Protect, Mr. T. Houston.....	1625
W. Northfield Elem. Sch.: Mobius Award - Honourable Mention, Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	1625
Blair, Don - Fundraising Vols. Hon. J. Baillie .....	1625
Shubenacadie Canal: Land Claim - Settlement, Mr. B. Horne .....	1626
Howe, Gordie - Well Wishes, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1626
Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie - Lobster Resource, Mr. L. Hines .....	1627
Churches/Communities: Vols. - Recognize, Mr. L. Harrison .....	1627
HRM Charter - Amendment, Mr. J. Stroink .....	1627
New Glasgow Acad. - Pictou Co. Dist. Girls Soccer, Hon. P. Dunn.....	1628
Alzheimer's - Treatment, Mr. B. Jessome.....	1628

Kids First - Funding, Mr. T. Houston.....	1628
Clare-Digby Mink Industry, Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	1629
MacLellan, Ken/Eileanan Brèagh Vineyards: Achievement - Recognize, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1629
Sampson, Steve - Commun. Dedication, Mr. I. Rankin.....	1630
Digby Wharf Rat Rally (2014), Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	1630
Cheema Aquatic Club, Mr. B. Horne.....	1631
Nichols, Ruth Cormier: Death of - Tribute, Mr. T. Farrell.....	1631
Guysborough Mem. Hosp. - Renovation, Mr. L. Hines.....	1631
Spryfield & Dist. Bus. Commn./Landscapers - Planters, Mr. B. Maguire.....	1632
Cancer Patients: Drug Care/Hospital Care - Funding, Ms. P. Eyking.....	1632
HOUSE RECESSED AT 1:40 P.M.....	1633
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 2:00 P.M.....	1633
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:</b>	
No. 197, Prem.: Onshore Gas Dev. - Support, Hon. J. Baillie.....	1633
No. 198, Prem.: C.B. Layoffs - Assistance, Hon. M. MacDonald.....	1635
No. 199, Prem.: Energy East Pipeline Proj. - Support Confirm, Hon. J. Baillie.....	1637
No. 200, Prem. - Onshore Gas Ban: Alberta Prem. - Explanation, Hon. J. Baillie.....	1638
No. 201, Fin. & Treasury Bd.: Fin. Hardship Prog. - Fee Remove, Hon. M. MacDonald.....	1639
No. 202, ERDT - Internet Access: Provision - Status, Mr. C. Porter.....	1640
No. 203, Fish. & Aquaculture: Fishers - Meet, Mr. J. Lohr.....	1641
No. 204, Health & Wellness: Mental Health & Addictions Strategy - Actions, Hon. David Wilson.....	1642
No. 205, Health & Wellness: Continuing Care Strategy - PC FOI Request, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1643
No. 206, Com. Serv.: Fin. Hardship Prog. - Transparency, Hon. M. MacDonald.....	1644

No. 207, DIS - Hum. Res. Comm.: Lib. Members - Min. Communications, Mr. T. Houston .....	1644
No. 208, Energy: Election Platform - Electricity Rates, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1645
No. 209, Health & Wellness: Roseway Hosp. - Nursing Shortage, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	1646
No. 210, Prem.: Ivany Rept. - Liberal Party Concerns, Ms. K. MacFarlane .....	1647
No. 211, Health & Wellness - Nursing Strategy: Bill No. 1 - Impact, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1648
No. 212, Health & Wellness: "Better Care for Seniors" - Snow Removal, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1649
No. 213, Agric.: Cabbage Costs - Effects, Mr. J. Lohr .....	1650
No. 214, Energy: Low-Vol. Hydraulic Fracturing - Define, Mr. J. Lohr .....	1650
OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 2, Clean Air Act	
Ms. K. MacFarlane .....	1652
Mr. J. Stroink .....	1654
Ms. L. Zann.....	1655
Hon. P. Dunn.....	1656
Hon. R. Delorey .....	1658
Mr. T. Houston.....	1661
Hon. J. Baillie .....	1664
No. 53, Veterans Appreciation Act	
Hon. J. Baillie .....	1667
Mr. A. Rowe .....	1670
Hon. David Wilson .....	1674
Mr. L. Harrison .....	1678
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1680
No. 55, Helping Seniors Stay at Home Act	
Mr. T. Houston.....	1682
Mr. T. Farrell.....	1684
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1685
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1687
Hon. L. Kousoulis .....	1689
Mr. L. Harrison .....	1692
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
Taste of N.S.: Importance - Recognize,	
Mr. K. Irving.....	1693
Mr. J. Lohr .....	1695
Hon. S. Belliveau .....	1698
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., Oct. 30 <sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. ....	1700

## NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 477, St. Agnes JHS - PTA Fundraising, Hon. L. Diab .....	1701
Res. 478, Saikali, Anthony - Dal. Med. Campus Response Team, Hon. L. Diab .....	1701
Res. 479, Chinese Benevolent Soc. - Anniv. (60 <sup>th</sup> ), Hon. L. Diab .....	1702
Res. 480, Italian Cdn. Cultural Assoc. - Italy's Republic Anniv. (68 <sup>th</sup> ), Hon. L. Diab .....	1702
Res. 481, École John W. MacLeod/Fleming Tower Elem. Sch. - Spring Fests, Hon. L. Diab .....	1703
Res. 482, Springvale Under the Stars Comm. - Movie Night, Hon. L. Diab .....	1703
Res. 483, École Chebucto Heights Sch. - Grade 6 Closing Ceremony, Hon. L. Diab .....	1704
Res. 484, Shannex Arborstone/Victoria Gagne - Garden Party, Hon. L. Diab .....	1704
Res. 485, Prismatic Arts Fest./Shahin Sayadi - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab .....	1705
Res. 486, India Fest: Indo-Cdn. Commun. Ctr. Soc. - Support, Hon. L. Diab .....	1705
Res. 487, Levack, Vicky - ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, Hon. L. Diab .....	1706
Res. 488, S. Indian Cultural Assoc.: Onam Fest. - Hosting, Hon. L. Diab .....	1706
Res. 489, East. Chebucto Hub Organization: Launch - Commend, Hon. L. Diab .....	1707
Res. 490, Ryl. N.S. Yacht Squadron - Club of Yr. Award, Hon. L. Diab .....	1707
Res. 491, Komagata Maru - Exhibition, Hon. L. Diab .....	1708
Res. 492, Shearer, Sandy & Bev - Tim Hortons Ribbon Cutting, Hon. L. Diab .....	1708
Res. 493, École John W. MacLeod/Fleming Tower - Adopt & Don't Stop Comp., Hon. L. Diab.....	1709
Res. 494, Fares, Wadih - Cdn. Red Cross Humanitarian Award, Hon. L. Diab .....	1709
Res. 495, Wicha, Peter/Fairview JHS Boys A Soccer Team - Cap. Reg. Championship, Hon. L. Diab .....	1710
Res. 496, Wilson, Ms. C./Fairview JHS Girls A Soccer Team: Victories - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab .....	1710
Res. 497, Mansour, Dr. Marc - Cedar & Maple Gala Award, Hon. L. Diab .....	1711
Res. 498, Cdn.-Lebanese C of C/Industry/Award Recipients - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1711



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2014**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the discussions on the rule changes with the House Leaders, and I believe with the consent of all the House, it was always the intention that Question Period would start one hour from the time of when the House was scheduled to start that day. For example, today we start at 1:00 p.m., so Question Period would start at 2:00 p.m., and the same thing during the week, except Fridays where, since the House starts at 9:00 a.m., Question Period would start at 10:00 a.m.

In light of the fact that sometimes we have administrative matters to deal with and everything else and we may be a bit delayed in getting started, I'm looking for unanimous consent of the House that, from here forward, the agreement is that Question Period starts one hour from the time the House is scheduled to begin, unless there is unanimous consent to change it to another time, which is part of the consistency we talked about, the predictability of when QP would be. So today, in this case, Question Period would start at 2:00 p.m. and it would be one hour from the time that the House sits.

I would ask you to request the unanimous consent of the House to have that rule apply for the remainder of this session.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The motion is carried.

Just before we start the daily routine, the topic for this evening's late debate was submitted by the honourable member for Kings South:

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the importance of the Taste of Nova Scotia initiative and support our local businesses in the farm and food and beverage industries.

This will be debated this evening at 5:30 p.m.

We will begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

MR. SPEAKER: I have one.

As Speaker, I am tabling the Annual Report of Elections Nova Scotia for the period of April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014.

The report is tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 64 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Limitation of Actions. (Hon. Lena Diab)**

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

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

**ACKROYD, ROD: RIVER HEBERT - RELOCATION**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome a new citizen to our province, Mr. Rod Ackroyd. Mr. Ackroyd recently relocated from out West to River Hebert, Nova Scotia. What is interesting about Rod Ackroyd is his employment: he is a fluid technician and production enhancement specialist with Halliburton; in other words, he oversees onshore shale gas wells.

I am pleased to report that Mr. Ackroyd makes a good living at his job; however, he is required to commute regularly to North Dakota. Mr. Ackroyd has put down roots in River Hebert; he loves the people and the culture here. He, like thousands of others, would like to live and work in the same place and be able to return to his family here every day after work.

For Mr. Ackroyd and many like him, we urge the government to withdraw its ban on one of the new ways to create new jobs in Nova Scotia.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - HEALTH SERV.: RURAL N.S. - EROSION**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, as we watched, this Liberal Government dismantled the DHAs across the province. We only need to observe the preoccupation of the Minister of Health and Wellness with amalgamation in the last year as he allowed a serious situation to get worse. The Minister of Health and Wellness admitted in this House, this session, that the reason Roseway Hospital in Shelburne was closed for 117 hours this year was due to a nursing shortage. My colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party from Cape Breton have also pointed out very clearly that Northside General Hospital in North Sydney is also closed an additional 40 days - unexpected closures this last year.

The hospitals are under attack in rural Nova Scotia. In the last 12 months our health care services have been eroded in rural Nova Scotia by this Liberal Government. We need to speak up and we need to stand up for health care in rural Nova Scotia because the Liberal Government has let rural Nova Scotia down.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**SUTHERLAND, DALE: MACINTOSH CASE - PUBLICATION BAN**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago we had two gentlemen visit this Legislature to be acknowledged as survivors of sexual abuse. Another man, Dale Sutherland, asked that his name be read aloud that day as another survivor. Dale was the original complainant in the Ernest Fenwick MacIntosh case. Today everyone knows who



DRS is, because Dale has asked that the publication ban on his name be lifted, another brave survivor, worthy of our applause in this Legislature.

For Dale, this is about shining a light on the secret of the abuse so everyone knows what was done to him was wrong. It was not asked for and it was not his fault. We in this Legislature can offer our support to Dale and other survivors as a message to society that we can do better; we will do better to protect and care for the children of this province. May we hereby extend our support to Dale and his family for Dale's courageous decision. (Applause)

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

**CIRILLO, CPL. NATHAN/VINCENT, WO PATRICE:  
RCL BR. 19 (N. SYDNEY) - VIGIL**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a sea of red poppies as a couple of hundred people stood in silence at the cenotaph in North Sydney during a silent vigil honouring Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. Following the singing of *O Canada*, Branch 19 President Carl Wall led a crowded service of remembrance. Two by two, veterans took turns standing vigil, including 98-year-old Bill MacKeigan, a veteran with the Cape Breton Highlanders. They stood there for over an hour and hardly a word was said.

Congratulations to Branch 19 of the Royal Canadian Legion and all those who helped organize and participate in this silent vigil and service honouring our two fallen heroes and all members of the Canadian Armed Forces and those who have gone before.

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

**ROSS FARM MUSEUM LEARNING CTR.**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Generations of Nova Scotians have experienced traditional farm life while visiting the Ross Farm Museum which was established in 1969 in New Ross, Nova Scotia. The Ross Farm Museum raised \$2.4 million in a capital campaign and as a result recently broke ground for a new Learning Centre designed to meet a need for more knowledge about food, farming and heritage skills.

After 10 years of seeking provincial support, I am proud that the NDP Government contributed \$1 million to make the Learning Centre a reality. Thank you to the Ross Farm board of directors and the community for not giving up. I would like to congratulate the New Ross Farm Learning Centre for its vision, hard work and continued dedication to their community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **LUN. DOC FEST - INAUGURAL EVENT**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, the Town of Lunenburg has long been known for its fishing prowess. Now the town is forging a new identity as a centre for arts and culture. The inaugural Lunenburg Doc Fest has helped further that identity. Founded by co-chairs Pam Segger and Debra Beers, the initial festival, focusing on documentaries, saw over 400 such films submitted from 59 countries.

As a result, the board chose six categories for screening: Atlantic, international, environmental, political, music and art, and youth and family. The inaugural festival was, indeed, a success and has further contributed to Lunenburg's reputation as an arts and cultural centre. The initial success will hopefully lead to years of interest and praise, serving as a creative outlet for documentary lovers. I encourage all members to join me in congratulating the Lunenburg Doc Fest on its inaugural event.

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

### **ENERGY POVERTY**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of energy poverty is new but growing. Today we learned about 400 households in Antigonish County being at risk of not being able to stay warm this winter, and I know in my own constituency I have a number of people coming to me who cannot pay their power bill. Now, many of those who will find themselves in need this winter are young women with school-age children. High home-heating prices force parents to make terrible choices between healthy meals or a warm home. It appears these choices will only get more difficult.

In the election campaign the Liberals promised to lower the power prices for Nova Scotians, so on behalf of the 400 households in Antigonish County and elsewhere, and the hundreds across Nova Scotia, I urge the government to address energy poverty.

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

### **BURKE, JOHN - KNIGHTHOOD (FRANCE)**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Salmon River resident and Second World War veteran John Burke was recently awarded a knighthood from the Republic of France. He was bestowed this honour for his role in the liberation of France during the Second World War at the age of 17 having forged his age to join his brothers in the war.

After training he served guard duty for the Queen's summer estate, was moved to the Regina Rifle Regiment in Normandy, and was then placed with the 10<sup>th</sup> War Material Wrecking Team.

I would like to thank Sir John Burke for the brave and courageous role he played during that war, and would like to express my sincere admiration for his service on behalf of this House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **CHEBUCTO HEAD RD.: HRM/PROV. REPAIR - SOLUTION**

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an important road in the riding of Halifax Atlantic, the Chebucto Head Road. The view from this road is spectacular, but the state of the road has prevented many from enjoying it.

I worked with our local city councillor Steve Adams to find a solution for this road, along with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the province, to come to an agreement that will finally see Chebucto Head Road repaired and maintained by the province in the future. We have worked out a road swap between the HRM and the province to ensure this road continues to be maintained.

I am pleased to have been able to work with my councillor on this issue and find a solution to have this road repaired. This road leads to one of the most spectacular views in all of Nova Scotia - I am not biased at all - and now will be more easily accessible to anyone who would like to view the natural splendour of this area.

I encourage the members to take a moment to reflect on the natural beauty of our province and the importance of accessible roads so that all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to enjoy this beauty that surrounds us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **JONES, SCOTT - REV. DARLENE YOUNG COMMUN. HERO AWARD**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Pictou County's Scott Jones will be recognized today at the 2014 Community Heroes Awards. This award is presented by the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project in celebration of the Company House. Mr. Jones will receive the Reverend Darlene Young Community Hero Award, which recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to Nova Scotia's LGBTQ communities.

Mr. Jones helped launch the Don't Be Afraid campaign to combat homophobia and promote acceptance after an attack in downtown New Glasgow last year, which left him

paralyzed from the waist down. Scott's compassionate, transformative response to a personal crisis is at the very heart of what these awards are about.

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

### **FIREWOOD ACCESS**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I continue to raise the issue of the basic need for access to firewood in this House, which has kept Nova Scotians warm throughout the cold winter months and has reduced their energy costs.

I thank the Minister of Natural Resources for tabling an ad for the sale of firewood. However, Mr. Speaker, there still continues to be a shortage of wood fibre or access to firewood for wood suppliers across Nova Scotia on Crown lands. We have a flawed, clumsy permitting system. This is fundamentally wrong, and still a flawed process.

The minister refuses to meet with firewood suppliers who cannot meet supply for demand. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

### **FIREWOOD: PURCHASERS/SUPPLIERS - CONNECT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I want to table another advertisement here that I found. This is a different company selling firewood in Nova Scotia. What we're doing in our department is coordinating people who have firewood with those who need it, and I would urge the member opposite to do the same. His time would be much better spent actually helping those people in his area who need firewood - coordinating with people who have it - than spending time here spreading the foolishness that he is. Thank you very much.

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

### **LUMBERJACK AXEPERIENCE - RICK MERCER REPORT**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Lumberjack AXEperience was showcased on the *Rick Mercer Report* last night. Barrington's seven-time World Champion Lumberjack Darren Hudson tried to teach Mr. Mercer how to saw a log, throw an axe, and roll a log down the river.

This was a wonderful opportunity to show off the area, and Darren's energy and commitment to his craft made it exciting and very memorable. So a great big thank you to the *Rick Mercer Report* for coming and to Darren Hudson and his team for being great ambassadors for our area. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **HALLOWEEN FEST. (S. WOODSIDE) - ORGANIZERS**

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to you today about a special event that happened in my constituency. On Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, the community of South Woodside held a Halloween event for all the families in the neighbourhood. The community has a group of volunteers that operate their community school, and they have many programs to offer the children and adults.

The Pumpkin Festival is an annual event which is organized by this group and set up for all the children to enjoy. The inflated pirate ship was a huge hit, as well as Milo the Clown with his many balloon creations. There were also long lineups for face painting, and I can now tell you I'm an expert at snow cone making. In the hall, there were all kinds of pumpkin magic. The children were carving pumpkins, some of which the artwork was quite unique, and they all got to bring their pumpkins home.

I want to recognize this inspiring group of people in South Woodside who continue to give unselfishly to their community.

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

The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **PICTOU CO. TRAILS ASSOC. - SHORT LINE TRAIL EXPANSION**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the Pictou County Trails Association is planning a Short Line Trail expansion with an investment made by the provincial government. The trail is currently five kilometres in length with a planned expansion of seven kilometres, for a total of 12 kilometres. The trail will connect residents from Hardwood Hill to Scotsburn. Pictou County Trails Association President Clifford MacDonald noted that since the project began in 2013, there has been an increase in people using the trail. The completed multi-use trail will encourage additional residents to be healthy and active in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable manner. Thank you.

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

### **COMMUN. MARKETS - ROLE**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the role that community markets play in the fabric of our province. Community markets provide a venue for the public to learn about and interact with the local products and producers in their communities and to support buy-local and eat-local initiatives. They serve as an

economic driver to promote the production and consumption of locally produced and sustainable goods. They foster community spirit and cooperation. Communities, local producers, consumers and tourists benefit from thriving community markets. I encourage all members to visit a local market and ask the government to provide support and invest in community markets and eat-local and buy-local initiatives. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **BOURGUIGNON, DERRICK - PROTECT**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am standing this afternoon to recognize the courage and perseverance of Derek Bourguignon. Derek was hurt in an accident at work, an accident that happened while he was fulfilling his duties as a government employee in a government building. Three doctors say Derek is still not ready to return to work, and one doctor says he is. Based on that one doctor, the other three are being ignored and he is being told to return to work despite being physically unable to work. As a result, Derek's income has severely decreased. We as a government have a responsibility to protect good people like Derek from unfairness and hardship. I ask the government to fix this broken system and protect all of the Dereks out there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **W. NORTHFIELD ELEM. SCH. - MOBIUS HONOURABLE MENTION**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, if the youth are our future, then the students of West Northfield Elementary are going to ensure that the future is environmentally sound. Earlier this month, the school was named as an honourable mention at the annual RRFB Nova Scotia Mobius Awards of Environmental Excellence. That's quite an accomplishment for a school of just 166 students.

West Northfield is a school that lives and breathes environmental responsibility from the big-picture projects to everyday initiatives. From its recycling bins to its electronic newsletters and outdoor garden, the school is a fine example of what today's youth can accomplish when you truly want to make a difference. It is not a task or a job, it is a way of life. To the students and staff at West Northfield Elementary School, I want to thank you for making a difference.

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

### **BLAIR, DON - FUNDRAISING VOLS.**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the volunteers in the Springhill/Oxford chapter of the Kidney Foundation of Canada are tireless people who give their all to this great cause. Don Blair, a volunteer fundraiser, along with 50 others, were at the Senior

Citizen's Recreation Center in Springhill recently to celebrate their chapter's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Don has helped spearhead many Kidney Foundation fundraisers over the years, including golf tournaments at the Springhill Centennial Golf Club and the annual Boxing Day breakfast at the Lamp Cabin tavern in Springhill.

Like all chapters across Canada, the Springhill/Oxford chapter raises money for transplant research, provides patient support and increases public awareness about the importance of organ donation. Congratulations to these amazing volunteers who do so much to raise both funds and awareness for those dealing with kidney disease. Thank you.

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

### **SHUBENACADIE CANAL: LAND CLAIM - SETTLEMENT**

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, the Shubenacadie Canal flows from the headwaters in the lake areas of Dartmouth, Waverley, Fall River, Sackville, and Beaver Bank through the Shubenacadie and Stewiacke River corridors, and eventually flows into the Cobequid Bay in Maitland. The lakes, streams, and rivers, originally plied by the Mi'kmaq people, are valued for their aesthetic and recreational qualities.

