



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2014

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HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin the daily routine, I'll present the Speaker's Ruling on the point of order raised yesterday by the honourable Government House Leader.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Questions to minister in Question Period about proceedings in committee (Pt. of order by Hon. M. Samson [Hansard p.1651, 10/29/14]) Valid point of order.

Yesterday the honourable Government House Leader rose after Question Period on a point of order to object to questions asked to members of the ministry with respect to discussions at the Human Resources Committee about the appearance of an officer before that committee.

The Government House Leader referred to the 6th Edition of Beauchesne, which contains the guidelines for the types of questions that may be asked during Question Period. The authority provides at Page 126 that a question must not seek information about proceedings in a committee, except with respect to reports of the committee that have already been made to the House, which is not the case here.

The restriction is expanded upon in O'Brien and Bosc which provides at Page 506, "Questions to the Ministry . . . concerning the proceedings or work of a committee, including its order of reference, may not be raised. Thus, for example, a question would be disallowed if it dealt with a vote in committee, with the attendance or testimony of Members at a committee meeting, or with the content of a committee report."

Questions posed yesterday and on Tuesday have been with respect to a vote in a committee about the appearance of a witness, and appear to me to fall within the prohibition which I just quoted. It has been long held by a succession of Speakers in this House that committees are the masters of their own procedures and that disputes over the procedures should be kept within those committees, unless the committees themselves conclude that they should be put before the House.

The point of order is therefore valid, and I ask that all members not raise questions about the proceedings or work of a committee during Question Period.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the ruling on that. The only thing I'd like to add to it, in our thought, is that if there is an issue that comes up in a committee, it should be valid to be able to be discussed here. If we're talking about the operation of the committee, I understand where your ruling comes in - whether we're trying to influence what happens in a committee, I can understand that. But if there's a topic that comes up, we should be able to discuss it here - just my thought around that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads: "We, the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia, urge our elected representatives to do everything within their power to encourage the Chignecto Central Regional School Board to stop the closure proceedings respecting the River John Consolidated School."

There are 540 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a report entitled *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make a brief introduction before tabling a report.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: I would ask that the honourable members direct their attention to the east gallery, where we are joined today by the president of the Nova Scotia Community College, Don Bureaux, if he would stand. He's a dedicated leader who is committed to the education of learners across Nova Scotia, and I would ask the members to give him a warm welcome here today. (Applause)

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Nova Scotia Community College's *2014 Report to the Community*.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, it is my pleasure to table the 2013-14 Annual Report of Nova Scotia Business Inc.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to begin with an introduction before I begin my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, over in the east gallery I would ask the following to stand up: David Wilson, Laurie Jennings, and Colette O'Hara. I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to present the House with the names of the members of the first board of Invest Nova Scotia. The proposed board members for Invest Nova Scotia are a diverse group of people. Ils sont de toutes les régions de la province et tous les horizons. Ils sont, entre autres, des gens d'affaires, des dirigeants, des entrepreneurs, des bénévoles, des enseignants, des fermiers et des athlètes. They all have impeccable credentials and their biographies are too long to read here.

However, I would like to say a few words about each proposed board member. Chief Leroy Denny of the Eskasoni First Nation is a teacher and a counsellor who has dedicated a great deal of time and effort towards promoting healthy and active living for youth. Colette O'Hara is an entrepreneur, a co-founder of Halifax's Awesome Foundation, which provides funding to make awesome ideas happen. David Wilson is a businessman who has managed billion-dollar portfolios in the venture capital industry and worked with numerous early- and growth-stage companies. Julia Rivard is not only a business and marketing leader; she is also a technology developer, volunteer and former Olympian. Kenneth Deveau est vice-recteur à l'enseignement à l'Université Sainte-Anne. Il est spécialiste du développement des communautés linguistiques minoritaires et il a publié de nombreux écrits.

Laurie Jennings is the vice-president of Masstown Market and an icon in the local food market. He is committed to supporting local businesses and local producers. Adrian White is the CEO of the Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce and has 25 years of proven executive leadership experience working with new start-ups and attracting new investment. Elizabeth Beale is the president and CEO of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council and has worked as a consultant, economist, lecturer, and governor of Dalhousie University. Finally, Dr. Tom Traves is being proposed as the initial chair of this board. He was president of Dalhousie University from 1995 to 2013 and recently reviewed our economic development tools.

We were very deliberate in our selections. This is a very different kind of board. This is a group of people who traditionally have not had a place at the table of a major

economic development fund. I sincerely hope that they bring that wealth of experience and blend of new ideas to bear on charting a new course for our economy.

La présentation des personnes que nous proposons pour siéger au conseil d'administration est une étape importante dans l'engagement du gouvernement de donner une nouvelle direction au développement économique. Nous avons toujours dit que le secteur privé devrait être à la tête de la croissance et prendre des décisions qui sont dans l'intérêt supérieur des Néo-Écossais.

The days of free money for business are over. The days of government picking winners and losers are over. This board will independently choose to support broad-based projects that benefit entire sectors and regions of our province.

This board also understands that they will be investing money that belongs to Nova Scotia taxpayers. That is why they are committed to transparency. Les transactions seront affichées sur le site Web « Accountability Reporting » et mentionnées dans le rapport annuel. Les Néo-Écossais sauront non seulement à quoi sert leur argent, mais aussi que celui-ci est utilisé de façon responsable. All of the investments made by Invest Nova Scotia will be posted on our “Accountability Reporting” website for all Nova Scotians to see.

This is the fundamental and meaningful change that we need. Our province is at a turning point and we know we can't keep going the way we were going. Our province is facing daunting economic and fiscal challenges. We can, however, turn our economy around if we are prepared to act together. It's not going to be easy, but we can do it. We all have an important role to play. The men and women who have stepped forward to be a part of the first Invest Nova Scotia board are doing their part. I hope that serves as an inspiration to others across the province, and I wish them great success. Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by thanking the minister for his ministerial statement in advance.

AN HON. MEMBER: We got the right email address.

MS. MACFARLANE: We did, and I thank you for that. I would also like to thank our guests who are here in the gallery today. I welcome them personally. We appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to come here today and be with us in this Chamber.

I agree with the minister that the proposed board members represent a diverse and talented group of individuals. I was very impressed. We see members from differing backgrounds and fields who have already contributed greatly to this beautiful province. Without a doubt, economic development in our province needs to be improved.

One way of attracting greater development is by improving business confidence. Another way to attract investment is by lowering the tax rate for small businesses and reducing red tape. These are measures that should be undertaken immediately to boost job creation in our province. This is one of the reasons why I introduced Bill No. 4, the Tax-free Zone for Small Business Act, as a means of encouraging the private sector investment.

I agree with the minister that our province is facing daunting economic and fiscal challenges. We need to find the fiscal logic in order to move forward successfully. By encouraging entrepreneurship in this province, we have the opportunity to see the private sector create jobs and prosperity for all Nova Scotians. I look forward to meeting the members of this new board and offer my sincere encouragement and support in the future. I thank the members of the board for their time and commitment to improving this province. Thank you very much.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would also like to thank the minister for providing a copy of his statement in advance. I also want to extend a thank you on behalf of the NDP caucus to board members of the new Invest Nova Scotia Board. No doubt it will be a demanding role and their public service to our province is very much appreciated.

According to the minister, Invest Nova Scotia will be a very different kind of board. The minister has outlined some general principles the board will be asked to follow but we have yet to see any regulations outlining these rules. In fact, members haven't actually been approved by the Human Resources Committee of this legislation, at the request of the Premier to hold their approval for another week.

According to the minister, the days of free money for business are over, yet government continues to provide grants to businesses in the form of tax breaks to large corporations. According to the minister, the days of government picking winners and losers are over, yet Cabinet still controls decisions about significant economic investments. According to the minister, government is prioritizing transparency and economic decision making, yet we still have seen instances where the minister is refusing to disclose details around investment decisions that continue to be made at the Cabinet Table.

Our concern is that 9,000 jobs have been lost in the first year of this Liberal Government and neither the minister nor the Premier has presented a plan to address this. Nova Scotia is facing an out-migration crisis. Half of the people who left our province in 2013 were under the age of 25, yet this government eliminated the Graduate Retention Rebate Program. If the minister and his Cabinet members don't take a coordinated approach to keeping people in our province, we will face serious challenges in the not so

distant future. I am hopeful the Invest Nova Scotia Board will be a part of the coordinated effort and approach.

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

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, may I give an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. WILSON: In the west gallery, a good friend of mine, although he is in the west gallery. I would just like to point out Steve Meuse, a well-known friend from First Nation in Bear River, a good advocate for a lot of the good work that we see our First Nation do in our community. I am very proud of the work they do there. A long-time friend and I would just like to bring the warm welcome of the House to him. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and with your permission I would like to do an introduction prior to reading my member statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. CASEY: I'd like to draw people's attention to the gallery opposite where we have members of the minister's panel who have today presented their report to me, and it has been tabled here in the House. I would like them to stand as they are introduced: Myra Freeman, Halifax, who was chairman of the panel; Gordon MacInnis, Glace Bay; Mike Henderson, Brookfield; Donna O'Connell, Wallace; Tina Dickson, Bear River; and Kyle Hill, Yarmouth, Toronto, wherever.

Let's give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Over 19,000 Nova Scotians have made their own decision to become involved in a review of public education in this province. They have responded to a call from the minister's panel to engage in a process to have their voices heard. Through an online survey, as well as written submissions and hundreds of emails, 50 per

cent of the respondents indicated they are not satisfied with the education system as it currently exists. Those respondents included parents, students, teachers, education partners, community members, and business leaders from all geographic regions of the province. These responses have been presented under seven categories and the report also includes 30 recommendations.

The report, under the title *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*, was received by me this morning and has been tabled in this House. It has been distributed to all our stakeholders and the Partners Advisory Group for reaction, and together that will provide me with the information needed to develop an action plan, with both short-term and long-term actions to be shared with the public in January 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

SMITH, MURRAY “MOE”: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honour of Murray “Moe” Joseph Smith, who passed away earlier this week at the age of 87. Moe was a great hockey player, having played on two intercollegiate championship teams, 1948 and 1949, and won the Orlay Bligh Memorial Trophy as Acadia’s Most Valuable Player in 1951. When Moe returned home after graduating from Acadia he played with the hometown Windsor Maple Leafs for nine seasons.