I'm very pleased that the Department of Natural Resources was able to settle a long-disputed claim at Lock Four, resulting in a safe portage route for paddlers between Lake Fletcher and Lake Thomas. Thank you to the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

### **HOWE, GORDIE - WELL WISHES**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: This morning we learned that Mr. Hockey, Gordie Howe, suffered a stroke over the weekend in Texas. Mr. Hockey had a remarkably long hockey career. He began his NHL career in 1946-47 with the Detroit Red Wings, and he spent 32 years in the game, playing 26 in the NHL, where he led Detroit to four Stanley Cups, and another six in the World Hockey Association.

He retired in 1980 after fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing hockey with his sons Mark and Marty. Gordie was famous as a goal-scorer and for his physical strength. Today I know all members will join me in hoping that his strength serves him well as he recovers from his setback.

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

**GUYSBOROUGH-EASTERN SHORE-TRACADIE - LOBSTER RESOURCE**

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak briefly about the wonderful renewable resource that exists in my riding of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, and the brave, hearty men and women who harvest it. That wonderful resource is our extremely valuable inshore lobster fishery.

Throughout the riding from East Tracadie on the Northumberland Strait to the Strait of Canso, and westward to East Ship Harbour on the beautiful Eastern Shore, hundreds of fishers work diligently to bring this incredible food to the world while providing a living for their families, a pursuit which in many instances has been practised for generations.

This industry is keeping our youth at home and employed - a goal of government as we build our local communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**CHURCHES/COMMUNITIES: VOLS. - RECOGNIZE**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, this is the time of year when a lot of volunteers in churches and communities take on events to raise money, not only for their own purposes but to help those who are less fortunate. So in the next couple of months a lot of activity will take place, and I urge all of us to encourage that kind of activity, and to even say thank you to those who put so much effort into helping others during this time of year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**HRM CHARTER - AMENDMENT**

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: I rise in this House today to talk about a very important issue for the residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality. As you all know, Halifax requested that we make amendments to the charter to give the municipality greater control over the tools they need to officially manage their jurisdictions. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs recently mentioned in the House, this change provides authority for council to enter into a property tax agreement with the owners of heavy industrial properties.

This amendment can provide a competitive operating environment for heavy industrial businesses, which can lead to an additional economic benefit to the municipality and its citizens. This change allows Halifax Council to provide stable taxes eligible for properties with approval from the municipal bylaw. If the members of the Opposition do not believe that this city should have a competitive advantage, they should go explain that to the Mayor of Halifax.



MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **NEW GLASGOW ACAD. - PICTOU CO. DIST. GIRLS SOCCER**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, New Glasgow Academy won the Pictou County District Girls Soccer Championship last week, a first for the New Glasgow school, which officially opened its doors in September.

When the season started, the school struggled with low roster numbers and began recruiting players who normally played other sports. Coach Shane Pitts quickly realized that the girls were really athletic and became familiar with the game very quickly. New Glasgow Academy's final challenge of the year will be the Norththumberland Regional Championship this week, hosted by the Cumberland District.

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

### **ALZHEIMER'S - TREATMENT**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, Darlene Boliver of Hammonds Plains-Lucasville is her husband Stephen's biggest advocate and supporter. Stephen is impacted by early onset Alzheimer's. This year I humbly listened to Ms. Bolivar as she very candidly shared challenges she faced on a daily basis, balancing work and caring for the needs of her husband as his illness progresses. She also expressed the challenges she faced navigating a system lacking specific consideration to support individuals impacted by early onset.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I say to members that as legislators we need to recognize that this is an illness that should be treated based on the severity of the illness and the individual rather than someone's age. Our decision-making should reflect this.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **KIDS FIRST - FUNDING**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, every Nova Scotian deserves to have access to the same level of service be it health care, education or community services, regardless of where they live. Yet, we have inequities in this system, inequities that have developed over time, and I'm thinking of our network of family resource centres, including Kids First.

Kids First is a wonderful organization like similar organizations across the province, they all do wonderful work. Unfortunately, not all children across the province are receiving the same opportunities. As an example, when you look at combined Department of Community Services funding for family resource centres, kids in Annapolis County receive \$209 per child per year for age zero to four whereas Pictou County receives

\$26. As a government we should be careful not to punish those organizations that make good fiscal decisions, and conclude that they need less because of it. As a government we need to support similar organizations similarly.

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

### **CLARE-DIGBY MINK INDUSTRY**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on an important industry in the Clare-Digby riding. The mink industry has worked very diligently to progress through the summer months. Since the dramatic fall of the mink prices globally last Spring there have been many hard decisions made by farmers in this crucial agricultural industry.

A steering group, comprised of federal and provincial representatives, is working closely with representatives from the industry looking at short-, medium-, and long-term strategies. Their efforts are aimed at strengthening programs and finding opportunities for the future. Good progress is being made to assist with developing infrastructure and solutions that will accommodate waste management for all farmers.

I'm also encouraged with the strong growth in numbers of quality mink being raised throughout this challenging period and I would like to thank all the people involved for your perseverance through these difficult times. Your hard work will eventually make this sector grow and be more sustainable for the future of rural Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

### **MACLELLAN, KEN/EILEANAN BRÈAGH VINEYARDS: ACHIEVEMENT - RECOGNIZE**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that Cape Breton's only vineyard, Eileanan Brèagha Vineyards wrapped up its harvest of almost 12,000 grapevines for the season. I would like to congratulate owner Ken MacLellan on his season's successful harvest, as well as the sale of the first batch of wine under the Eileanan Brèagha label this summer.

This achievement is no small feat. Mr. MacLellan splits his time between the vineyard and working as a contractor in Alberta's oil and gas industry. This vineyard has come to involve the whole MacLellan family in the effort to establish this business - even taking courses in Gaelic.

Mr. Speaker, their entrepreneurial spirit deserves to be acknowledged and I ask this House to recognize their achievement and community support they have fostered.

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

### **SAMPSON, STEVE - COMMUN. DEDICATION**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Steve Sampson is passionate about everything that is family and community related, and displays all the qualities of someone deserving of community recognition. He is a loving father of a family of four children, and husband to a very successful woman who is also heavily involved in community activities. Their passion as a giving family is even further accentuated through their actions in opening up their house to international students every year.

Along with their kids' busy schedules they also have fully ensured that their international guests are fully involved in all that Nova Scotia sports have to offer. Not only are his kids very involved in sports-based activities, but he continues to lead several amateur sports teams. Steve has been heavily involved in basketball teams with the Prospect Bulls Basketball Club as a coach and executive member, is currently the head coach of the Halifax Wheelchair Basketball team, and he has also been cited as being a pivotal member of the coaching staff, taking both men's and women's Canadian wheelchair basketball teams to the Olympics.

Of note, there is only one wheelchair basketball team in Halifax and he is the individual who keeps it all going. For Mr. Sampson's community dedication, I want to extend my sincere thanks and recognition in the Nova Scotia Legislature.

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

### **DIGBY WHARF RAT RALLY (2014)**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to mention my hometown today and speak to you about the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Wharf Rat Rally, which was held this summer in beautiful Digby. The 2014 rally represented a special milestone for the event - it marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that has become a highlight of summer for the people of Digby, across Nova Scotia, and others throughout the country.

Over the past decade the Wharf Rat Rally has grown leaps and bounds, bringing tens of thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts and tourists alike to the heart of southwestern Nova Scotia. They come to explore and experience the dozens of rally events - concerts and our world famous Digby scallops and, of course, our second-to-none Digby County hospitality.

This year's Wharf Rat Rally saw thousands and thousands of people descend on Digby and surrounding communities, generating millions in economic activity for businesses in the region. There are so many unique things to see and do during the Wharf

Rat Rally. I challenge everyone to try something new and experience this new, exciting, annual event.

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

### **CHEEMA AQUATIC CLUB**

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, as you drive along Highway 2 by picturesque Lake Thomas in Waverley, you will see the Cheema paddling club training in Spring, summer and Fall. Founded in 1969, Cheema Aquatic Club had a long history highlighted by national, international and Olympic success. In September the club cut a new ribbon for their new Frank Garner Boat House, a \$1 million expansion which was supported by the Department of Health and Wellness with a \$100,000 grant.

For the third year in a row Cheema took home the championship title at nationals. Mr. Speaker, Cheema racing has had great success building Olympic athletes, as well as healthier children and a stronger community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **NICHOLS, RUTH CORMIER: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE,**

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, the late Ruth Cormier Nichols. Ruth Nichols was the consummate performer, songwriter, teacher, mother, wife and friend. We lost her earlier this year to a very short, violent and gallant battle with cancer. God rest Ruth.

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

### **GUYSBOROUGH MEM. HOSP. - RENOVATION**

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise today and to bring the attention of the House to the incredible commitment to community that exists throughout my riding, particularly in the catchment area of the Guysborough Memorial Hospital. The board of that facility recently accomplished a dream to complete the fundraising to the tune of \$1.5 million for the community portion of the \$5.6 million renovation to this important community hospital.

In the short span of five months, these dedicated folks secured donations and pledges exceeding \$700,000 which, coupled with the generous commitment of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, will allow the award of the contract to construct on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **SPRYFIELD & DIST. BUS. COMMN./LANDSCAPERS - PLANTERS**

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to talk about a fantastic idea that was conceived by a member of the Spryfield and District Business Commission. A member of the commission thought it would be a nice idea to have planters put throughout Spryfield to add a touch of colour to the streetscapes. With this idea, the landscaper challenge was born. Six large wooden planters were placed along the main streets of Spryfield and the landscaping companies in the area were invited to take charge of one planter each.

Each company planted flowers in the planter and were responsible for maintaining the planters throughout the season. This led to a friendly competition between the landscaping companies as they all vied to have their planter voted Number One. We will have to wait for another week or two to see who actually wins the landscaping challenge, although I'm sure everyone will agree that all the companies that participated are winners and should be congratulated on giving back to the community.

I ask the members to join me in congratulating the Spryfield and District Business Commission and the six landscaping companies that participated in the challenge on their efforts to beautify the streets of Spryfield. Thank you.

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

### **CANCER PATIENTS: DRUG CARE/HOSPITAL CARE - FUNDING**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the contributions that cancer patients, survivors and their families make to Nova Scotia. I recently had the opportunity to meet Karen Breen Welton, a mum, a teacher, a cancer survivor and now an entrepreneur. She was inspired to make a difference in the lives of women with breast cancer and has created a yoga wear line that meets the needs of women who have had breast surgery.

We know that cancer survivors also contribute to improving our health care system as those who have had colorectal cancer have been providing feedback to the Nova Scotia Government on new clinical standards. Cancer survivor patients and their families continue to lobby for better support and funding from the government to ensure the best possible outcomes with the most appropriate care settings for patients.

I ask this government to come to the table with funding to support cancer patients, survivors and their families through adequate funding for cancer drugs and hospital care and post-treatment care. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring any more members' statements, we have two choices. We can either recess until 2:00 p.m., at the beginning of Oral Question Period, or we can begin with Opposition Members' Business.

With the unanimous consent of the House, we'll recess until 2:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We stand recessed until 2:00 p.m.

[1:40 p.m. The House recessed.]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now begin Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **PREM.: ONSHORE GAS DEV. - SUPPORT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in his speech last week former Liberal Premier Frank McKenna concluded his remarks by saying, "Let me close by connecting the dots. Atlantic Canada is in a perilous situation of high deficits, declining and aging populations, stagnant economic growth. On the other hand we are blessed with abundant energy resources."

Mr. Speaker, Frank McKenna gets it: developing our energy resources helps solve our larger problems. I'll ask the Premier, will he too connect the dots as Mr. McKenna has done and support onshore gas development instead of banning it?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for that question. We're very encouraged by the investments we made offshore to capitalize on the resource off the coast of Nova Scotia. I've been encouraged on the investments made by the mining sector in this province to capitalize on the resources that we have in front of us.

I'm very proud of the work the Minister of Energy is doing, through his department, by going out and doing consultation to ensure that if we actually do have onshore gas and if there is ever going to be fracking of onshore gas it's done in a way that allows Nova Scotians to capitalize on that resource, while at the same time we consult with the First Nations community and ensure that we protect the environment.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, apparently the Premier thinks that we have enough jobs in this province from the offshore and from mining and we shouldn't be trying new ways of creating new jobs in the province, but that's not what we think and it's not what Frank McKenna thinks either. Turns out the speech last week wasn't his only remarks on the topic of onshore shale gas development.

In a speech last year, entitled *Hope Restored - a future in energy*, Mr. McKenna pointed out that producing and exporting shale gas can generate over \$7 billion in royalties and tax revenues to the Province of New Brunswick, and I'll table that. We could sure use some of that new revenue here, Mr. Speaker, for health care, for education, maybe even for tax relief someday, but no company is going to invest here to make it happen when there is a ban on onshore gas development.

I'll ask the Premier, how long does he expect Nova Scotians to wait until his government connects the dots and permits this new way of generating new jobs in our province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I encourage him to reread the speech that Mr. McKenna provided. Mr. McKenna talked about ensuring that we have the infrastructure in this province, but most importantly Mr. McKenna said make sure that you go out and consult and build the partnership that is going to be required to develop any resource - and that is exactly what's taking place.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that there has been fracking in this province and this government is dealing with the mess that was left behind from the fracking waste that was left in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's no news to Nova Scotians that this government is always in favour of more consultation and more studies and more commissions. We just had one, the Wheeler report, which had all the things that the Premier now wants to do all over again while Nova Scotians go on waiting for new jobs and new ways of earning a living and keeping their families together here at home.

Even the New Brunswick Liberals, less than a month in office, are already taking a second look at onshore gas development. It was reported today that the new Liberal Minister of Energy in New Brunswick may well allow onshore gas development from Corridor Resources and potentially others. He has connected the dots, so I'll ask the Premier here in Nova Scotia with so much at stake, \$7 billion in revenue, and thousands of

new jobs, will he now admit that his ban on onshore gas development will hold Nova Scotia back while New Brunswick moves ahead?

THE PREMIER: Unlike the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party I have all kinds of faith in the people of this great province. Not only, Mr. Speaker, will this province lead Atlantic Canada, we'll take our rightful place in ensuring that we build a national country. We will do our part, but we're going to do it in a responsible way - the Minister of Energy is out engaging.

I want to remind all members of this House it is the responsibility, it is our duty, to consult with the First Nations community across this province, Mr. Speaker, and none of that work has happened. We're going to do exactly what Mr. McKenna said: go out and ensure that we build the partnerships required to make sure we capitalize on all of our resources.

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

**PREM.: C.B. LAYOFFS - ASSISTANCE**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately many people in our province are leaving our province because there isn't enough good-paying work here at home.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, through you. With 9,000 fewer people employed in the province since the Liberals came to power only a year ago, out-migration is one of our biggest challenges. There's news today that another 130 people are being laid off in Cape Breton, and many of these people undoubtedly will be forced to move out West.

My question for the Premier is, why is the Premier not doing anything to help these Cape Bretoners and other Nova Scotians so they don't have to leave our province?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to inform her that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education has moved in to work and support those Nova Scotians she's referring to. I want to remind her that we have provided more apprenticeship opportunities to keep young people here in Nova Scotia, to provide them with their first job here in this province. I want to remind her that we've invested in research opportunities that will provide the first-job opportunities for many university students in this province who had to leave to go to central Canada to find that opportunity. No more - that will be happening here. We're continuing to work with the private sector to provide opportunities in this province for young people.

MS. MACDONALD: When the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal was on this side of the House, he regularly talked about the need for job targets.



He said if there are no job targets, there is no plan. It's obvious this government does not have a plan. The government is abandoning Nova Scotians who want to stay in the province.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, why won't the Premier commit to creating a plan with real job targets like his Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal used to advocate for?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member that this government is doing exactly what it said it would do during the election campaign. We're ensuring that we're getting our own financial house in order. We're not ignoring the problems faced within governments like the previous government did. We've made it very clear it's the private sector that will drive job growth in this province, and we're going to do all we can to support the private sector to do so.

MS. MACDONALD: The Premier is just ignoring the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's wise advice. The reality is that instead of improving opportunities, the next generation is looking at being worse off than their parents. The Premier has said time and time again that his government will not create jobs, and he's fulfilled that promise. But instead, he said he will, ". . . create a fair and competitive environment for business . . ."

What does the loss of another 130 jobs in Nova Scotia say about the environment that the Premier has created?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should know that the company she's referring to is providing an opportunity for some of the employees to work from home, right here in Nova Scotia. We're continuing to work with that employer and the employees to ensure that they fully understand what's happening. This news came today.

But I want to assure the honourable member that we're doing all we can to make sure that Nova Scotians get an opportunity to work right here at home. We're providing more job opportunities. Let me be clear: there is a big difference between our view and the view of the New Democratic Party. They believe they should open up the chequebook and write, for everyone who walks through the door, a blank cheque without any job commitments to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. We've said very clearly, we're not writing blank cheques. It's up to the private sector to deliver those job opportunities.

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

**PREM.: ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PROJ. - SUPPORT CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, onshore gas is not the only way we could create new jobs and new opportunities for Nova Scotians. The Energy East Pipeline has been described as a nation-building project that Nova Scotia can participate in. This past weekend, we actually saw organized opposition from away come to Nova Scotia and tell us why we should be opposed despite the potential benefits to all Nova Scotians and all Maritimers from this project. Turns out that the Minister of Energy was asked and given the opportunity to defend the project and stand up for Nova Scotia and the jobs that may come with it, but he declined.

I would like to ask the Premier specifically, does his government support the Energy East Pipeline Project?

THE PREMIER: The Minister of Energy had travelled to Alberta in advance to promote the idea that the pipeline actually should go to the strait, all the way through the Province of Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, if a minister or someone in our government doesn't take an entourage to provide some kind of press release, they don't think it is news. The fact of the matter is there is lots of work happening inside government; we just don't go and find a reporter to make a press release on it.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I take it from that that they do support the project and that is, indeed, good news. I don't know why they want to keep it a secret. The Premier of New Brunswick, the current new Premier of New Brunswick and the previous Liberal Premier of New Brunswick, they are all out hustling every day, trying to get that Energy East Pipeline project for New Brunswick.

Nova Scotia companies could easily benefit from the same work and I agree, we should be working to bring those benefits right here into our own province, but the government has been quiet on all these things, that's why we have to ask this question.

I want to ask the Premier specifically, like his counterparts in New Brunswick, will he show real leadership on this issue and publicly advocate for the Energy East Pipeline, including extending it into Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for that question. I have already made arrangements. I'm going to visit the Premier of Alberta to talk about this issue and many other issues.

I'm very proud of the work that we've been able to do on the apprenticeship with the Province of Alberta, the only province in Canada that has been able to reach an agreement with Alberta when it comes to apprenticeships. We are going to continue, but unlike the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I'm not going to look for a microphone every time I have meetings that will benefit the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

**PREM. - ONSHORE GAS BAN: ALBERTA PREM. - EXPLANATION**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the Premier has a problem with what Frank McKenna is doing, in publicly advocating for jobs for New Brunswick and what the new Liberal Premier of New Brunswick is doing, which is publicly advocating for new jobs for New Brunswick, while he sits by and lets it happen.

Mr. Speaker, we need those jobs here, too, and the Energy East Pipeline is one great way to create real jobs and real opportunity in rural parts of Nova Scotia. In fact, NuStar has already said they would like the pipeline to come to Point Tupper where they can use it as a great export terminal.

I'd like to ask the Premier, will he specifically advocate, in Alberta and other places, for this important development?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what he doesn't get. We have just said the Minister of Energy has been doing just that. I have arranged a meeting to meet the new Premier of Alberta to do that. While he believes we should be out on a speaking tour, we have responsibilities inside of this House to make sure that we are providing good government to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, we just had the most significant restructuring of health care in the history of our province. We have dealt with issues that have been ignored by previous governments for decades, right here in this House, showing leadership on the things that we can deal with. I am very proud of the fact that my fellow Premiers have given me the opportunity to work on internal trade and we have started by ensuring that labour mobility will happen across this great country.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what we do get, we do get that you cannot create new jobs in this province by banning one of the new ways to create new jobs. You cannot create new jobs in this province; you can't connect the dots, as Frank McKenna says, without getting out there and doing the hard work that the Premiers of New Brunswick, past and present, are doing.

I am glad to hear that the Premier is going to Alberta. I hope he pushes hard for these kinds of projects. I will ask him, how is he going to explain to the Premier of Alberta his ban on onshore gas when Alberta has made such a success of that exact same process?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue to work with my colleagues across this country to ensure that we continue to build a solid country, that Nova Scotia will play its active role. I want to remind the honourable member that as he talks about all the

issues around development that has happened in this province, we have seen what has happened when consultation doesn't happen.

This government is going to consult; it is what the Minister of Energy is going to do. Let me tell all in this House, as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I will ensure that the chiefs across this province will be partners sitting at the table because we are going to do what we have always done: deliver a peaceful resolution to the challenges facing this province. We will make sure that we maximize the resources we have and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with them.

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

**FIN. & TREASURY BD.: FIN. HARDSHIP PROG. - FEE REMOVE**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. The financial hardship program allows people in dire financial situations to access their pension funds, to avoid losing their home, for example. However, in order to use this program, people have to pay a fee of \$113.25. This morning at the Public Accounts Committee the Superintendent of Pensions said she could provide no good rationale for why people are being charged a fee to access their own money in times of financial hardship. My question for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is will she commit today to removing the unnecessary and unjustified fee?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and I know there has been discussion here at Public Accounts today about this. We will certainly be willing to look at fees that are on the books and this would be one of them but I would like to know why the member opposite didn't cancel it herself.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to that is in four years it is very hard to clean up a mess that has been left over 250 years. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my office has received documents through a freedom of information request stating that new procedures have been put in place with regard to the processing of financial hardship applications. Included in this are that files where MLAs have requested the application be given priority over other applications be flagged for the deputy minister. My question for the minister is could she please explain why it is that applications are being flagged if an MLA is involved advocating for a citizen or a resident from Nova Scotia?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't see anything wrong with us looking at requests that come from our colleagues in the House. It means something has become critical enough that people are not getting answers directly from the bureaucracy or when

they have gone through the proper channels. If they are in great distress and they bring it to our attention, I think it's the proper thing that we do that. In fact, the member across the way knows that she herself had brought the subject to the attention of the media this summer. Of course it is important to deal with matters that members bring forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

### **ERDT - INTERNET ACCESS: PROVISION - STATUS**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. As many members in this House, including the minister, would know, quite a few years have passed now since a previous Tory Government promised high-speed Internet access for all those who wished it in the province. To date, I know that has not yet been completed and it has been probably close to seven years now. I wonder if the minister could update members of the House, myself and others who may be watching, exactly where we are and the current status of where we might be going on completing it?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the member for the question. This has been a challenging file. The rural broadband initiative was started in 2006 with the goal of having 100 per cent coverage for all residents of Nova Scotia.

Unfortunately, there have been some challenges in certain geographic areas of the province - the member's riding being one of them - as well as several other ridings all along the southwest shore and into the Valley. We are looking closely at the recent federal announcement where monies will be given to the provinces to assist with upgrading the system to a higher speed of the five megabytes per second. We are waiting to see the details of that but I can assure you we are in constant communication with the providers to try to address the challenges that remain.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. I would take from that and he can clarify this, it would almost seem that those looking for the service would believe it would be unrealistic, the way we are geographically located and the issues we've had over the years, that 100 per cent would be connected. Is there a move afoot as part of this new upgrade to actually connect to the high-speed and now the fibre op network - the hard line versus the wireless style that many are promoting and that we have based our past years and installation on and availability?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the member is that the service providers are looking at all the new technology that is coming out because this is not just a challenge in Nova Scotia, it is a challenge all around the country. In certain geographic areas it's extremely difficult to get service. For example, Seaside Communications, which services the northern part of Nova Scotia along with Cape Breton, now has three customers who've asked for service that they simply cannot find the solution to. Obviously, there are

many more on the other end of the province. The companies are looking at new technology, they are looking at new ways, and we continue to be in discussions with them to try to have as many Nova Scotians as possible connected. And again, with the new federal money coming in, we're hopeful that that might provide some opportunities as well, and possibly even some new providers that may be looking to provide service here.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

### **FISH. & AQUACULTURE: FISHERS - MEET**

MR. JOHN LOHR: My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Last February, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture attended the annual ministers' conference with fish harvesters in Debert. At that time, the minister said, you have to get out and talk to the people. You have to make them understand what it is you're going to try to do, and make sure that they are going to be part of that, and that it is going to benefit them.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, when will the minister take his own advice and start telling Nova Scotia fishers what he's trying to do and how they're going to be part of it, and how it will benefit them?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much. That's a very good question. Indeed, we've already started that process. We have met with many of the people in the industry and we will continue that through this winter, and hopefully come up with a solution so we can provide this very important funding to improve our lobster fishery in the province.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for the answer. At the same conference, the minister identified marketing in Nova Scotia fisheries as the responsibility of the province. Maine has legislation in place for extra funding, and is in their second year of marketing their lobster sector. P.E.I. will finish voting on the lobster levy this coming Friday.

My question for the minister is, what is the minister doing right now to ensure that Nova Scotia's lobster industry is consulted with and achieves the levy it needs to compete?

MR. COLWELL: This is a very important topic to the Province of Nova Scotia. Lobster is one of the biggest exporters in this province, and it's very important to our economy. We are moving forward with consultation with the industry, and we want to make sure we have the industry onside. We have a program that will work and will perform what we need, and increase the value of lobster. We hopefully will be able to get the value of lobster up without having to land any more lobster, and that is very, very important. That's very important to rural Nova Scotia. We understand that, and we're going to work very closely with the industry to accomplish it.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:  
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS STRATEGY - ACTIONS**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is through you to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In May 2013, I was pleased to provide a one-year update on the province's first Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, Together We Can. We surpassed our commitment by undertaking work on 24 of the 33 recommendations outlined in that report, and I'll table that for the House. At the time, we anticipated having all actions undertaken within the first two years of the strategy - by May 2014.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, which of the 33 actions in this strategy were not yet undertaken by the end of the second year, in May of this year?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much. I'm pleased to say that this is one of the areas that the Department of Health and Wellness - the work needs to be a continuum over a number of years, and the majority of those recommendations are now, in fact, being developed across Nova Scotia.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, 24 out of 33 are the majority, and I would hope the minister can give us some more detail on that. When the one-year report for the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy was released in May 2013, \$1 million in funding was provided for a community grants program. I'll table the list of the recipients in that first year. In the 2014-15 application form, which I'll table, the department advised recipients that funding for two recipients at \$100,000 each would be announced, yet that was supposed to be happening in August or September. We haven't heard yet who the recipients of this year's grants are.

I'd like to ask the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, when will the 2014-15 community grants recipients be announced, and will it be in an annual update of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the two major announcements that the member is referring to are actually planned for this Monday - one in the Valley and one here at, I think, the North End Community Centre. We will provide, on an annual basis, exactly where all those recommendations from that very significant report are on an ongoing basis.

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

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**HEALTH & WELLNESS: CONTINUING CARE STRATEGY  
- PC FOI REQUEST**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness to comment on a freedom of information request received by our office that stated the 100-day Continuing Care Strategy update would actually take 12 to 14 months. Also included in that document was a cautionary note stating that there may be expectations that a more fulsome evaluation be completed. Of course, the 2,500 Nova Scotians on the wait-list are expecting a fulsome evaluation. The minister was not prepared, and now they have to wait.

My question to the minister, why does his department expect that it won't be fulsome and how can the minister justify this to the families on the wait-list?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asks a very important question about wait-lists. We will have part one of that implementation around a wait-list coming into winter, and by April, part two of that will be rolling out.

We know the statistics are extremely high for people who refuse the placement that they are offered the first time that they are notified. We need to get a true wait-list so that Nova Scotians will see that they can move into a nursing home based on their need.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the minister has to say there, because we do know there's a lack of availability of beds in many areas around Nova Scotia. I don't know if people are just going out there and filling things out and hoping that they get on a list somewhere, but the challenge right now is that there is really no place for them and they are still sitting on this list.

In addition, the document states that no funding was set aside at the outset of the evaluation for the 2006 strategy. It is clear that the 100-day review the minister announced was really not well planned, so it's a straightforward planning exercise, I would think, Mr. Speaker.

Why did the minister not require his department to conduct a proper review of the Continuing Care Strategy as he set out?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what we promised in the first 100 days was we would set in motion a refresh of the Continuing Care Strategy. When that is announced in phase one, phase two by Spring, in fact we will have one of the clearest, most robust, continuing care strategies in the country, and one that in fact will be taken note of by many.

The department wants to make sure that we get it right for the next decade as we move into the very large cohort of baby boomers now retiring.



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

**COM. SERV.: FIN. HARDSHIP PROG. - TRANSPARENCY**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Community Services. Today in Public Accounts Committee, the Superintendent of Pensions was here talking about the financial hardship program. I provided an email that she had written that I obtained under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in which a Department of Community Services official had cautioned her about “being too explicit about how priorities are established” for applicants.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Community Services is this, why is her department advising the superintendent of pensions not to be transparent with Nova Scotians about criteria used to process financial hardship applications?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Community Services provides valuable services for low income Nova Scotians and it is a series of last resort that someone would come to the department seeking financial assistance to help with housing or basic necessities or whatever. I’m not sure what email the member is referring to but the criteria for application to our programs are very transparent. They are available in any office across Nova Scotia.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. It’s not about the department’s policy and the transparency - it’s about advice that was given to the superintendent about setting up her criteria. The document I tabled also indicates that the Department of Community Services, in a specific incident, would have provided a loan to keep the lights from being disconnected for a particular person applying for the financial hardship program. However, they would collect that money back and require that an application for financial hardship be made, which is, I think, a violation of the financial hardship legislation.

My question to the Minister of Community Services is, will she review the information in this piece of correspondence and report back to the House some clarification on what the policy of her department is with respect to this program?

MS. BERNARD: Yes, I will, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**DIS - HUM. RES. COMM: LIB. MEMBERS - MIN. COMMUNICATIONS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services. Yesterday at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Liberal MLAs used their majority to block the FOIPOP officer from appearing before that committee. During

Question Period yesterday the Premier said Liberal members of that committee received no direction from him to block Ms. Tully's appearance at the committee.

My question for the minister is, will the minister please tell the House what if any discussions, emails, texts or other communications from him, his EA or his office occurred with Liberal MLAs on the committee or staff that supports Liberal MLAs on the committee about the FOIPOP officer appearing before the committee?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I have sent no emails to any of my fellow MLAs regarding the FOIPOP officer. Thank you.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, presumably neither his office nor EA did as well. So the Liberal Party has refused to consider making the FOIPOP officer truly independent by making her an officer of this Legislature. Liberal MLAs appear to be afraid to allow the FOIPOP officer to answer questions in a public forum yet the Premier boasts about the level of transparency of this government. Will the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information tell the House if he would allow the FOIPOP officer to appear before a committee of the Legislature?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would say go back to the committee and maybe this time, instead of bringing something in at the last minute, put it on the agenda and have a discussion. Thank you.

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

### **ENERGY: ELECTION PLATFORM - ELECTRICITY RATES**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, this week we found out that Nova Scotians have another power rate increase on the horizon. Nova Scotians are facing an increase of between 2 per cent spread out over several years or a 7.6 per cent increase. If we remember a year ago, this government ran in an election saying they would break the monopoly and implied prices would be lower.

My question to the minister is, why would the government run an election campaign on lowering electricity rates when it is apparent they had no idea how to do it anyway?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, in fact the first bill this government passed broke the monopoly and that is working its way through the Utility and Review Board at the moment and there are a number of companies that have actually already come in to talk about options to deliver energy to Nova Scotians independently.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that the Liberals are playing a bit of a shell game on electricity rates rather than actually lowering them. Now we have

another rate increase fast approaching, it may be as soon as the new year. Yet this government continues to claim that electricity rates are going down. In fact, the Minister of Energy said it yesterday - he said that rates are going down January 1<sup>st</sup> and I'll table that; it's from Hansard. But the documents filed by Nova Scotia Power with the URB clearly state that rates could go up by 7 per cent next year, and I'll table that as well.

When will the government admit that it has no plans to realistically lower electricity prices?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member should get his information direct from the source than from second-hand sources, because in fact all of the proposals - even the worst-case proposals submitted by the stakeholders - would all result in a net decrease on power bills on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: ROSEWAY HOSP. NURSING SHORTAGE**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Earlier this session the Minister of Health and Wellness informed us that Roseway Hospital in Shelburne was closed for 117 hours last year "due to nurses' shortage" - and I'll table that. He also pointed to the hiring of 83 nurses who graduated from Cape Breton University as an action he has taken to address this.

My question, how many of those new nurses graduating from CBU were hired by the South West Health Authority?

HON. LEO GLAVINE:, Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows very well, there can be gaps in the availability of nurses. We have on occasion, of course, people who take leave, people who go back to school, out for a year on maternity leave and so forth and 117 hours is what it is. It's 117 too many and I know South West is working to make sure that for the long-term there are indeed adequate nurses and physicians throughout South West.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the minister also told this House last week: "Roseway is a bit of an exception" - and I'll table that. My question, through you is, what is the minister doing to address this exceptional circumstance at Roseway Hospital in Shelburne?

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you very much for that question. By "an exception", meaning that the closure in this case, unlike available physicians, is due to nurses. This year the nursing school in Yarmouth has taken in the biggest class that they've had in a number of years and we know that for the long term this will be, in fact, a good solution

because, again, it's mostly students from southwestern Nova Scotia who in fact are on the campus of Yarmouth for their RN program.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PREM.: IVANY REPT. - LIBERAL PARTY CONCERNS**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Those attending the Liberal Policy Conference last week are concerned that this government is not making progress on the Ivany report. They put forward a resolution that stated: "Be it further resolved that the Nova Scotia Liberal Party encourage the Government of Nova Scotia to make it a priority to examine and implement all reasonable recommendations expected to be identified in the findings of the Ivany Report." And I will table that.

Can the Premier explain to us why his own Party is now calling on his government to step up and to take more concrete action on the Ivany report?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the great members of the Liberal Party who have worked so hard to ensure that the people of the Province of Nova Scotia have a government they can be proud of. I want to tell the honourable member that's exactly what this government is doing, we are delivering on that. If she had actually attended the annual meeting, she would have heard Mr. Ivany talk about how bold this government was in dealing with problems that had been neglected by so many Nova Scotian governments.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for his answer. The Premier's own membership is calling for a bold response - your membership to the Ivany Commission's recommendations. They are calling out for the provincial government to respond to the needs of rural Nova Scotia. Instead, the Premier puts the full responsibility, continuously, on Nova Scotians to fix the problems themselves. This government has to take some direct accountability.

Will the Premier show his own Party members that this government is serious about turning the economy around and enact the Ivany goals into law to ensure they are followed by all governments going forward?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the honourable member how proud I am of this caucus, who from day one has responded to every challenge that has been put before this government. Previous governments ignored the inherent structural problems in health care delivery. This government stood up and delivered on that. Successive governments ignored the cry from young people who were residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. This government stood up and responded to those needs. This

government is the first government in 25 years to review the public education system to ensure that it's responding to the next generation of young Nova Scotians.

We're going to continue to do what we've been asked to do. Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Ivany said - this government continues to be bold at every corner. (Applause)

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

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS - NURSING STRATEGY: BILL NO. 1 - IMPACT**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much. I don't know what they're drinking over there.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing a crisis in rural Nova Scotia as so many hospitals are forced to close their ERs due to staffing shortages. More and more nurses are retiring each year, and the number of registered nurses graduating each year is not enough to fill the gap.

When the government introduced Bill No. 1, we heard from dozens of nurses who claimed that they were more likely to move away as a result. So my question to the minister, has he directed staff designing the Nursing Strategy to consider the impact of Bill No. 1 or what the impact of Bill No. 1 will have on the number of nurses in Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I want to thank the member opposite for supporting Bill No. 1. (Applause) I can assure him that the Nursing Strategy - we know that it's in draft state now. When it comes out, it won't be looking at just next year; it will be looking at the next 20 years as to how we can provide all the nurses we need for Nova Scotia hospitals.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: You know, Mr. Speaker, despite this being a tipping point for our province with the impending nurse shortage, the government cut 10 per cent from the budget of that strategy. However, they went on to spend \$74,896 on untendered consultants. This government appears to lack some foresight on both the cost of doing business and the impact that legislation could have on our health care system.

My question is simple, when can we expect the new Nursing Strategy?

MR. GLAVINE: I appreciate the former Minister of Health, who does have a good insight on this particular issue, knows the average age of nurses in the province and what we can project for the future. There are certainly a number of developments already that are there. Nurses are staying in the profession longer, we have more graduates each and every year as we go forward and we also have one program that's now looking at an intensive two-year program that will help fill any of the gaps that may occur in the short term.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: "BETTER CARE FOR SENIORS" - SNOW REMOVAL**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: My question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Mr. Speaker, the government has a brochure, which I will table, that they give out to the public that's called *Better Care for Seniors*. People can receive - in this brochure, it says - up to ". . . \$500 a month to pay for home support services like meal preparation, household chores and personal care." In addition, it reads, "Eligible seniors can also be reimbursed for snow removal services up to \$495 per year."

On the South Shore, residents were told that lawn care was covered by a monthly program but were later told that the program had changed and work already done would count against the \$500 per year in their snow removal.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, what can the Minister of Health and Wellness tell seniors who are very concerned about getting snow removed that would allow them to get to their medical appointments or for them to be able to buy food?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite has presented is one of many, many cases as to why we need one provincial board in this province so that a program gets rolled out from Yarmouth to Sydney in the one way. This was never intended to be \$500 a month; it was \$500 a year and it was unfortunate that it was given to a charitable organization to administer the program and it was wrongly presented to the people of that health district.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, that still doesn't answer the question for those seniors, that's what we are talking about. I know the Minister of Health and Wellness is concerned with taking preventive measures to protect health, so my question to the minister is, what steps has the minister taken to ensure that the families with disabilities who need financial assistance don't have to choose between snow removal and food this coming winter?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly unfortunate that due to the miscommunication there are seniors who spent the allotment this summer. We have asked that non-profit organization to see if there is any way to deal with their unexpected shortfall. Also we are checking to see if there is underutilization across the province on that particular program.

It is really very much like the VIP program and it does provide real, necessary means to help citizens stay in their home. I will get back to the member opposite to see if there is anything we can do for a small number who will be short this winter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**AGRIC.: CABBAGE COSTS - EFFECTS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. As I have mentioned in this House on a couple of occasions, Quebec cabbage farmers are fighting Nova Scotia with cabbage below the cost of production. Cabbage is coming into the province for about \$5 for a 50-pound bag. That leaves the Quebec growers with about \$3 per bag.

My question for the minister is, does the minister believe that Nova Scotia cabbage farmers can make a profit at \$5 for a 50-pound bag of cabbage?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much for this very important question. As the honourable member would realize, we are very concerned about the profitability of the farms in this province and we are doing everything we possibly can to help them make it more profitable as we move forward.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. By selling their cabbage below the cost of production in our province, Quebec growers are forcing Nova Scotia growers out of business, all to protect their own markets elsewhere. Will the minister commit to consulting with Nova Scotia cabbage farmers, such as Mike and Art Woolaver, to take action to ensure Nova Scotia growers are not forced out of the cabbage business?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, indeed we will consult with everybody in the industry, as we have been doing in the last year. It has been very helpful for us and indeed very helpful for the industry as we try to move our industry to a more profitable situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**ENERGY: LOW-VOL. HYDRAULIC FRACTURING - DEFINE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. The minister had indicated in a response to a previous question that the definition of “high-volume fracturing” will be determined after public consultations and a scan of definitions in other jurisdictions. Further, the minister stated, “I am not aware of a technique called low-volume hydraulic fracturing, or medium-volume.” I will table that comment.

It has been some time now so I will ask the minister again, will he seek to define low-volume hydraulic fracturing in a regulation process?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of that member, I will table high-volume hydraulic fracturing regulations from - we have New York, we have Illinois, we have quite a few here - I won't list them all. There are only a few minutes so I

will table them all for the benefit of that member so that he has them. Thank you very much.

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday and today, questions were directed to ministers and the Premier regarding the workings of standing committees of this House. The committee in question does not have any ministers actually sitting on the committee and questions were asked regarding the workings of the committee itself, and decisions of the committee. I would simply ask if you could refer to Beauchesne, the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, and give the House some direction as to whether questions of that nature, regarding standing committees of the House, are deemed appropriate during Question Period.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take that under advisement and I'll report back to the House.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a point of order. Today, in response to a question from me, the Minister of Internal Services implied that the Progressive Conservative caucus tried to bring a topic before the Standing Committee on Human Resources improperly and at the last minute. Today, I'm tabling an email from the Committee's Office to members of all three caucus offices, dated October 16<sup>th</sup>, that had attached to it the list of caucus witness submissions compiled for consideration at the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the HR Committee.

Mr. Speaker, you can clearly see in this document that the FOIPOP Review Officer was the first item on the Progressive Conservative caucus list. It was not, in fact, slipped in at the last minute, but circulated, like the suggestions of all caucus offices, 12 days before the meeting.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you instruct the minister to withdraw his remarks, which were clearly in error. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not going to rule that as a point of order. That's a disagreement of facts, and is between the member and the committee and the minister involved.

### **OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much. Let's get back to the business for today.



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

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 2.

**Bill No. 2 - Clean Air Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour and true pleasure to rise today to debate Bill No. 2, the Clean Air Act, a bill that is very dear and near to my heart. The bill ensures that Nova Scotians breathe clean air - all Nova Scotians. It lays out detailed requirements for maintaining the air quality in Nova Scotia, and it places responsibility on the polluter for any released substances that will damage or have negatives on the environment and on the health of residents. It means everyone should be responsible for the consequences of their actions on the environment.

The bill also requires the Minister of Environment to present a report on all air-quality testing results to the Legislature each year, and finally, this bill will impose strict penalties for individuals and companies that fail to comply with the Act itself. There will be two types of penalties under the new Act: administrative penalties, and fines for violation of the Act. For individuals the total amount of an administrative penalty must not exceed \$5,000. Fines for an individual violating this bill or regulations will be no less than \$500 and not more than \$50,000. Fines for companies will be no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, those fines are serious. They tell those who would pollute our province that we are serious. It tells those who dare to risk our environment that there is a financial penalty and that it is unacceptable in Nova Scotia to take advantage of the clean air we are all entitled to. There has been a school of thought that said Nova Scotians must choose. They must choose if they want the jobs associated within industry, and that they have to be prepared to live with some unpleasant consequences.