Moe and his father ran Smith’s Sporting Goods for many years following that and perhaps one of the best-kept secrets about Moe was his baseball abilities, playing second base for the Windsor Maple Leafs during the late 1940s. In 1994 he was inducted into the Birthplace of Hockey Hall of Fame by the Windsor Hockey Heritage Society, and has also been inducted into the Acadia University Sports Hall of Fame. His favourite team was the Detroit Red Wings.

John Paris, Jr. said in his book, “The epicentre of minor sports in Windsor was Murray ‘Moe’ Smith. For baseball as well as hockey, Moe was the man.”

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon people will gather in my community to say good-bye to Moe Smith and pay their last respects in tribute to him. Thank you very much.

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

SMITH, MURRAY “MOE”: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I have a similar statement for Mr. Smith.

The Windsor-West Hants area lost a hockey legend this week. Murray “Moe” Smith was one of Windsor’s all-time hockey greats.

He began his hockey career with Windsor Academy in the late 1930s, before attending Acadia University and playing in two intercollegiate championships. He then returned home and played nine seasons for the hometown Windsor Maple Leafs. Moe was a tremendous organizer of junior sports and led the Windsor Royals to their first season of play in the old Metro Valley Junior Hockey League.

In 1994, Moe was inducted into the Windsor Hockey Hall of Fame. His dedicated involvement to sports in Windsor spanned over 50 years. It’s an honour to pay tribute to the life and many contributions of Murray “Moe” Smith.

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

FIREWOOD SHORTAGE: NAT. RES. MIN. - RESPONSE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on October 29, 2014, the Minister of Natural Resources called it “foolishness” for bringing the shortage of firewood to the floor of the House of Assembly. I am not a fool for pointing out that wood suppliers are not having access to Crown lands in Nova Scotia. This is a flawed process. The minister has refused to meet with firewood suppliers over the summer to get a better understanding of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I googled the word “foolishness” and would like to read this quote: “Talk sense to a fool and he calls you foolish.” Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

FIREWOOD: PURCHASERS/SUPPLIERS - CONNECT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table another advertisement for someone who is selling firewood, for the member opposite. That member has been given numerous opportunities to help us coordinate between the folks that don’t have firewood and the folks that do have it and are looking to sell it. He has not taken us up on that offer.

All that member has done is stand up in this House every single day and read the same misinformation, which doesn’t take into account any of the actual facts that relate to the current market situation around firewood. He has not once presented one single solution or new idea to help out in this current situation. If he does actually believe that this is an issue, I’d advise him to please do a better job of being part of the solution.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll remind the honourable minister not to refer to members opposite directly, please.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

FRANCIS, KEN: ELEM. SCH. STUDENTS - MUNICIPAL POLITICS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of municipal government. When young people know the history of their hometown, they feel connected to the place and the people who came before. When young people become connected, it is because of the work of people such as Ken Francis.

For the past four years Mr. Francis, a former educator turned municipal politician, has helped educate elementary school students about the municipal world of politics. Mr. Francis is hopeful that by engaging the younger generation they will become more active throughout their school days and future generations. Mr. Francis even takes the time during these classroom visits to delve into Stellarton's history, and students have learned facts like Stellarton officially becoming a town on February 1, 1870. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

COM. SERV.: INCOME ASSISTANCE - NDP GOV'T. CHANGES

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians deserve to be given the real facts. Therefore the real fact is that, while in government, the NDP changed the accounting process for income assistance. As in other jurisdictions, income assistance payments were changed to be paid in the same month that the payment was allocated for. When the change was made, income recipients received a one-time bridge payment. Therefore, income assistance recipients had absolutely no loss of payment and had no loss of monthly payments in a calendar year. These are the real facts.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

E. HANTS & DIST. C OF C BUS. EXCELLENCE AWARDS GALA

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak to the tremendous achievement of businesses in Hants East. Last week I attended the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. This gala saw young entrepreneurs, community groups, customer service teams, and individuals, as well as rising stars and outstanding businesses, recognized for their excellence and unwavering commitment to success.

It was an honour to attend the chamber's gala awards and to see that, despite the challenging circumstances of the past and the many ups and downs of business ownership,

our businesses across Hants East and Nova Scotia are able to thrive. The success of business growth, of entrepreneurship and commitment to excellent customer service, is indicative that small business is alive and well in Nova Scotia. Moreover, the gala demonstrated the conditions for business to succeed and exist right here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, businesses in Hants East and across Nova Scotia are thriving.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

LEES, JAMES - EF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to say a few words about James Lees. James Lees is a Grade 11 student at Norththumberland Regional High School, and he is literally turning heads here at home and across the globe based on his work in nuclear fusion energy.

The multiple-award winner is one of 12 Canadian students going to Europe in March for 10 days as the winner of the EF Global Citizen Scholarship for his Fusion through Electrostatic Repulsion and Electromagnetic Compression innovation. That's a topic I know you're very familiar with, Mr. Speaker, so you'd be proud of him. In January he is also heading to Australia for their national youth science forum.