That is a very outdated way of thinking. Jobs shouldn't come at an environmental or a health cost. The price is just simply too high. Nova Scotians should not have to choose; it's a false choice. It's an unfair choice. Nova Scotians should not have to sacrifice their health or their community's environment in order to put food on their tables and a roof over their heads. They should be able to take a walk, jog, or bike on the beautiful trails we have and not have to jeopardize their health while doing so.

We can have good jobs, we can have clean air, and we can have a clean environment. We most certainly can coexist. In order to be sustainable, we must make sure that our laws are updated to protect our environment.

Some will say a bill like this one will be trouble to big business. They are wrong. I believe the vast majority of companies want to bring value to the communities where they do business and where they are located. They certainly do not want to devalue it. They want to be good corporate citizens and responsible employers.

Mr. Speaker, businesses in New Brunswick have been operating under a bill very similar to this one since 1997. Imagine, only 17 years ahead of us. The time is now to act on creating a clean air environment for all. People deserve better, and they expect more from us government officials, especially when it means protecting their basic rights such as clean air. What this bill does is lay out very clearly what we, as Nova Scotians, expect from individuals and companies when it comes to keeping our environment clean.

There is no doubt that the situation at Northern Pulp was the catalyst for introducing this bill. Pictou County residents and residents beyond the borders of Pictou County have been voicing their displeasure with the government for allowing Northern Pulp to pollute well above the legal limits. They have been reaching out to all of us for help in this most unfortunate situation, and we need to listen and act now.

Pictou residents are frustrated. They are afraid for their children's health and their own health. They have no idea what the effects of the current air pollution will be on their children in years to come, but for now, many can't breathe without puffers.

As I stated earlier, we can coexist. I truly believe this. I know this. I have witnessed this. There are many residents who need their job at the mill, as well as the thousands of jobs indirectly related to the mill. We all know that good jobs are scarce in our county and all of Nova Scotia.

This bill will open a dialogue where expectations of the mill and other industries are clearly laid out in law. Residents will know what will happen if that law is violated. They will take comfort in knowing their government has the means to keep their environment safe and to ensure their clean air is protected. It will also make accurate information available about what is coming out of those stacks at Northern Pulp.

For those reasons, I urge the government to consider Bill No. 2 very carefully and enable all Nova Scotians to breathe the clean air they all are entitled to. On that note, I will take my seat. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to have the opportunity to stand and speak on this proposed legislation. Let me start by saying that, as someone who lives in the outdoors and who has spent a lot of time in the outdoors, I get the importance of clean air. I was just there in Pictou this week announcing some trail funding, so we get the importance of clean air and the environment.

We also believe that the mill's footprint needs to be reduced. This will be better for the environment and better for the community. This government has taken steps to reduce pollutants in a measured and balanced way.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the legislation takes a measured or balanced approach. I think it's irresponsible to table legislation without knowing what it will mean for the jobs of hundreds of the member's constituents.

I want to ask the Opposition a question: has this legislation been introduced as a means to address the desire of the member for Pictou West, who in a CTV interview in August stated that the mill should be closed? Is that what this PC Party is trying to do with this legislation - close the Northern Pulp mill?

The Opposition Party stands in this Legislature and challenges the government to give more respect to protecting and creating jobs, regardless of environmental concerns. The Leader's claiming that this government is saying no to the ways to create new jobs.

I guess with Bill No. 2, it kind of ensures a duplication of the red tape that's already in place, which kind of contradicts a bill that was introduced by the member for Pictou East - Bill No. 3, the Red Tape Reduction Act. So we have a bit of a shell game going on over there.

The government has delivered concrete data with which the mill must come into compliance or shut down. We have also committed to enhancing the standard for air emissions at Northern Pulp within our current legislation and regulations through the firm's industrial approval. Unlike previous governments who have handed over cash to the company, we have said no to the bailouts. As the Premier has said recently, we made it very clear there would be no forgivable loans under the administration, so that was off the table before we even started.

He went on to say that the role and responsibility of the company is to move forward on its own, not on our backs. The previous two governments - both NDP and Progressive Conservatives - tapped Cabinet-controlled slush funds to give the company more than \$42 million in tax dollars. This government is doing things with more responsibility and a more balanced way.

So as of right now, at this moment, there are too many questions out there for us to move forward with this. With that I take my seat.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to rise here today to speak to Bill No. 2, the Clean Air Act. On October 17, 2013, IARC, the International Agency for Research on Cancer and part of the World Health Organization, announced that it has classified outdoor air pollution as a Group 1 carcinogen in a report compiled by the world's authoritative source of scientific evidence on exposures to cancer-causing substances. This is the first time experts have classified air pollution as a leading cause of cancer and it represents an important step for mankind.

While levels of exposure vary between locations, after evaluating the air that everyone breathes from studies on five continents, the conclusions of the working group in volume 109 of the *IARC Monographs* apply to all regions of the world. The main sources of particulate matter and other substances found in outdoor air pollution are transportation, stationary power generation, residential heating and emissions from all industries.

Positive action is indeed possible according to IARC's director, who is quoted as saying, "There are effective ways to reduce air pollution and, given the scale of the exposure affecting people worldwide, this report should send a strong signal to the international community to take action without further delay."

A Clean Air Act that is made in Nova Scotia for Nova Scotians in my opinion is essential in doing this, and this is why I commend the member for Pictou West for introducing this bill; I would've liked to introduce a bill like this myself. However, the Liberal Government, I thought, would have supported something like this that would affect and help all Nova Scotians in trying to create a better air quality in our province - especially since the science shows that air pollution of many kinds, and particularly greenhouse gas emissions, is the main cause of climate change, which we know affects us all and which many Nova Scotians are very concerned about.

In fact, I recently visited Germany and travelled there to investigate some renewable energy places. There, I discovered that their jurisdictions are actually moving to return their electrical utilities and distribution and transmission grids to public control. Why is that? Not only because it makes economic sense, but because it's the swiftest and most efficient way to develop renewable energy resources which will help to clear and clean the air. In fact, countries like the Netherlands, Austria and Norway that resisted privatization of their electricity sectors are now global leaders in developing renewable energy resources and making their electricity green.

In Trenton, for instance, we're still using coal for that generating station. The people there are complaining that their air quality is not good and that they are experiencing a lot of problems from the fly ash. My Party, the NDP in Nova Scotia, recently passed a policy resolution committing to carefully study the costs and the

possibility of bringing back into public ownership the electrical distribution and transmission grid of this province, and I think that is something that the current government could think about. In fact, this would bring not only power to the people but it would also bring clean air faster. The legacy after all for our children and our grandchildren in this province should include clean air to breathe and a minimum of odours that detract from our quality of life and the tourism industry.

I think that Nova Scotians now are speaking loud and clear about their concerns. The Wheeler report, for instance, showed many people showing up in large numbers to comment about their desire for a ban on fracking. Why? They're concerned about their air and water. People feel vulnerable and they're telling their government that the old ways of doing business are no longer working, that they should not have to choose between jobs or a healthy environment. There is a much-deeper appreciation for the symbiotic relationships that we have with our environment.

Our First Nations people are speaking out and our communities all around the province are speaking out. Again, I commend my colleague for Pictou West for introducing this bill and being brave in doing so. Surely people understand that we need an affirmation from the government for their substantive rights to clean air, clean water, and clean land, and the Clean Air Act would begin to address these concerns. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to the second reading of this important piece of legislation. Before I begin some of my more formal comments, I want to say that I object to a comment made by the member for Halifax Chebucto with regard to this side wanting to close the mill down. That particular statement is so far from being correct that I could probably go on for an hour and speak about it.

We want the mill management to keep very valuable jobs to Nova Scotia and Pictou County, and we also want Environment to do their job, to work together to keep these very valuable jobs and at the same time protect the environment and the access to clean air.

This bill is important because it does so many things to protect Nova Scotians and our environment. To start, it creates more transparency with the department so that all Nova Scotians are aware of the air quality across all areas of the Province of Nova Scotia. By requiring the minister to table an annual report on the results, Nova Scotians will be better educated on the issues surrounding our pollution and other air quality issues.

It will also require the department to pay very close attention to test results as they will be top of mind knowing they must be compiled and tabled in the House each year. If Nova Scotians are more aware of the results of various air quality tests and the conditions

surrounding those results, then we could prevent a lot of damage before it becomes problematic.

Rather than have to issue freedom of information requests for results, or go through endless enquiries, they would be public. The government would have the luxury of addressing issues head-on rather than knee-jerk reactions that we have seen on occasion in the past. This is not to say that the Department of Environment does not do an excellent job of monitoring these things but it would be an added protection for all Nova Scotians.

This bill puts the onus of polluting directly on the polluter in a very direct way. As Nova Scotians, we know that we must take responsibility for our actions in our own lives, so we expect companies who pollute the environment and our air to do the same. This bill would clearly lay out harsh penalties for companies that do not comply and damage air quality. It adds a very important disincentive and would prompt companies to plan ahead and properly address any risk areas they have in their operation.

Mr. Speaker, the transparency this bill requires will have a direct benefit to those polluters as well because they will become aware of the issues much earlier, they may have time to come up with a mitigation plan that will protect the environment without devastating their productivity.

Mr. Speaker, this bill puts an eye to the future by both protecting the health of Nova Scotians and our environment. So often in this House we talk about how we must change the way we currently do things so that our children and future generations can benefit from everything our beautiful province has to offer. This bill is no different. We need to think of them when we debate legislation of this type and it will do just that.

The incidence of respiratory illnesses in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, is very high. By making sure the process by which the government monitors and reports air quality is open, transparent, and constant, we might be able to slow that trend.

In other jurisdictions, legislation of this kind has not been detrimental to some of the biggest polluters in that region. Companies may be wary of this legislation at first but with proper time and consideration it would be of an incredible benefit to them going forward. Mr. Speaker, it would spur innovation in a sector that could help to preserve our environment rather than damage it so badly that it takes years to recover.

We believe that everyone should have access to clear air and safe water in order to survive and prosper. A healthy environment should be a fundamental right of all Nova Scotians. It is the one thing that matters so much - a healthy community for our children. Access to clean air is one of our most basic needs therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure we do a better job making sure our air is clean. We do not need environmental pollution violating what should be a healthy environment.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will consider this bill. As I mentioned this is not about politics this is about what we do to make the province better going forward, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I too, like my colleagues in all the parties thank the member for bringing this piece of legislation forward. I think certainly - given the events of the past number of months in Nova Scotia and in particular in the member's riding in Pictou West, in the country of Pictou - the concerns of Nova Scotians have been made clear, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to those concerns, they are concerns that we have certainly heard in the government and in the Department of Environment as well, Mr. Speaker. But with respect to the legislation before us, what I think is an important task for all members of this House to do is to actually go through that legislation, cross reference it with existing regulation and legislation that we have in the Province of Nova Scotia. I believe that if you go through that process you will find that there is - well, there are some variances from existing legislation, including, as has been mentioned a couple of times now, fines, proposed fine levels for organizations that violate that particular piece of legislation.

What I ask the members to consider, particularly in light of another bill brought forward by the Opposition Party, that being Bill No. 3, which they refer to as the Red Tape Reductions Act, Mr. Speaker, I do have to ask, with such high percentages of duplication of existing legislation and regulations, how is this particular piece of legislation consistent with the desire of the Opposition Party for this government to act in a more efficient and effective manner? How this piece of legislation duplicating existing perimeters, guidelines, and requirements of organizations is a means to support industry in the reduction of red tape and make it easier for those organizations to find new ways to create new jobs. I have to wonder how that is, so I do encourage the members of this House, as they consider this piece of proposed legislation, to consider it in that context.

With respect to the concerns and motivations brought forward and discussed thus far in the debate around the question of why legislation like this would be important, each member talked to the importance of air quality to the health of Nova Scotians. I believe that is an objective shared not just by all Nova Scotians but by all members of this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, I assure you it's certainly an objective shared by the employees of the Department of Environment.

With that in mind, many of the aspects of this legislation that have been highlighted as reasons for bringing it in and duplicating the many aspects of existing legislation - people have discussed and brought up the notion of transparency. Particularly in respect to those proponents or organizations that have been identified and flagged of most concern by Nova Scotians - the member for Pictou West herself indicated Northern Pulp as one of the

motivating factors behind introducing this legislation - I encourage the members of this Legislature and all Nova Scotians to go to the Nova Scotia Environment website. You will find that there is far more transparency today than ever before, with respect to the access to information, with respect to the air qualities.

I notice the members questioning the piece about transparency. I think those were comments coming from the member for Pictou Centre, that highlighting the notion of transparency was an important part of this legislation. I do encourage you to go to our website, where you can go and see the results of the air standards and the air tests, particularly the most recent, from August, and again, you can expect to see updated test results that were recently taken in the month of October to be posted on our website - again, making this information that is of such public interest, in particular to the people of Pictou County, available to be reviewed and assessed and considered in a timely fashion.

In addition to that, the question and the notion of access to information pertaining to air quality, I think it's important for all members of this House and members of the public to be aware, Mr. Speaker, and for yourself to be aware, that the Province of Nova Scotia and the Department of Environment participate in a national program with respect to air quality monitoring, which would be a program that monitors air quality right across this country.

In the past, that program was designed and had a mandate to establish air quality monitoring stations that assessed air quality only around jurisdictions that had a population greater than 100,000. In the Province of Nova Scotia, that means that we only had a mandate to monitor and report on air quality as part of a national program outside and in and around the area of HRM as the only significant area. At one point Sydney was included in that as well.

I think it's important for all Nova Scotians and all members of this Legislature to be aware that we have additional monitoring stations in the Province of Nova Scotia, which goes above and beyond the requirements of that particular monitoring program. It's also important to know that, as part of the work with the national programs, this program is changing. It is moving toward a new air quality monitoring program that will focus on air quality zones, whereby we've removed the population criterion so that we can recognize the concerns brought forward by rural residents, not just in Nova Scotia but across this country.

It should be known to the public, particularly those in Pictou, that the proposed zone that we have for the more northeastern side of the province would have our monitoring stations situated in the County of Pictou, so that we are assessing air quality in the County of Pictou for a particular geographic zone identified as part of a national program. There is no air quality monitor station proposed for Antigonish County. It is in Pictou County that air quality monitoring is being assessed as part of a program that is a national program. The notion and the suggestion that we need to have air quality monitors



in every county or every few feet or miles goes exceedingly above and beyond what is deemed appropriate at a national level by those people who are qualified and experienced in making the assessment and recommendations to establishing this type of program.

I am proud to say that Nova Scotia is a partner and a member of the air quality monitoring network and that we are participating and that there will be ongoing monitoring as part of that national program in the County of Pictou to assess those standards.

All of that said, while there are some interesting aspects to this legislation, I do have concern with respect to the high amount of duplication in the legislation to existing legislation, which actually will introduce additional work for the department and the government at times when legislative changes may come forward. If we want to make modifications to the Environment Act, now we have to go and modify and assess it against this particular piece of legislation as well where things are so similar and in many cases the exact same language is used.

Where the Environment Act exists as a piece of legislation currently assessing all aspects of the environment and pollution, this would be a subset yet it duplicates many aspects of existing legislation and regulations making it difficult for both proponents, companies in industry as well as the government itself.

With respect to the fines and the increase in the fines, I guess some consideration as to how the fining process works in this province. I would encourage the members to access a report from this Spring by EcoLaw - it got lots of media coverage from CBC - that assessed the notion and criticized the Department of Environment with respect to our enforcement in regard to compliance, taking action and fining organizations that may have been in violation of the Environment Act.

In fact, one of the flaws in that particular report is that what they assessed were only those actions taken that were brought through the court system. It's important to highlight that, that goes through the judicial process. For the Department of Environment to assess fines, which the current maximum is in the vicinity of \$1 million, those actually have to go through a long-form prosecution, which is actually a court system. It is not up to the government to make those decisions as to the fine being allocated to the people; it is actually up to the courts and the judges. It's my understanding that the maximum fine given out by the courts of Nova Scotia to date is approximately \$90,000 despite already having a cap of \$1 million.

We could increase these fines substantively yet the judicial system, which assesses the reasonableness and appropriateness of these fines, has in the past determined that the nature of violations and exceedances in the Province of Nova Scotia does not warrant such hefty fines. But it is not for me to assess the decisions of our judicial body, that is another arm; we are here as legislators, not judiciaries. That is for them to assess those decisions and they do that work on the basis of the rules that govern that process.

While we provide what the cap is and the maximum fine, the courts to date have not found fit to reach that level. Increasing that fine does not ensure that it really does address the concerns brought forward by the speaker. I do think, while the intent and the direction of some aspects of this proposal does have some elements of potential merit, there are many challenges and issues and concerns with some of the details around it and perhaps some of the, perhaps, unintended consequences that may not have been considered before bringing this piece of legislation to the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting few minutes there. First we had the member from the government side saying that there was actually no need for this legislation, that it was just kind of silly legislation. Finally, we heard from the minister who said, well, in fact, much of this stuff is already in legislation, so yes, there is a need, it's not silly. It's in legislation. Then he concluded by saying that there are interesting aspects to it, and the intent is well and there is some merit to some of these things. We kind of went full circle there, which I was pleased to see.

I guess my opening comments for the minister - and I was a little surprised at first, when I was hearing the Minister of Environment argue against stronger environmental laws, but maybe I shouldn't have been surprised by that - but in the end we came around.

I guess what I would leave the minister with is, if there are interesting aspects here, if there are some things that have merit, then let's look at some amendments to the bill that has been introduced. Maybe we can make some positive changes that make everyone happy.

That's what the exercise is about. You introduce a bill, it goes through the House, and the people of the House get some commentary. Now, I know that traditionally in this form of Parliament, the bill will be finished today. The bill will die today, because it came from Opposition. I think that's a sad reflection of the state of our politics. Maybe the minister would agree. Maybe he'd say we can look at some of those interesting aspects. So that's a positive thing.

I don't want the intent of this legislation to be lost, though. When I heard the opening comments from the government talking about subsidies and stopping financial subsidies to companies and this type of stuff, well, that's a separate issue; I mean, nobody on this side has an issue with that. We applaud them for anything that they do there.

But that's a question of how a company finances its operations. That only speaks to the financing of a company. That doesn't speak to the environment, no pun intended, that the company operates within. So I want to make that important distinction. I don't want the members of the government side to say, well, we have not given a company any money, so

therefore everything with that company and the way they operate is fine. That may or may not be the case.

This bill is only speaking to the environment that the company operates in, and the rules that they operate in, and I think the government does have some responsibility to set rules that companies operate within, such that they are respectful of Nova Scotians. That's all we're trying to do here today. We're not really too - you know, we are where we are. I have a lot of questions about how we got here, and specifically on Northern Pulp, I find it hard to believe that we got here. Successive governments have failed. Successive mill owners have played a part in this. There are lots of moving parts, but we are where we are, and this bill - the intent behind this bill, as I understand it, is to go forward, prospectively, and say, let's not get here again on another situation. We have this situation. We have to deal with it. But let's not let this happen again.

We should always be looking for new ways to make things operate better in this province. Clearly, I think I heard today that, well, maybe there's something in here that does just that. There's stuff in here that might make things better. There are many aspects to the bill. It is a bill that has been enacted in New Brunswick in, I think, 1997. New Brunswick has a lot of heavy industry. They manage to operate within it. It's not completely recreating the wheel there. Industry and this bill, industry and the environment, industry and the people of Nova Scotia, can and have to get along. That's just the way it is.

This is about setting the rules so that companies understand them and that companies respect them. If you have a company that loses respect for the rules, what happens is that lots of things go amok. I know when I travel around my constituency, and I talk to - oh, well, I was in business myself and I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was pretty fearful of running amok of government rules, because I just didn't want to run afoul of something and cause problems for my company that could then impact my employees. Some companies aren't as mindful of that.

I think the real shame in this is that governments over the years - and this one is not excepted from this - can pick and choose what regulations they want to enforce. I had been out in my constituency and I talked to a young lady who had a sandwich shop. She would sell maybe a dozen sandwiches out of her store at lunchtime. An inspector came and opined that she didn't have the proper equipment for sandwich making - she did not have a commercial-grade sink, she did not have a commercial-grade fridge. So on the spot, immediately, she was stopped. She doesn't make any more sandwiches. The inspector stopped her right dead in her tracks.

On the other hand, we have other companies that can seemingly be less respectful of the rules. I think that's where the fines come into it, because nothing gets a company's attention like the opportunity to be out a lot of money on account of a fine.

I was listening with interest to the minister's comments about the complexities around fining companies. I certainly take him at his word that there must be some complexities there and I'm sure that's a frustration for people in the department. The thing that I would think about and get my head around is that a court of law only interprets the law, so if there are issues maybe with the application of fines, maybe there's leeway or maybe there's some subjectivity around the way the courts are interpreting the existing laws. I don't know. But if that's the case, then it would be incumbent on us, as legislators, to clarify that, to say these are the rules, and for companies that break these rules, this is the penalty. The penalty has to be punitive enough to get a company's attention. I think that's what the intent of this bill is.

When I think about those examples of my friend who makes sandwiches and at the other extreme, the mill, which has been - it is what it is - they have been not in compliance for a good number of years. I don't know how that happened, but it did happen. But I can tell you, that makes people suspect of government's ability to regulate. People are losing faith in government's ability to regulate.