James continues to work on having his project for sustainable energy realized, and he will continue to advance his studies in science, which is his obvious career path. This morning, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to wish James safe journey on his travels and a smooth path as he moves forward on his scientific dreams and goals.

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

TIR: HWY. NO. 103 - VEGETATION CONTROL

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I welcome my role as Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Critic. I would like to take this opportunity to address an important issue, which I feel needs more attention on the floor of this House: the roads in rural Nova Scotia. One road in particular would be Highway No. 103, which I routinely travel. I've listened to Nova Scotians who complain about our roads, roads they drive to work, to school and to carry out their daily routines of life. They are very clear in their messaging that many rural roads and our 100-Series Highways need a more aggressive approach to brush-cutting and vegetation-control programs.

Our highways on which Nova Scotians drive on a daily basis have serious safety issues. Wildlife love this type of vegetation. What is needed is for the minister to have a vegetation program or schedule which would be tabled in this House on a yearly basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I request permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I draw my colleagues' attention to the east gallery where I would like to introduce Mrs. Marg Forbes. Marg is a former member of the South Shore Regional School Board and a long-standing community advocate on education within our education system. I would ask my colleagues to provide her a warm welcome to the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS - SUPPORT

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Bridgewater Farmers' Market has become not only a place to support local farmers, but a place of great conversation. I frequently stop in on Saturdays and I'm encouraged with the amount of support our community gives to the vendors at this market. It is the small pieces like our community markets that make up the whole. This is one of the many places I can go to find out what's really on people's minds, where community members feel they can have a conversation on a whole variety of issues.

It's important for us to continue to support such organizations as our local farmers' markets and to understand that these Saturday morning trips to get fresh, local produce among many other items is just part of the Saturday morning experience. Connecting and reconnecting with neighbours, a wonderful mix of different generations all meeting at the same space and observing the interaction is an important lesson of how lucky we are to live in this beautiful province.

I would like to encourage all members of the House to pay close attention and visit their farmers' markets.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

FREE THE CHILDREN - HALLOWEEN DONATIONS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, on Halloween night, there will be many children out looking for treats. However, I would like to draw members' attention to a group of youth in Pictou West. Instead of looking for treats on Halloween, these youth will be going door-to-door asking for non-perishable food items to donate to the local food banks. Youth from Northumberland Regional High School, Thomas McCulloch School

and Pictou Academy have become engaged in the community, inspired by Craig and Marc Kielburger, the founders of Free the Children.

Free the Children is an international organization that focuses on children's rights and helps children in need by way of youth empowerment. I commend these young people and ask that we all be ready with a donation for them when they come to the door. Thank you.

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

NDP GOV'T. HOUSING STRATEGY

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians deserve the real facts. Therefore, the real fact is that while in government, the NDP created the first housing strategy in the history of Nova Scotia. The Housing Strategy brought together community leaders and organizations and did months of work. Once the framework was developed, a province-wide consultation took place. A 10-year plan with a \$500 million investment was the result; \$42 million of federal contributions was earmarked for the initial implementation. This money certainly was not sitting around without a purpose, as the Liberal Government would want people to believe.

Mr. Speaker, these are the real facts.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. SOUTH SALVATION ARMY

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Dartmouth South is well served by a number of community organizations and groups that work to make life just a little better for all of our residents. These organizations and their commitments and their contributions in Dartmouth South are made possible by the generosity and the commendable work of volunteers and dedicated staff members.

Since 1967, the Salvation Army has made Pleasant Street its home in our constituency. The Salvation Army Dartmouth Church and Family Service offers a place of worship and enhances our sense of community. It provides relevant educational opportunities to many of our local residents as well. Earlier this year, I had the privilege of touring the facilities, and I can say with first-hand experience just how exceptional the staff and the volunteers are at what they do.

The Salvation Army Dartmouth Church and Family Services office will soon have a new home. On November 1st, after 47 years in our community, the church is moving to Caldwell Road in Eastern Passage and the Family Services division is moving to 171 Main

Street. I'm confident although both divisions are now moving outside of our constituency, these fantastic teams will continue to serve residents.

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

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

WILLIAMS, JASON/STAFF - FOOTBALL PROG.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sports are a great pastime for our young people. My grandson just finished his football season. It's something to see a seven-year-old weighing 51 pounds dressed in football gear.

I just want to acknowledge the coaches who have given their time and talent to help these kids develop. More than time, it is the patience and the guidance that they give to be good competitors. I want to say a thank-you to Jason Williams and his staff for their leadership during this football season.

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

ST. MARY'S RIVER SMOKEHOUSES

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I would rise to inform the House about a very successful business enterprise that exists in the delightful shire town of Sherbrooke and the pristine Municipality of the District of St. Mary's in Guysborough County.