I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is the reason we are seeing the blowback on the fracking, because the people of the province are saying - we have concerns about fracking. The natural response to that is, well, we will go get the information to alleviate those concerns and we will set the rules such that we keep people safe. That's the natural progression of that - we need information, we get information, government sets rules, people feel safe by the rules that government has set.

Well, the chain is broken, Mr. Speaker. People do not believe that the government will enforce the regulations. That is why the Minister of Energy is having so much discussion about his fracking legislation. People don't believe. They just don't believe that the government will enforce the regulations that they come up with.

Now why would they not believe that, Mr. Speaker? Why would they not believe that? That's the issue. The way that you can give people comfort on that and show them you're serious, is to say that you will take people who flaunt the regulations, who ignore the regulations, whatever the case may be - you will take those companies and you will penalize them. And it's going to hurt. That is the reason that we see in the bill that I'm so pleased that my colleague from Pictou West introduced and that's why we see such punitive measures.

We do have a moral obligation in this Chamber to protect the people of Nova Scotia from many things. I referred this morning, in my statement, to a constituent of mine who is having difficulty with the Workers' Compensation Board. We have an obligation to protect those people as well, but we certainly have a moral obligation to protect the air that people are breathing. Right now, the people don't feel that government is doing that.

So if the people don't feel that the government is doing that, then they should take some action to help them get there. They should try and address those concerns, and to skirt around those concerns, it's just not productive. You can't say it's already addressed in legislation therefore we need not do it because the people, they don't believe it. If there's an issue there, it's the government's job to make sure that the people feel it is addressed.

That is what we're talking about here. We're not talking about giving a company money, giving a company a subsidy of any sort, because a subsidy isn't just money, there are lots of ways you can subsidize a company. You don't have to write them a cheque to subsidize them and that's a discussion that we will have in this House many times. I do believe this government, as much as they say we took the chequebook away, we're not writing cheques - I think that's a very cute thing to say but I do believe, and there are many instances where they are subsidizing companies and maybe not with a cheque. So it's got to be one or the other.

This bill is not about that. This is a bill about setting the ground rules that companies operate within. One member from the government says that's a silly notion, you don't need any ground rules for companies to operate in. The minister said well, in fact, there are lots of ground rules that companies have to operate within and it's already covered. So somewhere amongst those two things is the reality. I do take the minister's comment that maybe there are lots of ground rules set in different legislations, I'll take that.

I'll take that comment, but I would say let's take that a little step further and take a look at addressing the interesting aspects - let's address the things in the bill that the minister found interesting. Hopefully they were interesting enough to try to address because the intent is good and there is some merit to parts of this bill - in fact I would say there's merit to the entire bill, but if there are parts that are not addressed by existing legislation that are in here, then let's do that. Let's find a way to move forward - we don't have to say no, we're not going to look at that because it's not necessary because it came from the Opposition. Let's find a way to take the interesting parts and enact them. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JAMIE BAILLIE:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe this Minister of Environment that we have today in Nova Scotia. It's quite a sight to behold - the Minister of Environment stands up and argues against strengthening our environmental laws.

I would just like to remind the minister of the duty he swore himself to when he entered the Cabinet of the province, to actually be the advocate for our environment, for protecting our environment, for protecting our air, for protecting our pristine harbours and bays and forests and all of those things that he has sworn to do. Yet here we have a very reasonable bill, used in other places like right next door in New Brunswick that actually

enforces strong, committed, clean environmental laws, and who is the one that gets up and says that he is opposed to it? The Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker.

I'm actually shocked and appalled at what the Minister of the Environment just said in his speech. I am shocked and appalled but you know what? Maybe I shouldn't be, maybe we shouldn't be. He is having enough trouble enforcing the environmental laws that he is responsible for now. No one knows that better than the people of Pictou County, but all Nova Scotians are watching.

As if that was not bad enough, the Minister of the Environment actually stood in his place here in this House and he compared environmental laws to red tape. Now if he believes that environmental laws are red tape, we have a bigger problem on our hands than we realized. Mr. Speaker, requiring our manufacturers, our industries, our businesses to comply with strict and enforceable environmental laws is important to creating jobs, is important to our environment, but it is not red tape. That is what the Minister of Environment is missing. (Applause)

I'll tell you what red tape is, just for the benefit of the minister; I'll tell you what red tape is: shutting down a long-time, long-established turkey processor because they don't like what he does. That is red tape. Here we have a government that has all the time in the world to shut down legitimate, long-standing turkey processors, not to work with them to make them compliant, but to walk in on one with no notice and close their doors. They have all the time in the world to do that but they don't have time to enforce the environmental laws among our major pulp plants and other manufacturers. Mr. Speaker, that minister clearly has his priorities mixed up.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, you know in this house in the past number of years we have seen bills come in to regulate how long a clothesline can be. We have seen regulations come in that you must post in a public washroom the seven steps to washing your hands. Those are all red tape, but putting in place strict and strong and enforceable environmental laws that our major industrial employers have to live by, that is not red tape. That is what the Minister of the Environment is missing.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, having clear, strong, enforceable environmental laws is actually an important component of having a province that is open for business and creating good jobs. That's the point that the Clean Air Bill makes because then everyone knows the rules of the game. People in Nova Scotia and around the world who are trying to decide where to invest their money and create jobs and build new products, they know with clarity what the rules are and they ought to know, with clarity, what the consequences are when those rules are abused. That is what this bill says.

That's why I can't believe that we have a Minister of Environment who doesn't agree with that, because if he did agree with that, he would have gotten up and said gee that's a great idea, wish I'd thought of it, let's see if can't make something like that work, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, if he doesn't want to take it from the Opposition side of the Legislature, which it is a shame if he doesn't - right next door in New Brunswick they have a clean air Act and they have a pulp industry, and they have jobs there in that industry, and they have a forestry industry that supports it, Mr. Speaker. You know what they do in New Brunswick? They all work together and they all know the rules of the game. What we have seen here in Nova Scotia in the last little while, where there has been an absence of leadership from the Liberal Government, where there has been a vacuum created, where people need answers - is the opposite, where people, neighbours, friends, relatives, are pitted one against the other because they are told that they have to choose between the air they breathe and a job in their community.

As the member for Pictou West so articulately pointed out, that is a false choice. It is unfair to ask any Nova Scotian or any part of Nova Scotia to make that choice, for any period of time.

This is 2014. Nova Scotians deserve to know that they don't have to make that choice, that they can have both - that they can have a clean environment and clean air, one of the things that we value about our province, and also have a good job. The fact of the matter is that until the government strongly makes that point, until they show their mettle at enforcing our laws and enacting new, strong, clear laws to protect our people and our air, Nova Scotians are always going to be wary and they're not going to get ahead.

This actually directly relates to whether we have a government that is willing to try new ways of creating new jobs in the province or not. They've already said they're not, by banning one of the new ways to create new jobs that is working in so many other places when they banned high-volume hydraulic fracturing. All the jobs and all the tax revenue and all the royalties that would come with it, all banned.

They say it's because Nova Scotians aren't ready. Well, instead of actually giving them the confidence that this province can do new things well, they banned it. Instead of showing by their actions that they are prepared to put in place strong environmental protections and enforce them - we're not going to be ready. When that happens, all of that opportunity is banned as sure as if they had banned the jobs directly themselves. That's what's wrong with the ban. That's why we've spent so much time in this Legislature opposing a government that actually would throw away a new way to create new jobs in this province.

Let's be perfectly clear. The best alternative way to proceed, whether it's on hydraulic fracturing, whether it's on any other way of preserving or creating jobs, is to

match our resolve to move ahead and find new opportunities for Nova Scotians to live and work here with an equal resolve to make sure that our environment is protected, that our air is clean, that our lakes are pure.

Rather than say no and ban things, isn't it time that we resolved to be the best in the country at getting that balance right? The only bill that does that in this House is the bill sponsored by the member for Pictou West, the Clean Air Act. Given the opportunity to actually go along and get something right that might actually help all Nova Scotians in the future go forward, knowing there are good opportunities here and we have a clean environment, they said no - led off by the Minister of Environment himself, which is a great irony.

Even today in Question Period, we were talking about hydraulic fracturing and the Energy East Pipeline and how New Brunswick has such strong advocates at home and across the country. The current new Liberal Premier of New Brunswick, and a past, well-respected Liberal Premier in Mr. McKenna, are arguing that we need to try these new things.

We don't have that kind of leadership here. That is the problem. We don't have any sense of vision or plan or strategy from the government that they know that it's time to connect the dots - a strong environment, strong environmental laws, the willingness to enforce those laws actually equals jobs and doesn't ban them. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I put a schedule down for people to adhere to, so I'm hoping that everybody sticks to their times as best they can.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 53.

**Bill No. 53 - Veterans Appreciation Act.**

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on another note; I don't intend to mention the Minister of Environment as I talk about this bill.

It is nevertheless a moment of pride for me and for our caucus, and I hope for all members of the Legislature, to be able to rise and speak about Bill No. 53, the Veterans Appreciation Act.

It was actually introduced to this House before the tragic events of last week, but obviously it takes on even more meaning here today. All Nova Scotians are proud of the Canadian Forces and the great history and presence that the military has in the City of



Halifax and across our province. It is important that we find ways to recognize their service to our country, not just after a tragedy and certainly not just on Remembrance Day, but throughout the year.

That's what this bill is all about, thanking our veterans for their service. Beyond that it also recognizes the great traditions, history, culture, the social fabric of our province, and how much the Canadian Forces have added to Nova Scotia long before any of us were here and, I am sure, long after we're all gone.

For today, I note that there are almost 11,000 members of the Canadian Forces serving right now here in Nova Scotia. Of course there are thousands of others who are here who have retired from active service but remain, thankfully, as residents of the province. This bill is for all of them. There are 11,000 people on active service, plus thousands more Nova Scotians who are retired from active duty - that is a large number of Nova Scotians who have served their country in this great way, through military service.

I believe that all members are aware that Nova Scotia contributes one of the highest numbers of new recruits every year per capita to all branches of the Canadian Forces - the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. They're all part of our great Nova Scotia tradition and history of military service and we are thankful for that.

But 11,000 people - that's a big number, so just let me tell you for a moment about one Nova Scotian who is retired from active service who actually was not only the inspiration for this bill but who gave us the idea for this bill, and that is Mr. Don Fletcher of Advocate Harbour.

Mr. Fletcher served his country with great distinction as a member of the Army for over 27 years. He served here at Canadian Forces bases in our province and across the country; in fact, he served overseas on multiple occasions in places like Lahr, Germany, and others. After 27 years of service to our country he retired from active duty and returned to Advocate Harbour. They are the better for it because he continues to serve his community in large ways and small.

Mr. Fletcher leads the Remembrance Day service, for example, every year in Advocate and it's a very moving and fitting service. I'm going to speculate that it probably has the highest percentage turnout of any community in the province, or among the highest. Just about everybody is there and Mr. Fletcher leads that service. I've had the honour of being there every year since I've been elected and continue to go because it is a great way on that one day, on that important day of remembering the contribution that Mr. Fletcher and others like him have made to our protection and to the growth and success and freedoms of our country.

Mr. Speaker, Don Fletcher was recently - a year ago - elected as a municipal councillor for the Municipality of the County of Cumberland from that area, and he continues to find ways to serve his community and his province.

The reasons I raise Mr. Fletcher are numerous. One is I'm a great admirer of all that he does for his community and the leadership he has shown. Of course, I'm thankful for his service to our country. Mr. Fletcher is also a motorcycle driver, and it was Mr. Fletcher who came to me, as his MLA, and said, you know, I would like to be able to display my veteran roots the same way other veterans can who have automobiles by having a motorcycle licence plate that's a veteran plate.

Well, that's very reasonable. In fact, it's a great idea. I'm going to assume that governments past, when they started the veteran plate program, did not intend to exclude veterans whose choice of transportation is a motorcycle. But that doesn't matter - this is an opportunity to actually extend the thanks that we provide to automobile drivers to veterans who also use a motorcycle as their motorized mode of transportation. It's a way to show our appreciation to them too.

Last week, when we were all worried and saddened and anxious about our country and about members of the Canadian Forces, two of whom were killed, I did have the opportunity to speak with Rear-Admiral Newton here in Halifax, to thank him for the work of the men and women who serve under him here at MARLANT, for their service. In that conversation, it struck me how fortunate we are to have the Canadian Forces in great presence here in our province and how we should thank them. That was thanking them for extraordinary service in a difficult week where they themselves were under attack, where our country was under attack, where our instruments of democracy were under attack.

But it's also true that we should make sure that they know how much we appreciate their work, not at just times like that but for all time. This is a way to do so. We do have a special licence plate program for those who have served in the Canadian Forces, the armed forces of other Commonwealth countries, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the United Nations peacekeeping service. For all of them, we provide our thanks. Why not extend those thanks to the exact same people who also choose a motorcycle for their mode of transportation?

The veteran licence plate program was actually enacted in 2002 by a PC government, and I am quite proud of that. I know every Party since has kept it in place, and now we have a moment in time when we can come together and expand it.

I also want to talk about another provision in the bill, which is to provide an ongoing waiver or exemption of our vehicle registration fees and renewal fees for these very people who have literally put their lives on the line, getting in harm's way - a phrase that takes on new meaning now - protecting our country and our important institutions. One way to provide an ongoing thanks to all of them is to waive those fees. It does seem, on

reflection, that honouring our veterans with a licence plate and then charging them for the honour doesn't make sense. Providing veteran plates and registration to our veterans free of charge, that is a real thank you for their service.

It's a small price to pay for the sacrifice that they have made. We estimate that the cost of waiving those fees would be less than \$900,000 a year, a small amount in a province with a \$10 billion budget. But we are, of course, always mindful of cost, and I would encourage the government to find that \$890,000 in savings in administration or in their program savings review, and allocate that modest amount to waiving the registration fees of our veterans. It's only reasonable.

I know it would be a small but profound gesture in support of Canadian Forces personnel here who are retired and are now our veterans. It is one small way that we can say thank you to them, Mr. Speaker.

The government went through a 1 per cent review. That didn't work, so now they're trying it again, I know. I truly hope that in that 1 per cent review they're able to find \$890,000 out of \$10 billion in order for us to give a proper thank you to our veterans.

Let me conclude by saying that I happen to believe that the men and women who serve in our Canadian Forces don't really retire when their duty is done. Even though they remove themselves from active service, they remain on guard for their country. They remain citizens in the service of their country in a new way. We've seen them take action voluntarily, as Mr. Fletcher has done by volunteering in his community and running for municipal council. We've seen them take action at fire scenes and accident scenes.

The training, the discipline, the community dedication, the dedication to country - men and women of Canada who have served in the Canadian Forces don't lose any of those things when they retire and go off active duty. Those things endure, and so should our thanks to them for the things they have done for all of us. This bill is a good way to do that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to rise and speak for a few moments on this bill that is before us right now, Bill No. 53. I've looked around the House, and I notice that all of my colleagues on all sides of the House are wearing their poppies in honour of the people who continue to serve in our Armed Forces, but of course also honouring those who have given their lives to protect our great nation and to protect our freedom and the rights that we have in this House of Assembly and Houses of Assembly right across our great nation.

I've mentioned before in this House, in this Chamber, just how much respect and honour I personally have for the members of our Armed Forces. My grandfather on my

mother's side served in the First World War. He was a member of the First Five Hundred signed up in Newfoundland. He was actually from Glasgow, Scotland, but was living in Newfoundland. Back then, of course, Newfoundland was still one of the colonies, so he signed on as one of the First Five Hundred - the Blue Puttees, as they were called.

He went overseas in the First World War and served in the trenches all throughout France. He was mustard-gassed in one of those trenches, and had a severe lung infection and cough for the remainder of his life as a result of that. He managed to survive, though, for many years after the First World War, and in fact, served in the Second World War as an air raid warden in Glasgow.

My mother, his daughter - she was a WAAF in the Second World War. She enlisted and served with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force forces there. My father, a Newfoundlander, signed up in Newfoundland during the Second World War with the Royal Newfoundland Artillery. He was what they called a range finder, who went in behind enemy lines and determined the distance and the targets for shelling purposes. They didn't have all the electronic technology that they have today, so they actually had to send people in to determine where the targets were and what the ranges should be set for the guns and so on. So he was a range finder.

My mom and dad were married, as I've said before, during the Blitz in Glasgow. The windows of the church where they were married were boarded up with wood, of course, because of the ongoing Blitz of Glasgow and London during the Second World War.

So I certainly hold a very dear appreciation, and my parents instilled in me at a very young age the importance of recognizing all of those who served in both of the Great Wars, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War as well, but also those who continue to serve to protect our country, most recently in parts of Europe and in Afghanistan and in other parts of the country as well.

Mr. Speaker, I don't really think it's necessary for this House to doubt for a moment or have any hesitation as to how much we support our Armed Forces and our military personnel. The Province of Nova Scotia has a very deep appreciation for our military personnel, as does all of Atlantic Canada, for that matter, as the honourable members on the opposite side. The Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned a moment ago that clearly Nova Scotia has some very special and direct connections with our military forces, but all of Atlantic Canada has over the years. That is something that our history has shown, that we are among the first to stand and say, we will go forward and we will help protect, whether it be on the land, or in the air, or on the sea.

All members of this House, for example, should be proud that this is the only provincial Legislative Assembly in all of Canada that has a Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. Mr. Speaker, this is a committee that meets regularly to listen to veterans,

to hear their concerns, to do what it can to help them live better lives after their service is over, or even during their service, for them and their families as well, while they continue their service. It meets regularly to hear from them and do whatever action it can. I don't think there is any doubt or any hesitation by anyone in the House, of the recognition of the work of our Premier.

In fact, in Nova Scotia, our Premier of this province serves as the only Minister responsible for Military Relations in Canada. Let me make that clear: this is a unique role in all of Canada and it recognizes the important role, not only of the military here in Nova Scotia but the important role of the military throughout our country. It also recognizes the clear commitment of our government, of our Premier, and of our Legislature to the people who serve in our military forces.

I just want to highlight one or two of the things, for example, that our Premier, in his role, certainly has done to acknowledge all of those Nova Scotians who have served and made sacrifices on behalf of all our Canadians. The Premier has advocated, on behalf of our provinces' veterans, to Minister Fantino. He wants to ensure that our veterans are well-served by the Government of Canada, particularly in light of some of the reductions that our federal government is looking at when it comes to our Veterans Affairs offices and so on.

I know the Premier is one of the most outspoken individuals when it comes to protecting the rights of our veterans and doing what we can to push back the responsibility to the federal government to continue to support those veterans, as it should have been doing all along. The Premier has met, for example, and also corresponded with Minister Nicholson to discuss the importance of supporting our current members of the Armed Forces and their families.

The Premier has supported the work of organizations and groups who are committed to paying tribute to brave Nova Scotians all throughout our province. They include, for example - and I'll just go through a little list, Mr. Speaker: the Port Hawkesbury Veterans Memorial Park Society; the Maple Grove and Yarmouth High School Memorial Club; Veterans Emergency Transition and Services (VETS) Canada, who were recognized in this Legislature just a few days ago; the Canadian Youth Remembrance Society; the Cobequid Veterans Memorial Park Committee; the Pictou County Military Museum and Heritage Association; and the Juno Beach Centre Association. These are just a few examples of the many things that our Premier attends and supports regularly as part of his role as the Minister responsible for Military Relations, and again, the only one in Canada, I might remind.

In his role as Minister responsible for Military Relations, the Premier participated, for example, in the National Day of Honour that marked the end of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. The Premier participated in the Afghanistan Memorial Vigil, to

remember those Nova Scotians and other Canadians who perished in Afghanistan. That, as you will know, Mr. Speaker, is a very moving and emotional tribute to their memory.

I know all of my colleagues in the House, as we approach Remembrance Day - and we are wearing the poppies as I began saying a few moments ago - and in a way, I think it is sad that we only wear our poppies in these couple of weeks in the year. I know our Legions have begun to encourage people to wear the poppy all year round, to remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and for those who continue to put their lives on the front line to protect us, and to protect the rights we have to stand and make our opinions known in these Legislatures, and on the streets, and in our homes, each and every day.

I think, while it is critical that we think about things over the course of the next few days, we should also be remembering our veterans and paying honour to them at every opportunity throughout the entire year. Like many of my colleagues, come November 11<sup>th</sup> I will be laying a wreath at Sullivan's Pond at the cenotaph there, and I know many of my colleagues on all sides of the House will be doing the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, I make mention of some of these things just to point out that it is extremely clear that Nova Scotia, that all members of this Legislature, that our Premier and our government support, promote and do everything in our power to assist our veterans and those who served, and continue to serve, and their families, each and every day of the year.

It's interesting as well to me because, as I've also mentioned to this House, I'm a motorcycle enthusiast, and one of the major parts of this bill of course refers to the licence plates for motorcycles for veterans. Many of my associates who I ride with regularly - and I know some of my other colleagues in the House who ride as well - are veterans. The veterans wear their colours, as they call them, or their patch if you will, on the back of their vests. They wear them proudly. They wear their platoons or their service numbers on the fronts and they clearly show the world and the rest of the motorcycling community how proud they are that they have served. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that all people who ride with them are proud as anything at every opportunity to ride alongside them. I know I certainly am.

I know as well, for example, the Blue Knights wear their patches. As well, the Red Knights. The Blue Knights, of course, represent police officers and former and retired police officers; the Red Knights, of course are our firefighters, current firefighters and retired firefighters. The list goes on - masonic clubs, Shriners' clubs - these are all clubs and associations that wear their patches and their colours with pride. They are recognized by other people who are riding our streets and riding our roads each and every day.

I want to assure the House and I want to assure the Opposition that I have actually spoken to our minister responsible and asked the very questions concerning the potential for licence plates for motorcyclists. I know that as we speak, there are discussions underway with regard to specialized plates, perhaps not just for veterans and just for

motorcycles but for other aspects as well. I'm quite confident that our minister is listening to the concerns of all sides and will, in fact, respect what we may or may not be able to do to recognize our veterans.

I think what I really wanted to say and to make very clear to all members of this House, and to all those who might be listening - once again, it is imperative that they know that we are supporting them. When I say "them", I'm talking about those who continue to serve, those who are serving; those who are in the reserves who are prepared to put their lives on the line, to put their lives in danger at each and every opportunity; those who serve on our vessels overseas, in our air force and certainly in our ground troops as well that could be called to go into combat zones at any time.

We pride ourselves here in Canada in being a peacekeeping nation, on doing our utmost for preserve peace in foreign countries at every opportunity. I dearly hope that for the sake of myself and my family and my daughter and our grandchildren, my granddaughter and grandson, that we'll never see our Armed Forces have to go into conflict. I dearly hope that. But I'm also proud to know that those who do serve in our armed forces and have served in our armed forces and are retired from our Armed Forces are prepared to do that at any opportunity at a drop of a hat if our nation calls on them to once again go forward to protect and to serve in any way that they can.

I hope that over the past few minutes I've just made it clear that I don't really see a lot of issue with this bill. I think it is something that our government is already looking at, that we clearly understand is something that we can in fact take a serious look at. But more importantly, that it's very, very clear that our commitment to our veterans, that our commitment to those who continue to service is unwavering, steadfast, and will continue to be so as we go forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to stand and speak on this piece of legislation. Listening to all members comment on this bill, I think one thing that is evident is that we all do respect and support our veterans here in our province and across our country. I don't think anybody here would want to not associate themselves with the support that we see in our communities across Nova Scotia and across the country towards our veterans, especially after recent effects in Ottawa and around the globe.

It really brings it back very close to home, the sacrifices that our military personnel, the men and women who serve our armed forces, those men and women who serve our services like fire and police and paramedics, who provide care and who are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To see what happened this last week is just something that I don't think any of us would ever want to see again happen in our province.

I think we need to ensure that when we talk about the support we give to our veterans that we back that up. We back it up with the actions. I feel that we need to see the government come forward with some actions, and here is a great opportunity for them to support an Opposition piece of legislation that I think, on the face of it, most Nova Scotians, maybe not all but most Nova Scotians would say this is a piece of legislation that would really show in action the support that the Government of Nova Scotia has towards our veterans.

I would hope that maybe the government will look at this, maybe the Government House Leader will take it back to Cabinet Thursday and say maybe we should support this piece of legislation. We know - I've been here a long time, over 11 years, going on 12 years - that the likelihood of them passing an Opposition bill is little to none. We know that we just saw, it was yesterday, legislation from the Independent member get through second reading and it's going to move through the process and I think this is another great opportunity, Madam Speaker, that government could take to show that they truly support not only the process that we have here on how legislation is introduced by any member of the House, but show the support of veterans.

Actions do speak louder than words. It reminds me over the last year some of the issues that have been in the media that our veterans are facing. We know that the federal government made the decision within the last year to close Veterans Affairs offices across the country. We know the Veterans Affairs office in Sydney was closed even though there were huge protests around doing that. I think Nova Scotians showed that they support our veterans and they need the opportunity and they should be given the respect to be able to get into those Veterans Affairs offices that show and give the support to our veterans.

We have to remember many of them, especially of the great wars, are quite older individuals. To kind of suggest don't worry about it, the information, the support that you've been receiving for decades and decades through Veterans Affairs offices, you can just go down to maybe the Employment Services office that the federal government has, or you can go online and you can get the same service.

I think the federal government missed the point. The reason I'm bringing this up is because I know a colleague across the way mentioned the fact that we are one of the only House of Assemblies that has a Veterans Affairs Standing Committee. I was very proud when I first got elected in 2003, we were asked as new members which committees are you interested in, which ones would you want to sit on? And when I looked at the list my first request was to sit on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

I think we all bring our family history of service and having both parents who served in the Navy, Madam Speaker, I thought this was a great way for me to get on a committee I'm really interested in. I had the opportunity at one point in Opposition to be vice-chairman of that committee and it continued to bring forward issues and make sure



there was awareness around some of the challenges that veterans had in our province over the years.

One of the things that I brought up at the time when we had a presentation from, I believe, the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command was the Last Post Fund. I asked, because I had heard from a family about the Last Post Fund and accessing funds for that so they could properly bury a veteran, and I realized pretty quickly that there was very limited funding going towards that fund. It was a federally funded initiative and through the awareness of the Veterans Affairs Committee we brought some awareness around it where the federal government acted on that and they increased funding to make sure that any veteran who passed away received the proper burial that they deserved, because of their service, Madam Speaker.

With the Veterans Affairs Committee, last year when the federal government brought forward these changes of closing the veterans' offices, we, as Opposition members, both Parties, brought forward an initiative or a motion to try to get the government to recognize the impact that this closure was going to have on the veterans in Nova Scotia and tried to ask for an ombudsman to be put in place to oversee that transition.

That was turned down by the government, Madam Speaker. The Premier, who is the Minister responsible for Military Relations, I know one of the only Premiers in the country - the previous Premier, Premier Darrell Dexter, was also the Premier who oversaw that file and actually had military service in the Navy - but the government refused to support that. It was a great opportunity to show veterans in our province the support of the provincial government.

We understand completely that it is not a provincial issue. It was a federal issue that was downloaded, really, onto the province and I respect that. We have seen many examples of that over the last number of years, especially in health care, where the federal government has walked away, I think, from their duty to ensure that the programs they start and fund, that they continue to fund it, so I understand that. But it doesn't mean that the government shouldn't have acted.

I believe this piece of legislation would go a long way to try to reconcile the decision of the government at that time not to fund an ombudsman position to oversee that transition of those offices being closed, Madam Speaker. I think it is a great opportunity to show an action from government that we support our veterans and we need to continue to do that.

I hope the Government House Leader is listening. I hope he takes this back. If they are not going to allow for a vote today and pass this today, bring it back to Cabinet and see what support you have around the Cabinet Table to come back and support this piece of legislation. I think it's something that is reasonable. It is something that would get wide support across the province from residents and the timing is just perfect, Madam Speaker.

We are a week and a half away from Remembrance Day. I believe, especially over the last number of months the outpouring of support and grief that the country has seen and is giving towards our veterans, this would be a great opportunity to do something that shows that here our province is dealing and bringing forward issues that are important to veterans, that support veterans.

I think it's a great opportunity and I hope the government does that. I believe there are about 2.7 million Canadians who are designated as veterans in the country, Madam Speaker. We have Legions across our province that provide support for those veterans throughout communities across Nova Scotia. I know the Legion in my community is actually one of the largest membership Legions in the province; it is Calais Branch 162. They have seen a lot of support from the community because of the initiatives they bring forward to support veterans.

If we have organizations out there in our community, like the Legions and like other organizations that want to support our veterans through their actions, then I think we should do the same and return that. I hope the government members, who may not be in Cabinet, maybe talk with some of the members of the Executive Council to see if this is something we could potentially move forward to support.

We know, I know, and I think many members know, how proud veterans are, especially when they get to place a licence plate on their vehicle. My father has one on his vehicle. He is very proud of his service. He actually was on the Athabaskan during the first Gulf conflict back in the 1990s - I'm trying to think of the year, I was younger. He served almost 35 years in the military and so did my mother who initially served in the Navy but unfortunately back in the 1960s, when they decided to get married, they frowned upon service personnel marrying so my mom had to leave the Navy, which I don't think happens today. We have many men and women who are married who continue to serve.

But they are very proud to promote the fact that they're veterans. You see it in the licence plates. We know that other organizations like firefighters, volunteer firefighters who have their licence plate, they are so proud to have that on their vehicle. I think this would go a long way to continue that, to allow for motorcycles to have the same licence plate on it so that they can proudly display that they've been committed to our province, to our country, so that they can feel proud of the service that they provided.

The interesting thing over the last week or so is that I've been hearing from friends of mine who have served - some of them are retired now, some of them are still serving. One of my good friends is on *HMCS Toronto* and he's over somewhere, he's away from here. He's been away since July, and he's going to be away from home until February. Donnie Decker, he's a chief in the Navy and his family is very proud of his service. But I think that by ensuring that we can support them, then here is an opportunity to do that.

Just last week, after the events in Ottawa and in Quebec, there was what was - I don't know if it was - it wasn't an order, but a recommendation from the military for military personnel to maybe not wear the uniform out in public. I have to say, I know two of my friends mentioned to me right away - I will never do that. I will be proud to wear my uniform. I think it showed how much they're committed to being military personnel.

*HMCS Toronto* is in the Mediterranean right now, I believe. It's probably a little warmer than it is here, so I'll have to - he's actually going to be on leave next week. He's going to be home for Remembrance Day, so it's going to be great to see how he's doing.

But I heard through the events last week that military personnel are very proud. They are very proud people and they won't shy away from showing people that they did serve, they are serving. I think through this piece of legislation we, as MLAs, the government, can allow them to continue to show how proud they are by ensuring that they have licence plates available to them for their vehicle, private motor vehicles, for their motorcycles. If we could see about the fees, I think it would show the support of government.

I hope, again, that government will take this back, the Government House Leader will take it to Cabinet this Thursday and ask to support this. Thank you.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. This piece of legislation is intended to show the tremendous appreciation that we have for the many veterans who have served over many, many wars, conflicts. I know that in my own job for the last 41 years, I never, ever had a fee for anything that I did. But I know that when I did do something and a family or a couple or whatever appreciated what I did, they would maybe send a note or maybe even give me some money, whatever. I never charged a fee, but I always appreciated that thank you that they gave.

When I think of all those men and women who fought in the wars, we really owe those who fought and sacrificed for our freedom a huge debt. To me, this legislation is just one way that we can start to pay them back. It's a very small way, but it's one way that we can just say a simple thank you. Our caucus believes that we can at least offer motor vehicle registration at no charge to these folks, as we do to our brave firefighters and those who do ground search and rescue here in Nova Scotia.

With the Canadian Forces members who have returned from Afghanistan and the 11,000 veterans in Nova Scotia, we feel that offering a licence plate every two years at no charge is a thank you for which they really deserve our thanks.

Bill No. 53 ensures that our veterans, who even enjoy - as my colleague across the way said - riding a motorcycle, will have access to this free registration. Madam Speaker, the veteran licence plate has been displayed proudly from 2002 by our many veterans. Now is the time to allow them to have their registration and plates for free.

I am very proud that it was the Progressive Conservative Government that established the veteran licence plate to honour those who have served our country in the Canadian Forces and in other services. The plates were a way to show that we remember and value what they did for us. This bill renews our commitment to remember and to value our veterans.

To show you why we believe this genuine reflection of thanks and appreciation to our many veterans should take place, we only have to look back at our history. I'm looking back at my history in Brookfield, for instance. When I arrived in Brookfield, Remembrance Day was well attended. The actual monument for that was the elementary school. It was built right after the war, and that was the memorial for the veterans. Since then they have torn down that memorial, and the community has erected an absolutely fabulous-looking memorial to our veterans. It is in the centre of our community, and it is something to behold. I take great pride in that.

Our Memorial Day services are now attended by about 500 in our community. It's a very small community, but we do have a wide representation in our community to come and pay tribute to those people. When I look at how our young people are looking at this now, they have a great appreciation for what has been done. I also attend the schools in Brookfield, and I am a part of the Remembrance Day services that they have there. It is amazing what those young people put together in order to honour those and show their appreciation. Every year's different, I never know what to expect, and I always look forward to going to the schools, because they always come up with something different when they have their Remembrance Day services.

Remembrance Day is coming up now. I think of how our kids, for instance, are welcomed overseas when they go for their trips. Our teachers are taking them to France and to Holland, to sites that have been war zones, and how the French and how the Dutch welcome our kids when they go is really incredible. They never forget that experience, so they're starting to have a great appreciation, even though this stuff took place years ago. They're having a great appreciation for what took place and what is taking place now, and I certainly welcome and have a great appreciation for where they are.

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, we are proud to remember those who have served and those who are serving. There is one family in Middle Stewiacke called the Fisher family, and they have sent over many, many to serve in the World Wars. A lot of that family did not come back. I know that other families in the area, too, have sent folks over.

What they do as a community every Remembrance Day is amazing. They really get together as a family and as a community. Simply put, these folks are heroes. They're heroes who served in the World Wars, people in Afghanistan who served in all these wars in our generation. We are very proud of them, of the sacrifice that they have.

The tragic events in Ottawa and Quebec in this past week are a stark reminder of the sacrifices that members of the Canadian Forces make in far-away battlefields and also here at home. We really should not reserve our appreciation for our veterans for only one day a year, as stated by my colleague. This is something we should remember on a daily basis. We are always thankful and Bill No. 53 is maybe a way to show our gratitude in a very small measure.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia's history is entwined with the history of the Canadian Armed Forces. Veterans and members of the Canadian Forces hold a very special place in our province and in our hearts. I'm certainly appreciative of what this province does on behalf of veterans.

Bill No. 53 would make Nova Scotia the very first province in this nation to waive registration and renewal fees for veteran licence plates. I know a lot of veterans out there really do not have a huge income and they would really appreciate this cut in their income. It is a unique way to show our thank you and this is why I stand in support of Bill No. 53. I want to thank you, Madam Speaker, and the others for your attention.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask permission to do an introduction.

MADAM SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GORDON WILSON: In the east gallery I am very proud to point out that we have Rene LeBlanc. He is the manager of the Digby Pines Resort and Spa, probably one of the premier resort establishments that we have not only in the province but in southwestern Nova Scotia and a big part of my riding. He is also here as part of the Taste of Nova Scotia. I'd ask that the House bring welcome. (Applause)

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, I will take an opportunity to stand for a few moments and speak to this bill as well. As much as I would like to see if we could get a vote run in this House on this bill - I think it would be a nice gesture to our veterans to move it along to at least through second reading, into Law Amendments Committee where we could consider it further at a later date. I think it would be a nice gesture here. I know I didn't have the discussion with the Government House

Leader so I'm not going to do that today but I will fill the next few moments until this bill is due, before we go off to the next one.

We all have our own family histories when it comes to the military and it comes to service to our country, mostly during the Second World War. We do have some who probably were in the Korean conflict or have spent time as peacekeepers in the various conflicts around the world. I, myself, am proud to be the grandson of a Second World War veteran, who of course passed away a number of years ago. Grampie Tupper spent some time in Europe, was injured in England and ended up coming back to New Glasgow with basically a body cast and did suffer quite a bit throughout his life with a sore knee and those things that were impacted because of his accident when he was overseas.

I had another uncle, Uncle Allister, who was lost in the Athabaskan when that was originally sunk off France during the Second World War. My Uncle Carl Tupper was a medical officer during the Second World War as well. To go to today, I have a brother who I am proud to say is a Royal Canadian Dragoon. He is a member in Petawawa, Ontario, and who spends a lot of time in training at this point. He is at such an advanced rank at this point that he is one of the trainers but does find himself in the field an awful lot training the privates that are, of course, the troopers joining to serve their country. And it seems so many young individuals are still interested in providing security to their country, to provide a sense of safeness in a world that is getting more and more, I would say, bizarre when it comes to conflicts around the world.

My first interaction though with veterans and, I would say, with the services on November 11<sup>th</sup> revolve around my time as a Cub and a Scout when we would go to their cenotaph in Pubnico where there were, I would say, hundreds of veterans at that time in the early 70s all marching, all dressed up in their best uniforms, marching down to that cenotaph. I'll tell you, as a Cub you're only 10 or 11 years old and you're looking up at these individuals and thinking, oh my God, look what they've done for us. They look so proud of what they did.

Today, when I go to the same Legion, there's only a small handful of those individuals left. Yet, because they're gone, does it mean that we would stop honouring them, that we would stop celebrating the lives of those who were lost, or stop commemorating them in one way or another? It upsets me a little bit when I see such small groups showing up for Veterans Day activities these days. All I would do is ask that we as legislators, we as MLAs, would do our best to influence our young folks to get them to participate in these ceremonies, to make them understand the liberty and safety that these veterans provided to us.

I want to finish with my experience in France, and the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley talked about how we are received or how youth are received when they travel to Europe, and I did get to see that first-hand. I did get to visit Normandy on a couple of occasions, and I was able to visit the beautiful little community of Saint-Aubin-

sur-Mer, and I know the Government House Leader had the opportunity to visit during the Acadian Festival in August - and I know the member for Sackville-Cobequid as well was able to visit that community.

That community is almost right next door to the Juno Beach Centre. It's right on Juno Beach so you see what they feel and what we commemorate - their lives - and how we do it. But to visit the cemeteries where you see hundreds, if not thousands, of our Canadians who laid down their lives for us, and to see how France takes care of those cemeteries - there's not a thing out of place in these cemeteries - and how they honour the dead who are there. There's not a blade of grass that is out of place, or a flower. Row after row after row of young Canadians who laid down their lives for us.

We need to commemorate, and if this bill helps us do that, why wouldn't we run it through, have a vote on it, and pass it into law, because you know what, Madam Speaker? It is the right thing to do. Thank you very much.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Seeing that the times are a little adjusted, let's just continue with our 10-minute runs on these ones.

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 55.

**Bill No. 55 - Helping Seniors Stay at Home Act.**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and say a few words about Bill No. 55, Helping Seniors Stay at Home Act.

We all know seniors in our province who are living on fixed or limited budgets. For too many of them, high power rates, high taxes have driven them out of their homes; they simply couldn't keep up with the bills. Seniors in Nova Scotia have seen a lot of things in their time; they know that a dollar doesn't stretch as far as it used to.

Every member in this House gets calls from seniors who are struggling to pay their bills. Seniors need a little extra help to stay in their homes, to stay in their apartment as appropriate. After contributing to our province all their lives, our seniors deserve support to stay at home as long as they want to and as long as they are able to. That is what this bill tries to do; it tries to give a little bit of relief to those seniors who are trying to stay in their homes.

This bill expands the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors program to include all seniors who earn less than \$30,000 a year. I have to tell you that as I go around the

constituency and talk to seniors, it strikes me that quite a few times when you talk to seniors and they talk about how they just barely missed out on a program that would help them put windows in or just couldn't because they make too much money. A lot of times they will take me into the house and they'll say look around my house; do you think I make too much money?

These threshold dollar amounts haven't been indexed or changed in quite a long time in some cases. In this case what we are trying to do is expand the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors program to include all seniors who earn less than \$30,000 per year. We estimate that this piece of legislation will help more than 16,000 Nova Scotia seniors through the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors.

For the benefit of members in the House who may be unfamiliar with the rebate, it is a program that was established way back in 1995 by a Liberal Government and in 2000 the then Progressive Conservative Government began phasing in the program so that all qualifying seniors had fair access to the program and the program would provide a tax credit of up to \$400. The program provided eligible homeowners with a 50 per cent rebate on the municipal property taxes paid in the previous year up to a maximum of \$800. (Interruption) Yes, up to a maximum of \$800, you get your 50 per cent rebate, that is a \$400 tax credit for seniors. The rebate is always based on the property taxes actually paid in the previous year.

By 2013 the maximum rebate had reached \$800 under the NDP Government - I think the NDP Government made some positive changes to this program as well. The existing income cut-off to be eligible for the rebate is \$19,000 for a single Nova Scotian and \$26,000 for couples. This bill would expand that income cut-off to \$30,000. The rebate is not a huge amount of money but our seniors will certainly make good use of it. I think members of this House - and, Madam Speaker, given your constituency as well, you may have seen how excited this rebate makes seniors. They definitely see value in it and they look forward to it.

They deserve that because seniors are often the pillars of our rural communities. They are people who know the history of the area; they know the history of the people and they want to stay in these communities. We want them there, too, because they are valued and respected members of those communities. It always strikes me as very sad when we hear about seniors who want to stay in their home and who are physically able to stay in their home but they are not financially able to stay in their home. I think as a province this is something that we are going to address over the coming years.

Beds in hospitals are expensive; long-term care facilities are expensive, and I've seen families break apart. I think I told the story in the House one time about a couple who were in their 90s and had been married since their teens, and now one was in a facility in one part of the province and the husband was in another, and they were just heartbroken because they weren't able to see each other.



Nobody likes that type of situation. We don't want to accept that type of situation, so we should be doing what we can, however big or small, to make sure that doesn't happen. This bill is one step toward allowing those seniors to stay in their homes and to continue to enjoy their lives in their community. It is something that I think we should be looking at, Madam Speaker. We should be going through a lot of these programs and updating and modernizing the thresholds to recognize the realities of life and to make sure that the programs are accessible to the people who need them.

By increasing that income threshold up to \$30,000 a year, you're going to capture some additional seniors who are certainly worthy of this program. We hope that this is a bill that the government would take seriously. I am anxious to hear what some of my colleagues in Opposition have to say, and also what the government members have to say about this. I think this could just be the first step in a number of instances where we can bring the thresholds more into line to make sure that the programs are hitting their target audiences.