Several decades ago, Mr. Sandy Cameron, who will be fondly remembered by many in and around this Legislature, had a vision of a business that was appropriate to the heritage of the area and would supply needed jobs to the residents. Sandy, together with a partner, established the St. Mary's River Smokehouses to provide highest-quality smoked salmon to the world. With a strong reputation as one of Nova Scotia's best salmon rivers, the location seemed appropriate and has proven to be so. Today, employing over 35 people and shipping worldwide, the business brings pride and jobs to the community and enshrines the memory of a great Nova Scotian.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

SAVOIE, DERRICK/MACINNIS, DARCY - SHENANIGANS SPORTS BAR

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to use these few brief words on a couple of new entrepreneurs in New Glasgow. Derrick Savoie and Darcy MacInnis, long-time friends and pranksters turned business partners, are the proud owners and

operators of Shenanigans Sports Bar. Both men are sports enthusiasts and have used their love of sports to enter into a business venture using sport memorabilia as decor and the television sets tuned to hockey and football. Although everyone is not a sports fan, their clientele all love good pub food, and they have all the favourites and regular specials with their own spin.

With the business underway, the staff of 10 is anxious to welcome diners to experience the atmosphere of Shenanigans and to sample their food and beverages. I invite all members to join me in wishing Derrick and Darcy the best in their endeavour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

SECOND STORY WOMEN'S CTR. (LUN.)

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, for more than 30 years, the Second Story Women's Centre has been helping women in Lunenburg County reach their full potential. Located in the Town of Lunenburg, the centre has proven to be a safe haven for women and girls seeking someone to trust, seeking to find answers or to find themselves. It provides an invaluable service to women and girls in Lunenburg County and its importance cannot be overstated.

From the very young to the very not-so-young, the Second Story Women's Centre has programs and services to help all women. From simply lending an ear to crisis support to professional referrals, the Second Story Women's Centre offers non-judgmental support for all women. Its importance to our communities cannot be overstated. It is, and will continue to be, a pleasure to have them as part of our communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

SOBEY, PAUL: SMU CHANCELLOR - APPT.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saint Mary's University has named former Empire president and CEO Paul Sobey as the university's next chancellor. For more than 20 years, Mr. Sobey has given Saint Mary's the benefit of his visionary leadership and loyal support. From service on the board of governors to chairing the Hearts and Minds Capital Campaign that raised in excess of \$45 million, Paul has played a critical role in placing Saint Mary's at the forefront of education of global citizens. Paul is also the proud father and uncle of several SMU grads. Knowing Paul, I am thrilled to have him as chancellor of my alma mater and wish him the best.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BLACK RIVER COMMUN. HALL (KINGS CO.) - REBUILDING

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inspire the House with a story of a small but determined group of my constituents who worked together to accomplish a great feat with little resources and in the face of a tragic setback. The Black River Community Hall in Kings County was built in 1871. On March 7, 2011, the community celebrated the realization of six years of hard work in the completion of a rebuilt hall. Two days later, on March 9th, this hall was tragically destroyed by fire.

Undaunted by this tragedy, the Black River community rallied together and succeeded in raising \$100,000 and giving thousands of hours of volunteer time to rebuild their hall from the ground up. Their dedication, inspiration and courage in the face of disaster is an inspiration to Nova Scotians.

I am proud to announce that on September 21st, just three short years later, the community of Black River came together to celebrate the grand opening of their new hall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

DEER HUNTING SEASON - SAFETY

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 31st, the general deer hunting season opens at half an hour before dawn. Last year about 45,000 people bought licences for the general deer season and 10,800 deer were harvested. This results in a lot of activity in the woods. I urge all hunters to be safe, exercise caution and to maintain safe distances from dwellings.

I would also like to note that in light of recent events in Ottawa, that people may be more suspicious of firearms so I want to remind people that it is hunting season and in rural places gunshots may be heard. Thank you.

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

DIGBY PINES GOLF RESORT & SPA

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we enjoyed the awesome experience of Taste of Nova Scotia and all it brings to this wonderful province. I was also privileged to introduce Rene LeBlanc, manager of the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa to the House, who participated in Taste of Nova Scotia with a small example of the excellent cuisine served at the Digby Pines.

I would like to recommend the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa as the perfect spot in Nova Scotia for a vacation, with its breath-taking beauty, beautiful grounds and diverse

activities. This Norman-style chateau circa 1929 features the best of Nova Scotia accommodations with guest rooms in the main chateau, as well as maritime cottages nestled around spacious walking areas. Visitors can pamper themselves with the luxurious, full-service AVEDA concept spa and/or play a round of golf at the picturesque Stanley Thompson designed 18-hole golf course.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance this resort has to the Clare-Digby riding and appreciate the continuing support by the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

LEBLANC, ALCIDE/SPINNEY, WESLEY - KNIGHTHOOD (FRANCE)

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Remembrance Day, Mr. Speaker, is a day for all Canadians to pause and reflect on all who fought and died on the battlefield to protect our freedom. Royal Canadian Legion Branch 155 in Wedgeport will present members and World War II veterans Alcide LeBlanc and Wesley Spinney with a special decoration by order of the President of the Republic of France and award them the rank of Knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honour.

This decoration established by Napoleon Bonaparte on May 19, 1802, is the highest decoration in France, given in recognition of their involvement in the liberation of France.