In this case, seniors are the target audience, and we owe it to them to do what we can. The property tax rebate is something they look forward to. It's important to them. It's money that they can use, that they use in their communities. For the most part, they're spending that money back into their communities. It's a shame when somebody kind of just misses out on that program.

With that in mind, I would urge the government to give serious consideration to Bill No. 55, and in doing so, help support those seniors who need our support and do our little part to help them stay in their homes longer. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise today to speak to this legislation, which the Opposition has - I think mistakenly - titled the Helping Seniors Stay at Home Act. What we have here is just another in the Progressive Conservatives' long line of proposed tax cuts that are being irresponsibly thrown around to try to deceive Nova Scotians into believing that they have an actual fiscal plan.

At the risk of repeating myself from remarks that I made earlier, on another bill, I do want to take a few moments to remind Nova Scotians of just how long the list of the Progressive Conservatives' irresponsible financial tax cut commitments is becoming. The last time we reviewed these, there was an HST cut proposed that would remove \$390 million from the provincial coffers; a small business tax elimination, \$42 million; an equity tax credit of \$9 million and bracket creep \$26 million; parent-teacher tax credit, \$3.9 million, and here we have the Helping Seniors Stay at Home Act. It just goes on and on and on. (Interruption)

Today's promise, I think, is probably going to add another \$6.5 million to that, so I guess we'll just take all these promises as their commitment to add all of these on to the projected deficit for the province as part of what they are promising to do for Nova Scotians. Thankfully, Nova Scotians chose an intelligent approach to budget security on October 8, 2013.

Now I said this bill was misnamed and I think I am going to try my hand at giving it a slightly more accurate name here this afternoon. I'm going to call this the buying seniors' votes Act, is what I think we should call it.

Now, fortunately for seniors in the province . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member to please retract that statement. A couple of your comments have been bordering on unparliamentary and I would ask that you retract that please.

MR. FARRELL: Madam Speaker, thank you for that and I will, in fact, retract the statement. Now, on to the good things because fortunately for seniors in Nova Scotia, our government is working to improve the services available that will actually keep them in their homes. Due to the work of our honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, health care in Nova Scotia is evolving. The elimination of the district health authority silos and other silos in health care and continuing care and in home care is what is actually going to benefit seniors.

The small financial benefits that are being proposed by this bill are not sufficient to allow them to continue living in their homes on their own. You have to create conditions where they can continue to live safely and comfortably in their own homes. It is not just a matter of money. I'm no accountant; I'm just a small-town country lawyer. (Interruptions) But I can add and the types of services that are available for seniors out there, required by them to stay in their home, cannot be bought for these small amounts of money.

These things have to occur as a result of strong and dramatic improvements to our health care situation that are being brought on by our minister. The intelligent transformation that he's leading is the thing that seniors need right now to make their lives better and to allow them to continue to live in their homes.

For these reasons I have risen today on behalf of our government to oppose Bill No. 55. Thank you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to start off by saying that I think this is a good bill. The reason being is the fact that it creates accountability for government to make sure that the financial programs that we are

talking about actually take place and we don't keep hearing over and over oh, we're working on it or we're establishing a program or we're studying it or we're reviewing it.

I want to quickly go through the many things that the NDP really focused on during their mandate with regard to the senior population in Nova Scotia. We created programs to help low-income seniors - and I can table this - so that they would no longer have to pay income tax. We also, as my colleague next to me, talked about the property rebate tax and it was the NDP that actually increased that to \$800 a year for seniors. We also worked on a fair drug pricing because that was critical, as you know, with the senior population and their need for medication.

We created and provided funding, up to \$480, for a personal alert service, and also supportive care. That is the program that really helps people to stay in their homes longer, to provide the different supportive care that is needed for a senior to be able to live in their home. It also has the Independent Living Support Program that I've talked so much about in this House and how the government, unfortunately, has not looked at the fact that it has been oversubscribed, but that must be telling them something.

The program is only six months into being available and throughout the province the budget has already been used up, because seniors need that kind of help to be able to stay in their home longer. That's where the investment needs to be going, not in a plan that's two or three years down the road.

These seniors are in crisis now. Not tomorrow - they're in crisis now. That's why Bill No. 55 is a good start in legislation to make sure that we keep in our minds the fact that the crisis is happening now. A bill of this nature ensures that the government is supporting financially. That's the key component. You can review as much as you want, you can make as many promises as you want, and you can write as many strategies as you want, but if you do not correlate a financial commitment with that, those programs will never happen.

Another area that we addressed, being in government, was the Caregiver Benefit Program and the need to support a loved one who is looking after a loved one. The difficulty, as the Progressive Conservatives have brought to our attention, is that many of these programs have too low of an income threshold cut-off. In today's world, when we look at what the average income is, that's one area that has been left behind in terms of keeping up with the times - that is changing our policies that are supportive programs with what it costs to live nowadays.

As we said, many of these programs, including the rebate program, a cut-off of \$19,000 is much too low. We have to come to reality. The Liberal Government continually tells the public they're going to make changes, they're going to modernize government - well, part of modernizing government is living in the real world. The real world is that seniors want to stay home longer. They need this number of programs - many were

established by the former Progressive Conservatives or established by the NDP. We built on some of their programs, and we brought in new programs.

The key element is to be able to look at what that threshold is. That is why this bill is a very good start. It brings attention to the fact that we do need to have legislation that says, yes, we are committed as a province to support seniors to stay in their homes longer. It costs a lot more money for seniors to be in a hospital bed that costs \$1,500 a day than it does to help a senior get their driveway plowed or to help a senior get to some of their medical appointments. That's a lot better in cost efficiency and being preventive.

We have to see it actually taking place. We can't have the minister continually stand in the House and say, yes, we support seniors staying in their homes longer. Our seniors need to see that in terms of action, and part of that action is to support a bill of this nature that will make sure that there's accountability. We can have more of that accountability as we go forward - as you said yourself the other day, Madam Speaker, when you were supporting a bill. You said that this is a start, that we can make changes, we can add to it.

Well, I think that Bill No. 55 is exactly like that. This is a start, that government of the day and governments coming in, no matter what political Party they are - that there's legislation that is giving attention to the needs of seniors in our province. It makes the seniors realize and understand that there's action - not just a verbal commitment and no action but a commitment that they know they can get their driveway plowed, that they can get to a medical appointment.

Believe me, it is a crisis. For anybody to think that we're not living in a crisis - it's not going to get any better, because of our aging population. Therefore I would really impress upon the government that this is one of those pieces of legislation that they can co-operate with, and that is something we heard over and over again last year during the election. I don't think that any one of us could leave this House in the next couple of weeks and cite anything that has been really, truly co-operative in nature. I think that this is one piece of legislation that the government members can come forward and say yes, we are going to support this. This is how we collaborate, not for political reasons but actually for the people of Nova Scotia and our very dear seniors, thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much and we will try to finish this off as best we can. I saw the Minister of Internal Services wanted to speak as well.

A couple of quick comments here, which I find interesting, hearing from the member for Cumberland North in his response, which really wasn't much of a response at all; he really didn't thoughtfully look at a bill or really want to consider the merits of what

was before him. What I saw was a member who is sticking to the Liberal line on anything that comes forward here.

Madam Speaker, I've been here for a while now and you know there have been some really good debates in this House of Assembly. There have been some really good ones. To truly talk about the merit of a bill or talk about why you don't believe in the merit of a bill, I think that is important and, like I said, I have seen a lot of good ones.

I've seen a lot of responses that are bad as well and I can say what I heard tonight from the members from the government were pretty weak ones, ones that truly didn't look at what we are trying to talk about here tonight, regardless if they are for the bill or against the bill (Interruption) Whether they think that seniors should be taken care of or not Madam Minister. People come into our constituency offices . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask that the honourable member please address your comments to the Chair.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: When it comes to the people who come to our constituency offices, who have no clue how they are going to be able to fix one thing or another in their house, or how they are going to pay one bill or another in their house, or if they have to make a decision on whether they are going to pay their property taxes or eat, that is what's important to us as MLAs in this House of Assembly.

To hear someone just brush it off - this is not important, that's just the Tories, they don't know any better - is a disservice to the seniors that you represent, sir.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the member to please address your comments to the Chair.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I'm sorry, I'm a little passionate about this one but when I hear members just discount what members are trying to bring forward, at least have the discussion about an idea, it upsets me. And yes I apologize again for being kicked out the other day, but quite honestly this is running into one of those things as well where a simple idea - and I mean the members opposite can stand and say, you know, listen this needs more further thought, maybe it is a little too expensive, but you know what? We should be doing things for seniors.

I think many of us have seen the advertisement on TV for Efficiency Nova Scotia where you had that senior couple who are there when she says the line: we were quoted in order to make the fixes to the house \$3,800, to make the fixes to the house, that will make our house warmer, to make it more livable so we can stay in the house, and what does she say? She says, well \$3,800 might as well be \$38,000 because we can't afford that. We can't afford that. So when they are getting their property taxes - I don't know, I'm paying, what do I pay? I pay \$1,700 in the municipality of Argyle for my property. (Interruption) Yeah,

it's pretty good living in rural Nova Scotia. God knows what everybody is paying here in Halifax but I'm sure it is a lot more than that.

But the point is even \$1,700 for some of my seniors - they can't pay that. That's a lot of money. A lot of them who might be on GIS and Old Age Security, they can't pay that. Anything that we can do to alleviate that problem I think merits our consideration, at least that they're going to be looked after into the future.

It amazes me many times when I either visit a constituent or am visited at my office by a constituent - some of my older group, they are living in big old houses, alone, wondering how they're going to pay for the heat, trying to pay their property taxes, trying to pay for their pills, trying to run a car because of course there's no transit in rural Nova Scotia, for the most part. It makes it very, very difficult for them.

The point is whether this is the right bill or the wrong bill, it's whether the idea is sound, whether the idea is one that we can support as members of this House. Quite honestly, I don't care if the government in one way or another wants to steal the bill, take the member for Pictou East off it and put their name on it and find a way to incorporate it into one of their bills, whether the minister wants to stand and say listen, here's how we're going to accomplish maybe the same thing, whether it is the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Community Services, the Minister of Seniors, whatever, I don't need the credit for it. All I know is that when I have a senior come to my constituency office that I can say to them, here's a program for you, this will help make it work, here's how we're going to be able to at least cover that gap.

Madam Speaker, I think that's what this bill is trying to accomplish. I hope there's further consideration to this idea, that the Liberal caucus can bring it back and say, you know the member for Argyle-Barrington maybe had a point - I don't know, we'll see what happens.

Madam Speaker, I think it's a disservice to the seniors we represent when a government member comes here and completely throws it out and tries to blame everybody for the ills of the world, when there's a serious issue before us which is taking care of our loved ones, taking care of the people in our constituency who so much need our help. With those short words, I thank you very much for the opportunity.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

**HON. LABI KOUSOULIS:** Madam Speaker, I just wanted to have a couple of words on the bill. I feel it is government's role to support all Nova Scotians. It would be great to have this bill and many other bills, but we have a fiscal reality in this province. One of the things the NDP failed to mention as they were going on and on about all the accolades they had while they were in power for four years is that in four short years they added to our public sector funded debt \$3.17 billion. Do you know how much we're paying

on that \$3.17 billion? It's \$127 million a year. If we had that money not only could we do this program, we could do a lot more for Nova Scotians.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to table our Form 18-K, which is what the Province of Nova Scotia sends to the SCC as we trade our bonds, and that will show on the top line how much the NDP Government added. Not only did they add the \$3.17 billion in debt, but they added a little bit more (Interruption) they added a little bit more. As they came into government they pushed a lot of that debt back onto the previous Progressive Conservative Government, and if you go one year further back from when they came into power, we have \$1.148 billion.

Now I know and the Progressive Conservatives know that that wasn't all their debt, that there was a lot of trickery going on with the books under the NDP Government and they pushed a lot of things back such as payments to universities, trying to make their books look cleaner going forward.

Some of the other things they've done while they were in power - when we came into power we reversed (Interruption) We'll talk about seniors right now, we'll also talk about the most vulnerable people in Nova Scotia whom the NDP eliminated a payment to, Madam Speaker. They pushed the payment for people on welfare from the end of the month to the beginning of the following month.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is not true. That is not accurate.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission has the floor. (Interruptions)

Order, please. If people have conversations after the debate, please carry that on, but for right now, the honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Madam Speaker, all we have to do is look at their balanced - "balanced" - because it wasn't a balanced budget, where there were 11 payments to welfare recipients, not 12. How do we come up with 11 payments? Do you know how we came to it? We took the payment . . .

MS. MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like the record to reflect that, for the purposes of accounting, there were 11 payments for social assistance. The Liberal members are completely distorting the reality that people on income assistance would receive their payments just as always: seamlessly, without any interruption in those payments. (Interruptions) I hear the minister saying "Wrong." Well, I'm sorry. With all due respect, minister, you're wrong, because I was the Finance Minister who made (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. That would not be a point of order. It would be a disagreement on points.

The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Madam Speaker, as an accountant, I will comment on exactly what it was. In a fiscal year there are 12 months, 12 periods. The way the NDP got 11 payments is they took the February payment, and as opposed to paying it on February 26<sup>th</sup> or February 27<sup>th</sup>, whenever that payment to income assistance is, they moved it to March 2<sup>nd</sup> or March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and then the following payment in April was going to move to April 2<sup>nd</sup> or April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Every payment from that day on was going to move three to four days forward. And what would that do? It's an accounting trick. It did turn into 11 payments, but there are still 12 months in a year, and every single person on income assistance was going to miss their rent payment. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask that the honourable member please - you have used the term "trick" which is unparliamentary. I'll ask you to please retract that, and I would ask the House to please, let's try to keep our level sensible. We only have another 12 minutes until the late debate and it would be great if we could end on a positive note.

The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: A trick is unparliamentary, as well, Madam Speaker. What I will say is that the Liberal Government, our Treasury Department, reversed that. And do you know how I know this is true? Because I sat in the room and I was absolutely appalled when the Department of Community Services came in and said, every single person on income assistance is going to miss paying their rent, and all I could think of is thousands of people in Nova Scotia not getting their cheque at the end of the month; getting it at the beginning of the month. And you know that landlords don't care. They want their rent because they have an obligation to pay their mortgages on those buildings. So what was going to happen? We were balancing the books - the NDP balanced the books of the Province of Nova Scotia on the backs of the most vulnerable people.

How much did they balance the books by - \$16.8 million; how much was this accounting adjustment - \$17 million. And to that I say shame. But here's the reality of today - \$3.17 billion of debt was added to the Province of Nova Scotia which today we're paying interest on and future Nova Scotians are going to pay interest on. We do not have the funds to do everything we want to do, and it's unfortunate, because on that debt is \$127 million in interest. I wish we had those last four years back and I wish we didn't have to live through that government, so we didn't have to mortgage the future of our children in Nova Scotia from the NDP Government being in power. Thank you, Madam Speaker.



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

MR. HARRISON: These are tough acts to follow, and I have no intentions of it. (Laughter)

I just want to say that I do appreciate how much money is needed to fund all these programs. I hopefully will never have to use them, I am probably one of the most senior here; I'll be 69 in about a little over a month. (Applause) At 65, I bought my first home. I know, that's unusual too. But for someone like me, I'm probably never going to have to depend on government to be able to stay in my home, to live in my home, whatever. I will have that choice because I have the financial means to make that choice. But I know that there are an awful lot of people out there who do not have the choice.

Maybe this program doesn't need to go right across the board, I don't know if that's even possible. I do know there is a segment of people out there who really need some more assistance in order to stay in their own home. It has to be cheaper to keep them in their own home than to try to do something different in a nursing home. I know that's extremely expensive and people will fight that as much as they can. Their homes are just so important to them.

I don't know what a compromise could be here, I'm hoping a compromise can be met and I will support whatever compromise is possible. To me, any assistance we can give to seniors is needed because a lot of them don't have the financial backing: they didn't have the pension plans, they didn't have the way to put their RRSPs together; there are a lot of things that we can do that they couldn't do.

I'm hoping we can at least appreciate the fact that they do need as much as we can give them, whatever that is, and I hope we will consider doing as much as we can for them. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, that concludes our business for the night - that was exciting. I was worried at the start but we definitely finished it up.

I will ask the Deputy Government House Leader for tomorrow's business.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 1:00 p.m., and will sit until 6:00 p.m. The order of business will be Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 62 and 64; Public Bills for

Third Reading, Bill Nos. 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17; and Committee of the Whole House on Bills, Bill Nos. 6, 18, 22, 25, 26, 49, and 50.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The Adjournment motion was submitted by the member for Kings South:

“Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the importance of the Taste of Nova Scotia initiative and support our local businesses in the farm and food and beverage industries.”

### **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **TASTE OF N.S.: IMPORTANCE - RECOGNIZE**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, may I make an introduction before I begin my comments?

MADAM SPEAKER: Absolutely.

MR. IRVING: Madam Speaker, if the members could look at the east gallery, we are joined tonight by Janice Ruddock, the executive director of Taste of Nova Scotia, and Sean Doucet, the chair of the board of Taste of Nova Scotia. Please welcome them. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, given the last couple of hours of debate it's probably good to end on what I think will be a very good note. I'm hopeful we will have agreement tonight that the Taste of Nova Scotia is something to celebrate and embrace and taste.

We have a beautiful province here, and our greatest resource, of course, is our people. But second to that is our land. We have tremendously beautiful, fertile land in this province, and not only that, we in the Province of Nova Scotia are fortunate enough to have miles and miles of sea coast, and we have the sea as a resource as well, which we can prosper from.

These resources, our land and our sea, are of tremendous value - more valuable than mines or oil and gas, because our land and our sea provide sustainable and renewable resources. They not only provide that, they provide that with tremendous beauty that we can enjoy day in and day out.

The Taste of Nova Scotia has been around now since 1989. In fact, I don't know whether they've acknowledged this yet, but we should congratulate them on their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. (Applause) The Taste of Nova Scotia, in its simplest terms, is a provincial marketing program, but it's more than that. It's really about partnership. It brings together the public sector and the private sector to promote this tremendous asset of our food and wine and beverage industry.

It has over 140 members: winemakers, brewers, farmers, distillers, chefs, bakers, chocolatiers - for those of you with a sweet tooth - and restaurateurs. So there's a wide variety of small businesses associated with the Taste of Nova Scotia. Why is the Taste of Nova Scotia important? It supports very high quality standards through its membership. All the members need to maintain and meet membership criteria, and that helps us raise the level of standards and quality within this province.

They support culinary tourism marketing. They also work toward developing an export market for our products. The Taste of Nova Scotia also does event management, and we're about to see how good they are at that in about 30 minutes. If you visit their website, you'll see that they have a tremendous number of recipes. They also have newsletters, all in an effort to share with Nova Scotians the wonderful, wonderful products that we have in this province.

For those of you that are looking for a great gift from an MLA, they produce food baskets. Give that some thought on your Christmas shopping list this year. The topic tonight, why is it important to support local food and the local beverage industry? It goes without saying: the money stays local. It supports small businesses, particularly in our rural communities, and as well, if we can grow this industry, it helps with our food security. I think there are facts about this province, that if the highway from New Brunswick were cut off for a short period of time - and I know that our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal would never let that happen, but if we lose him and lose that road, in four days we are hungry.

So supporting our local food industry is important to our own food security. Why is the Taste of Nova Scotia so important in that local food industry? As I said previously, it

increases our quality and the standards of our food industry and our businesses that are providing the food for us. The Taste of Nova Scotia is an organization that makes that voice louder for the small independent farmers and businesses and restaurants. When they speak as a group it becomes louder. They can provide a voice for all those small businesses at once, and again, tonight we will see that in action.

We have the Ivany report guiding the work that we do in this House. There are two goals that the Taste of Nova Scotia is really already at work on achieving. Goal No. 16 is doubling the domestic markets for agricultural producers. The Taste of Nova Scotia is a great tool to help us meet that goal of doubling the domestic markets of agricultural producers.

Goal No. 14 is tourism expansion. As we know, there is a whole aspect of tourism that is moving into food and wine experiences. Again, the Taste of Nova Scotia is showing off the best of Nova Scotia.

To wrap up, we have 22 small businesses this evening, downstairs, and I hope all of us will take those in tonight and enjoy the samplings of the best that Nova Scotia has to offer. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my privilege to rise to speak on this worthy resolution, the importance of Taste of Nova Scotia to our province. I was speculating with my colleagues that the member for Kings South had my briefing notes because I had of course the same facts about Taste of Nova Scotia, so I think what I will talk about is my own personal experience with Taste of Nova Scotia. We at Farmer Johns Herbs became members of Taste of Nova Scotia in 2001 and my spice products - a number of our products have had the Taste of Nova Scotia logo on them for a number of years. Although I can't see Janice, I know she's right up behind me - I say Hi to Janice.

It's a wonderful program and I want to take a few minutes to talk about the aspects of it that have been so meaningful for our company. Probably the most meaningful thing is - there are a number of meaningful things - but one is the interaction that we have with other fellow Taste of Nova Scotia members. We have gone to a number of trade shows and by going to those trade shows, all the members who are there become friends with each other so I've become very good friends with Brian Allaway of Acadian Maple Products, which is a very well-known company down on Highway No. 103, and have become very good friends through that with Hanspeter Stutz from Grand Pre Winery. Were it not for Taste of Nova Scotia I probably would have never met those guys.