I call on this House to congratulate Alcide LeBlanc and Wesley Spinney on receiving this prestigious honour, thank them for their dedicated service to our country and best wishes for continued good health. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

THE TERROR (E. HANTS)

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak about important issues and work being done in Hants East. As all members may know, Hants East is the fastest growing district east of Montreal. The communities that span from Shubenacadie to Mount Uniacke have seen rapid population growth and a continual expansion of services to meet the needs of residents. Many artistic, cultural and musical events take place across my constituency, and of note at this time of the year is the Terror at Exit 10 haunted property in Shubenacadie.

The Terror at Exit 10 haunted property is operated by Vance Vegas and Allisa Swanson who combined their many talents in acting, costume design, and lighting to create one of the most terrifying scenes across Nova Scotia. Terror at Exit 10 is not just for those looking to be scared; rather, Vance and Allisa have also contributed part of all funds received to charity.

Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example of people from Hants East going above and beyond for the sake of Halloween scares and community service. I encourage all members to visit Vance and Allisa . . .

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. SOUTH SENIORS

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand for a moment to talk about my continued concerns about the living situations of many of the seniors in our constituency of Dartmouth South. In our constituency office we receive several calls a week from seniors at Eastwood and Alderney Manors in the riding, at Acadia Place and Fort Clarence and other community buildings as well. We receive pest control inquiries, questions about cleaning, crosswalk safety. I want to take this opportunity to reiterate to my constituents, our office is hearing those concerns and we are committed to ensuring we improve these situations.

I do my best to visit these facilities as often as I can and to maintain an open communication and dialogue with our Minister of Community Services as much as possible. I want to publicly thank these citizens and the seniors, in particular in Dartmouth South, for their patience and willingness to co-operate as we continue to make adjustments, find funding, and make necessary changes to improve these buildings and their lot in life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MAHONE ISLAND CONSERVATION ASSOC.,

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, they say there is an island for every day of the year in Mahone Bay. Truly the Bay is one of our most impressive natural wonders. With the help of the Mahone Bay Islands Conservation Association, it will continue to be forever so. MICA, as it is known, is a non-profit organization that has been instrumental in the purchasing and/or protecting of at least seven islands in the Bay to date.

Its mission is to protect and conserve the natural environment of the islands and shoreline of Mahone Bay and the traditional, social, and recreational opportunities valued by its various communities. I think it can safely be said that MICA has exceeded the expectation set for it in its inaugural meeting in 2002. To date more than 800 people have taken out a membership at one time or another. MICA continues to grow and continues to set its sights on the conservation of Mahone Bay's natural island treasures. Thank you.

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

WHITEHEAD/PORT FELIX - CANAL

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to the beautiful seaside communities of Whitehead and Port Felix in the Municipality of the District of Guysborough and their latest accomplishment. In 1858 the intrepid people of this area, long connected to the ocean and the bounty of fish it provided, saw that a very long journey between two harbours could be shortened by over eight miles of treacherous North Atlantic by the construction of a canal through an isthmus of 300 metres.

The industrious folks petitioned the government of the day who set aside an allowance of 20 pounds for the construction, and the canal opened in 1860. Ten years ago the federal government abandoned their responsibility for this historic landmark. The community rose up and with the help of their local government restored the canal, which is well used by canoers and kayakers in this beautiful area together with small watercraft. This preservation is a credit to the communities involved.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

PETITE RIVIERE COMMUN. PARK

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, on October 18th I had the opportunity to be the provincial representative at the official opening of the Petite Riviere community park located within my riding of Lunenburg West. Using land donated by Covey Island Boat Works, a beautiful green space has been created. This space was a community effort and represents the collaborative effort of a close-knit group of friends and neighbours to create a space where families can go, where children can run and play and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, and a place for tourists to stretch their weary legs after a long journey on a beach or a local hiking trail.

I would like to acknowledge the community as well as a strong community member, Mr. Leif Helmer, who was instrumental in helping create the final product. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the community of Petite Riviere for once again coming together in the spirit of community to create an opportunity for all us to further enjoy the beauty that is the South Shore where their new park exists.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

STUTZ, HANSPETER - GRAND PRÉ WINERY

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I know that I do not need to tell you that Nova Scotia is now producing some of the finest wines in the country, and perhaps the world. I

would like to recommend to you a particularly fine vintage grown and produced in Gaspereau from grapes specifically developed from our climate and landscape. I wish that I could offer an opportunity to the members right now as we sit to sample the remarkable depth and complexity of this superlatively focused Domaine de Grand Pré 2013 Riesling.

Instead, I must extend an invitation on behalf of Hanspeter Stutz and his family to his beautiful vineyard and the winery in Grand Pré, to taste for yourself the vintage that has received the inaugural Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Nova Scotia. One taste, fellow members, and you will know with complete certainty that Nova Scotia is destined for great things in the world of wine. Thank you.

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

RIVERSIDE LOBSTER & SEAFOOD INC. (METEGHAN)

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the lobster industry in Nova Scotia was valued at \$347 million in 2012; of that only 18 per cent went to processing facilities seeing the rest go to live market. In the Meteghan area of Clare-Digby riding, I'm proud to bring to the attention of the House a new processing plant that is only two years old. Riverside Lobster and Seafood Inc. is currently processing valued-added vacuum packed lobster in my riding. This company has grown up from an initial start of 80 employees to now having up to 170 full-time employees.

Riverside Lobster and Seafood employs workers from Weymouth to Yarmouth and also includes over 30 temporary foreign workers. This is a tremendous example of economic development in my riding. Riverside Lobster and Seafood could continue to grow their workforce if more employees could be found in the area. Out-migration of our workforce in rural Nova Scotia is directly impacting development of our resource sector. We need to continue our efforts to find ways through immigration, youth retention, and job enhancements to fight the plight of our rural Nova Scotia economic opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's statement expired a few seconds ago.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that with the unanimous consent of the House we recess until the commencement of Question Period at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We will recess in a moment but I want to provide clarification and a point of order ruling on the statement made by the honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to lead off the members' statements. I do have to rule it out of order as it is clear in the guidelines for Statements by Members that was circulated earlier this week that members who are ministers should not use this order of business to raise matters that fall under their portfolios or to announce government policies or initiatives, et cetera. So it is with regret that I rule that out of order and will chalk that up to a learning experience and the learning curve.

With the unanimous consent of the House we will now recess until 2:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The House now stands recessed until 2:00 p.m.

[1:52 p.m. The House recessed.]

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT TO MEMBERS BY MINISTERS

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

EECD - FREEMAN PANEL/RECOMMENDATIONS: PREMIER - AGREEMENT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Premier but before I begin, let me thank chairman Myra Freeman and her panelists on the Minister's Panel on Education. I'd also like to thank the 19,000 Nova Scotians who took the time to provide feedback to the panel.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with the recommendation of the Freeman panel and their report, so in that vein, knowing how important education is to the future of our province and the government's history of receiving reports and then not acting on them, I'd like to ask the Premier: Does he agree with all the recommendations of the panel on education?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find this kind of funny. We just received the report this morning. I would hope that even the unreasonable Nova

Scotian that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party may be, that he thinks we should take the time to actually look at what the recommendations actually are.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, of course we're trying to be good here today and tell the government we agree with the report that they have received. We've had it for less time than the government has. If the Premier wants to take some time to go through it, that's fine. Presumably they had more than this morning to look at it, but if he's telling us he saw it for the first time today, then we'll take him at his word on that.

I'll tell you why I'm asking the Premier, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the most important things that government has to get right. It's not something you would turn over to the private sector, it's the education of our young people.

In fact it involves more than the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The committee itself pointed to Community Services, to Health and Wellness, to Labour and Advanced Education, to Justice, to Immigration, among others - and the Premier is Premier of all those things.

I'd just like to ask the Premier: The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to the implementation - will he commit the other departments to doing their job to implement the recommendations in the Freeman report?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me assure the honourable member that this Premier and this Cabinet and this caucus value public education. It is why we committed to reinvesting the cuts that were in the public system done by the previous government and it is why we've continued to engage parents, students, and all Nova Scotians, by doing the first deep dive in public education in the last 25 years. I want to reassure the member opposite that we'll get it right.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer, thank you. I am sure if the Premier doesn't understand why we're asking, many Nova Scotians do. We've had an Ivany report come and go, we had a Wheeler report come and go - in fact, they're doing the opposite of what the Wheeler report said. We like this Freeman report and the recommendations it made, and we're prepared to get going on them. I hope when the Premier has had time to look at it, he will also commit his government to doing it.

I know that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has said she will have an action plan by January - that's great. There are other departments that, including Education and Early Childhood Development, also have a role to play here. Will he commit them to having an action plan for their parts of the report by January 2015?

THE PREMIER: We will take the report, Mr. Speaker, we will digest it and we will communicate to Nova Scotians, just like we've done with the Ivany report, if you look at the goals we put forward, the investments we made in terms of driving job opportunities by

engaging the private sector; we're doing exactly what the Wheeler report said to do, which is actually to continue to consult with Nova Scotians and make sure we do the proper science, understand whether we have that resource; and we're going to do what we continue to do, which is work with Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker. Unlike the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, we don't believe we have all the answers - we want to engage Nova Scotians to get some of them.

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

**EECD - MIN. EDUC. REVIEW PANEL - RECOMMENDATIONS:
MIN. ACTIONS**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I, too, want to thank the members of the minister's education review panel, and all those members of the public who participated in this very important report.

My question to the minister is very simple: How many of the recommendations of the panel will the minister be accepting and acting on?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I said this morning - and if the member had been there or if the critic from that caucus had been there, they would have heard my comments - I accepted the report as it was presented.

MS. MACDONALD: I thank the minister for that response. Mr. Speaker, there have been many thoughtful and well-written reports in the history of our province; unfortunately not all of them have been acted on in a timely fashion.

My question to the minister is very simple. When will she be producing her action plan, and will it have a timeline and targets?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, that information was also shared this morning. The action plan that I will be preparing will be presented to the public in January 2015.

I'd like to make a comment that, yes, I agree with the member. There have been lots of studies done on public education, but what this government and this minister did not do was fly someone in from Ontario, keep them overnight, get a report, and go away.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, that's what the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board did. But we quibble.