One of the things is this interaction that we have with each other and Alain Bosse, the bossy Chef we call him, he's probably downstairs; Randy from Van Dyk is another friend. That friendship means a lot in a small province where we get to know each other

and have an idea of what is going on. We can share information. For instance, Acadian Maple Products have helped us with labelling and we have helped other companies so there's this interchange of ideas that happen through this organization. You are not going to find that in the website but that is a big part of belonging to Taste of Nova Scotia.

One of the things that happens is we go to trade shows together as a group. Often in a trade show there will be real slow moments when nothing is happening. You get talking to your neighbour and then you find out there is a fair bit of business you can do with each other. That is another great benefit of Taste of Nova Scotia, that there is a fair bit of business that happens between the members. Those are two things.

Our company, Farmer Johns Herbs, has gone to Boston several times with Taste of Nova Scotia. We have gone to Ontario a number of times with Taste of Nova Scotia, a couple of times to the Grocery Innovation Show, which is the premiere show for groceries in the country, so Loblaw's and Sobeys and a lot of the retailers out West would be there. You probably wouldn't recognize their names but Freson, IGA and Coleman's from Newfoundland and Labrador would be there, and Farm Boy and those kinds of companies.

My business is interested in trying to deal with them so we're trying to cultivate those relationships. So Taste of Nova Scotia, by working together, we get to go to those trade shows. We can cut the cost on the trade show; we have connections made through their organization. Those are all really wonderful things about it.

There's another slice to it, too, and that is that it does have a restaurant aspect to it, too. That has been a very, very good program, although one that I'm personally less familiar with, although we all enjoy many fine restaurants.

Nova Scotia does have a unique culinary history and I think that's something to be celebrated. I know Taste of Nova Scotia celebrates that. We have this connection with the land and the sea. Our business, anyway - we're trying to create the flavours of Nova Scotia in my spice business, which my family is now running. That's what we're trying to do, and I know that's what Taste of Nova Scotia is trying to do.

The face of tourism in the future is going to be experiential tourism. One of the things we know is that experiencing the food and the wine is a huge part of tourism coming up. I know the member for Kings South; we've had some interaction. We want to see the Annapolis Valley promoted that way, and I know the Taste of Nova Scotia is promoting the whole province that way.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be a member of Taste of Nova Scotia and all the good work they've done. It's been an enormous benefit to our business. I know it is to all of the other businesses that are members - you can see from the kind of turnout we have downstairs. I know that it takes a lot of effort to come out to do an event like this, so when

you do talk to the people sampling, be sure to tell them you appreciate the product and you appreciate them being here.

Again, I could give you the raw facts, but that's my personal experience with Taste of Nova Scotia. I know that we're all looking forward to sampling the products downstairs. Promoting local food consumption, as the member for Kings South said, is very important. The fact that the whole province is supplied by one highway across the Tantramar Marshes is something that is of significance. I know that we'd start to notice the shortage of food within four days, because the grocery stores run on "just in time," but probably we'd have about two weeks' worth of food in the province. That's the estimates, so the fact that we want to support indigenous production of all sorts of food, I think, is clear to everybody - the importance of that.

If you think back - apparently when I started farming in about 1987, we were supplying about 20 per cent of our own food in the province. Now apparently it's down closer to 10 per cent. We've seen a decline. It's partly because the consumer has a much wider palate. If you remember back in 1987, you had strawberries from July 1<sup>st</sup> to the middle of July and that was it, right? But now the strawberries coming on is no longer a big deal. Strawberries are available in the store all the time. So are food products from around the world.

One of the things that we need to do to participate in that kind of grocery store environment is to be exporting. Taste of Nova Scotia is a big part of that. If we want to be self-sufficient in food, we have to have that sort of production part, but we'll never be able to meet some parts of that season. We can extend it. So these are some of the things that Taste of Nova Scotia works on.

I would like to draw your attention to Bill No. 20, the Buy Nova Scotia First Act, that would require all government departments to purchase local produce where possible. I can't recall if there are any beef producers in Taste of Nova Scotia - I'm not sure that there are - but I will say that in our province, one of the best things that we can grow is grass, and we have all these gorgeous (Laughter) As in, you know, grains.

We also have all of the dyke lands, which are heavy clay soils, which are some of the finest soils in the world for growing hay. Grass-fed beef is something that I think we should be - I'm not a beef producer, but I believe that it is something that Nova Scotia is uniquely positioned to do an excellent job at. When you drive across those Tantramar Marshes, which my member for Kings South mentioned, if you think back, the story is that back a hundred years ago there were 100,000 cattle on those marshes. If you think about that, if that's possible that there were 100,000 cows on the Tantramar Marshes, where did they all go? And the answer is, of course, that they went out West, but we could do that again, just like all of our (Interruption)

Anyway, at one time we peaked in agricultural production in almost every category around 1920 in this province. There is a lot of land that could be farmed again. Some of that stuff we need to be doing again, I don't know - certainly promoting grass-fed beef. I hope Taste of Nova Scotia has a role in that. I'm not sure of any - I don't personally know a member in Taste promoting that, but I'm just saying that this is the kind of thing that we need to think about.

Nevertheless, getting back to Taste of Nova Scotia, it has been an honour for us as a company to participate. Hats off to them for being here again this year. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, it's certainly a delight and an honour to have a kind of light-hearted ending to today. I'm looking forward to the presentation of Taste Nova Scotia, and certainly, to me, it's interesting that we got an opportunity to address or speak about the food industry and the beverage industry.

I noticed their brochure and I can talk about a number of the items on there. The mussel industry, I have some experience on that. I'm not a potato farmer, and I certainly love strawberries, and I enjoy oysters. I also eat fish - my colleagues tell me that I eat fish almost on a daily basis. I grew up picking blueberries for, I think at the time, 25 cents a quart and made sure that we had no leaves in them. So I can speak on any one of those particular items. The scallops, I'm sure, my colleagues from Digby and Annapolis could also speak on. It's something that is truly amazing, all the different food products that we have at our disposal, and we may have an opportunity to taste them later on this evening.

But Madam Speaker, I think, first of all, I know, when you have an opportunity to go last you can actually fill in a lot of the parts that may have been missed. Each speaker tonight spoke about the importance of buying local. I think this is crucial that we recognize all these particular products that we are blessed with across Nova Scotia. They come from the sea and they come from the land. It's certainly an opportunity to give thanks, and to know that we live in a world where a lot of people don't have the fortune to have these products at their disposal. So to me, it's simply an opportunity to give thanks for our blessings.

I want to recognize one particular group that may have been overlooked here tonight, and that is the chefs who prepare these products. That's something that I would love to be - I'm a wannabe cook. And to see their expertise, how they can put these products together is certainly an interesting challenge for a lot of us would-be chefs. They do a great job and I want to recognize that here. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, from the Taste of Nova Scotia brochure, I recognize that they have 140 members across our beautiful province and I just want to talk about a few of my life experiences in this House in the last eight or nine years. Two of them, I think, are very

fitting for this particular opportunity and time, and I want to emphasize that these next two stories that I highlight tonight will be done for amusement or fun. This is the attempt of making light of a situation that we're all very proud of, and I know whether you're a colleague from any sitting part in this House that we're all very proud of our products, and any opportunity to boast about them.

I want to bring your attention to a colleague of mine - I call him a colleague, a friend from the PC Party who is dealing with some health issues right now, from Sydney River-Mira-Louisburg. We've had this discussion many times about - we feel that we have the best lobster in Nova Scotia. I've seen this play out on a number of occasions, whether from New Brunswick or from Cape Breton, and the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisburg always suggested to me that we need to have a challenge to find out who truly has the best lobster.

I'm sure if we took this to Taste of Nova Scotia - we said that we may not get it right the first time, and like a ball game, we may have to have seven attempts to find out who the winner is. So the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisburg, I hope he's listening because he wants to get this challenge correct. It may take one, it may take three - it may take seven to find out who the winner is. To me, it is simply an expression of how we all are proud of the products that come from our communities.

I know it's easy for me to talk about lobsters because I spent close to four decades in that particular industry. I just want to point out that also there was a colleague of mine from New Brunswick who was a former Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Olscamp. I had an opportunity of several years driving through Shediac, New Brunswick, and if you are all familiar with that community, there's a large monument of a lobster there. The lobster is literally large and I was trying to make a comparison today - it's larger than one of the city buses that goes by our streets on a daily basis here in Halifax.

Mr. Olscamp is certainly just as proud of all the products as he is of the lobster industry and maybe fits in the same category as my colleague from Cape Breton. He looked at the large statue of the lobster and looked at me and said, what do you think, coming from Nova Scotia, what do you think of that large lobster? I knew he was so proud of the industry and that particular statue and I wanted to kind of get his attention, so he asked me what I thought and actually I'm proud of my own industry, and I said well back home we throw those back.

The point I'm trying to make, Madam Speaker, is that we're all proud of the products that come from our local communities. I know, in all seriousness, when I speak with the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, I know in my heart that the lobster industry, there is one industry and the industry basically sits from Rhode Island to Newfoundland and Labrador, one species. If we had the opportunity to just pull back and look a distance from space we would see that we are very strategically placed in a unique place, and we benefit from that unique habitat where we enjoy lobsters and it is one



species. But we're all very proud, whether we come from Shediac, New Brunswick, or Maine or southwestern Nova Scotia or Cape Breton, we're very proud of the products and we certainly want to promote that.

To me there was one interesting fact here tonight of how proud we are of all the products and we're going to see some in a very few minutes. To me I want to talk about an opportunity. This has not been dealt with by either speaker tonight - they've come close. We talked about 100,000 cows on the Tantramar Marsh. To me this is a simple equation, that we have an opportunity to feed the world of all the products that we're going to have the pleasure of sampling in the next few minutes.

Madam Speaker, the numbers that I have, in the next 30 years there are going to be three billion, I repeat, three billion more people on this planet and we have an opportunity in Nova Scotia and I'm delighted to know that we have an international airport in Halifax that we helped expand those runways. Here is a golden opportunity, we're so proud of the products that we produce and we can literally feed the world. To me, I think we all took an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of all these producers.

I'm glad to have the time to speak to you. Enjoy Taste of Nova Scotia. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: That ends the Adjournment debate for tonight. I wish to thank all members who participated in the debate.

The House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 5:45 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 477**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas St. Agnes Junior High School hosted their Spring yard sale on May 10, 2014; and

Whereas many students, teachers, parents and community supporters volunteered their time to create and organize this event; and

Whereas I had the pleasure to attend this yard sale, and being the school's largest PTA fundraising event, it always attracts a tremendous turnout;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish St. Agnes Junior High School many more successful fundraising events in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 478**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Dalhousie University can now join the ranks of having a student-led medical response society; and

Whereas Anthony Saikali was instrumental in pitching the idea to St. John Ambulance; and

Whereas Mr. Saikali worked tirelessly in forging the project from an idea to a successful university society called Dalhousie Medical Campus Response Team that provides first aid services for campus events;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anthony Saikali and all those involved in exhibiting leadership and wish them continued success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 479**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Chinese Benevolent Association of Nova Scotia has been providing support and leadership for Chinese-Canadians; and

Whereas in May the association marked a milestone of great achievement, namely their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Halifax; and

Whereas in commemoration of this occasion a special banquet was held on May 25, 2014 featuring a rich cultural celebration and presentation of awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Chinese Benevolent Association of Nova Scotia on their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and wish them many more years of success and prosperity.

**RESOLUTION NO. 480**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Italian community in Halifax celebrated the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Italian Republic on June 2, 2014; and

Whereas I had the pleasure to attend the reception held at the headquarters of the Italian-Canadian Cultural Association in Halifax; and

Whereas Honorary Consul Rodolfo Meloni delivered his 27<sup>th</sup> speech after 32 years as consular, reminding the Italian-Canadians to not forget that Italy's democracy is due to the sacrifice of thousands of Canadian soldiers who fought and died in Italy to defend democracy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Italian-Canadian Cultural Association on its 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Italy's Republic.

**RESOLUTION NO. 481**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Attorney General)

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

Whereas École John W. Macleod/Fleming Tower Elementary School hosted their Spring Fest on June 7, 2014; and

Whereas students, parents, teachers, and community supporters came out to enjoy multiple activities, kids' games, and the fire truck that was on site; and

Whereas I had the opportunity to hold a snake with some brave students at the reptile exhibit;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish École John W. Macleod/Fleming Tower Elementary School many more fun and exciting Spring Fests in the years to come.

**RESOLUTION NO. 482**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Attorney General)

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

Whereas the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Springvale Under the Stars movie night took place on Wednesday, June 25, 2014, in my riding; and

Whereas the Springvale Under the Stars committee volunteered their time to set up a movie and sell popcorn and other food; and

Whereas family and friends, including my daughter and myself, gathered together to watch *Despicable Me 2* and enjoy a great community evening under the stars;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish the Springvale Under the Stars committee continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 483**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Attorney General)

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

Whereas École Chebucto Heights School hosted the Grade 6 closing ceremony on June 26, 2014; and

Whereas 29 students were honoured for their efforts in learning and succeeding academically; and

Whereas Principal Lesley MacInnis gave a warm welcome to the ceremony and invited everyone to the reception that followed the presentations to students;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the graduating students of École Chebucto Heights School in wishing them the best as they begin the next stage of their academic development in junior high.

**RESOLUTION NO. 484**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Attorney General)

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

Whereas Shannex Arborstone Enhanced Care is beautifully located on Purcell's Cove Road, with a section of the residence bordering the Sir Sandford Fleming Dingle Park; and

Whereas Arborstone is one of the few nursing homes in Nova Scotia to offer long-term care for young adults with special needs; and

Whereas this home of advanced care has a very dynamic activity calendar for residents of all needs, drawn up monthly by Victoria Gagne, recreation coordinator;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Shannex Arborstone, Ms. Gagne, and all the staff and residents for hosting a marvellous garden party in August 2014 and wish them good weather for next summer's garden party season.

**RESOLUTION NO. 485**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Attorney General)

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

Whereas Prismatic Arts Festival was held for the first time at Alderney Landing in Dartmouth, August 21 to 24, 2014; and

Whereas Prismatic is a unique and valuable cultural event which showcases and celebrates the work of Canada's leading professional, culturally diverse, and Aboriginal artists; and

Whereas Prismatic promotes healthy, diverse communities by facilitating self-expression with cross-cultural learning and dialogue;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Prismatic and Shahin Sayadi, artistic producer, for their forward-thinking endeavour, connecting culture and diversity on a grand scale, and thank the artists, volunteers, sponsor, and community supporters.

**RESOLUTION NO. 486**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas India Fest provided Nova Scotians with a cultural sensory experience in August 23, 2014, with delicious foods, henna tattooing, various vendors, and entertainment ranging from Indian pop music to traditional dancers; and

Whereas the festival helps to promote Indian culture through the support of the Indo-Canadian Community Centre Society; and

Whereas this annual fundraising initiative will galvanize their goal for constructing a community centre in Bayers Lake, which will serve as a hub for helping new immigrants from India and also from South East Asia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and support for international students and seniors in the community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate India Fest on their outstanding third-year festival and wish the community success in achieving their future building plans.

**RESOLUTION NO. 487**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Vicky Levack, a vivacious young go-getter, participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge on September 2, 2014, at Arborstone Enhance Care; and

Whereas with the support of staff and residents, Vicky raised a total of \$294.85 for the ALS Society of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas I had the absolute privilege, as her MLA, to share the excitement of the Ice Bucket Challenge with Vicky, in helping raise awareness for ALS;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Vicky Levack on her wonderful spirit, courage, and commitment.

**RESOLUTION NO. 488**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the South Indian Culture Association of the Maritimes (SICAM) has been active since 1986; and

Whereas SICAM aims to preserve their cultural roots while endeavoring to share them with the wider culturally diverse Maritime Community; and

Whereas SICAM brilliantly shared their culture at the Onam festival on September 13, 2014, showcasing a traditional feast and enthralling dance performances;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the South Indian Cultural Association of the Maritimes on hosting the Onam Festival and wish them many years of continued community success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 489**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Eastern Chebucto Hub Organization (ECHO) is a partnership among eleven community service providers; and

Whereas ECHO is conveniently located on Herring Cove Road and serves the neighborhoods of Armdale, Spryfield, Sambro, Harrietsfield, Williamswood, Ketch Harbour, Herring Cove, and Purcell's Cove ; and

Whereas ECHO was launched on September 19, 2014, to be a resource centre connecting community members with such things as legal aid, local health support, and mental programs to name a few;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly commend ECHO on this great achievement and recognize the hard work of the many who were involved in creating this important venture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 490**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas in August the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron in Halifax hosted the High Liner Food International Federation of Disabled Sailors, a qualifying event for the Rio de Janerio Paralympic Games in 2016; and

Whereas the High Liner Foods attract 176 athletes and coaches from 24 countries; and

Whereas the RNSYS is looking forward to the Marblehead to Halifax Ocean Race, the biennial race takes place in 2015 and will attract around 80 sailors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the 177 year old Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron on having the honour of being the first yacht club in Canada to be named the club of the year by the Canadian Society of Club Managers, the Stanley Cup of club management, and wish them continued success in their future endeavors.



**RESOLUTION NO 491**

By: Hon. Lena M. Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas in 1914 the Komagata Maru sailed from India to Vancouver with primarily Sikh passengers, which after docking was forced to turn back as part of Canada's informal anti-Asian immigration policy; and

Whereas Sikhs in Nova Scotia observed the 100-year Anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident; and

Whereas on September 21, 2014, the Sikh Heritage Museum of Canada brought to Halifax its exhibition and lecture series titled, *Lions of the Sea*, highlighting Sikh settlement in Canada and their Canadian contributions, not least their role in the nation's war efforts in the First World War;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly offer our sincere regret for this past grievance marked by the Komagata Maru and commend the Maritime Sikh Society for their role in bringing this important exhibition to Halifax.

**RESOLUTION NO. 492**

By: Hon. Lena M. Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Halifax Armdale is the home to the very first Tim Horton's established in Halifax, in 1975; and

Whereas this Tim Horton's, known as Store 53, was originally located on Herring Cove Road, moved in October 2002 to Osborne Street, and continues today under the same management; and

Whereas I was delighted to have joined the managers Sandy and Bev Shearer and the entire team at a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 23, 2014, to celebrate the grand re-opening after extensive renovations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Shearer and the store team on their achievements and wish them continued success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 493**

By: Hon. Lena M. Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas École John W. MacLeod/Fleming Tower Elementary School entered the Adopt & Don't Stop giveaway competition hosted by the Adopt a School Program; and

Whereas the school, with the support of the community, worked hard and in October 2014 won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Nova Scotia with 11,685 votes; and

Whereas I am thrilled that the prize of \$10,000 in books will be awarded to JWM/FT school in the Halifax Armdale riding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate École John W. MacLeod/Fleming Tower Elementary School on this sterling achievement, a source of pride for Armdale.

**RESOLUTION NO. 494**

By: Hon. Lena M. Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Wadih M. Fares is the Canadian Red Cross in Nova Scotia 2014 Humanitarian of the Year Award recipient; and

Whereas Mr. Fares will be honoured on November 19, 2014, at the Canadian Red Cross humanitarian awards dinner at the Cunard Centre; and

Whereas since moving to Nova Scotia from Lebanon almost 40 years ago, Mr. Fares has become a paragon for hard work, life-long learning and entrepreneurial success, while embodying the philosophy that as one receives, one should give back;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Wadih Fares and his family for this recognition from the Canadian Red Cross in Nova Scotia.

**RESOLUTION NO. 495**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the valiant spirit of sportsmanship exhibited by Fairview Junior High Boys A Soccer Team is inspirational and commendable; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication of the team has culminated in winning first place in the Citadel Championship and Regional Semi-Final Playoffs; and

Whereas the Fairview Junior High Boys A Soccer Team had an excellent season and won the finals of the Capital Regional Championship on Wednesday, October 22, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Peter Wicha and the entire Fairview Junior High Boys A Soccer Team on their outstanding victories and wish them continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 496**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the valiant spirit of sportsmanship exhibited by Fairview Junior High Girls A Soccer Team is inspirational and commendable; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication of the team has culminated in winning first place in the Citadel Championship and Regional Semi-Final Playoffs; and

Whereas the Fairview Junior High Girls A Soccer Team had an excellent season and won the finals of the Capital Regional Championship on Wednesday, October 22, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. C. Wilson and the entire Fairview Junior High Girls A Soccer Team on their outstanding victories and wish them continued success in the future.

**RESOLUTION NO. 497**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Nova Scotia is a non-profit organization that facilitates the contact between Canadian and Lebanese business communities; and

Whereas the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Cedar & Maple Gala was held May 15, 2014, at Pier 21 and awards were presented for excellence in business; and

Whereas outstanding business person of the year was awarded to Dr. Marc Mansour, the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Immunovaccine Inc.;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Mansour on this outstanding achievement and wish him much future success.

**RESOLUTION NO. 498**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Nova Scotia is a non-profit organization that helps promote business growth through networking; and

Whereas the CLCCI held the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Cedar & Maple Gala on May 15, 2014, at Pier 21 and presented four awards for excellence in business and profession within the Lebanese community; and

Whereas the gathering was an inspiration to the younger generation of the Lebanese community in connection with their partners and award recipients;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the award recipients for their community spirit, leadership and innovation.