The Ivany commission last February also had some recommendations with respect to the P-12 education system, and those have yet to be put into action. Curiously, the Ivany commission is not mentioned in this report. However, I want to ask the minister, will she also be bringing forward any plans to implement the recommendations with respect to P-12 in the Ivany commission?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to all members of the House, the report that was presented to me today was what 19,000-plus Nova Scotians said about the public education system. It was not an action plan. It was a report of what Nova Scotians have said they like and don't like about the public education system.

I will remind all members of the House that having cross-department co-operation is not something new for this government. We have started that. We know that with SchoolsPlus we have more than one department involved. We know that we are working with the Department of Health and Wellness, with mental health clinicians. So that is not something new, but it is something we support and we will continue.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD - EDUC. REPT.: ACTION - QUARTERLY UPDATES

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I must say, I was very pleased to see the release of the education report today. In the next few days I'll have a chance to read through the report and the recommendations and so on (Interruption) I must say, I did look at the recommendations in the report prior to the release.

I guess the work begins now, but this review illustrates serious concerns that many teachers and principals know well. Nova Scotia children and educators need action now. The minister has said that she would reveal her action plan in January. I will be asking for progress updates toward this action plan prior to January 2015.

My question to the minister is, will the minister also commit to releasing detailed progress updates each quarter on the implementation of her action plan?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would say to all members of the House that I was very pleased, and I did acknowledge that the Education Critic from the Opposition Party did take the time to come over to the press conference; I acknowledge that his presence was there. I certainly believe wholeheartedly that he understands the importance of public education. Together we have had many conversations in the past, and I expect we will have many more in the future as we put together a plan that will support the students and teachers in our schools.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the panel has emphasized the need for the government to move forward with the full range of recommendations. In an earlier question the minister said that she has accepted the recommendations. My question to the minister is, will the minister's action plan that she is going to implement be implemented sooner than later, or over the next three years? Can she reveal - is it going to be one year, two years, three years, or over the three years?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the comments that I made this morning were that we have received a 60-page report. We know that it is broad-based, and it is all-encompassing. There are many different components of our public education system that are identified in that. What I have said is that we will be looking at plans that we can implement both in the short term and the long term.

I did suggest in my comments this morning, as the member would know because he was there, that there are some things we need to tie into semestering and the school year and that will certainly put limitations around what we can do and when we do it.

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

PREM.: BIG BUS. TAX BREAK - EFFICACY ENSURE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In January, *The Economist* magazine made the case that many manufacturing companies are experiencing pressure and they are investing in capital that replaces labour. I'll table that article. The argument is pretty simple: investments in new equipment and technology often reduce the numbers of jobs and workers.

My question to the Premier is this, what is the government's plan to ensure their new big-business tax break won't result in fewer Nova Scotians in the workforce?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no wonder Nova Scotians responded resoundly on October 8th and kicked that Party out of power. I don't know if she remembers, but when she was in power, those large companies paid 80 per cent of that investment and they picked up the other 20 per cent - or let me rephrase that - the taxpayers of Nova Scotia picked up the other 20 per cent of that right up front.

MS. MACDONALD: We've already lost 9,000 jobs in one year. We can't afford to be cavalier about this matter. In January 2015, companies looking to expand or immigrate to this province will be eligible for a new big-business tax break on capital investment worth \$30 million.

My question is, why hasn't the Premier explained how he is planning to supplement any job losses created by his new big-business tax scheme?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, she said companies expanding in Nova Scotia. That would create new employment opportunities. Why is she opposed to Nova Scotia companies becoming efficient or investing in equipment that would maintain jobs? It's little wonder that the only idea that Party had around economic development was opening up the chequebook and letting someone else fill in the number.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

EECD - SOS COMM. (RIVER JOHN): CCRSB REQUEST - AMOUNTS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The SOS (Support Our School) committee for the River John Consolidated School is working extremely hard to create a successful hub model and to comply within the parameters provided to them in July. Recently, they held a progress report meeting with the CCRSB.

Although the meeting went well, there seems to be a shift in the parameters around the financial amount they need to raise. The committee people initially understood that the target was to raise \$173,000; now, it is the group's understanding from the most recent meeting that the dollar amount they need is \$560,000, plus future maintenance.

I'm just wondering if the minister can please verify or clarify the dollar amount requested by CCRSB in order for the River John Consolidated School to keep their doors open with the hub model?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, and we've discussed this, the decision of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board back in 2013 was a motion that would look at closing three schools. Those schools were given an option to come up with a hub model and to work with the school board to see if it was possible for a hub model to allow that school to stay open.

This minister wrote to the school board and asked that they extend that. They have chosen not to act on that extension, but I do know that the decision for the community to meet with the board and the decision about school closure does rest with the school board.

MS. MACFARLANE: The parameters provided in July clearly state that the qualitative as well as the quantitative factors must be taken into consideration. Will the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development be offering any guidance to the school or the board regarding how they define qualitative versus quantitative factors or how they will assess and weigh the merits of qualitative aspects in the hub proposal the River John School, supported by the Support Our School team, will submit in March 2015?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, you know, when the board suggested that communities may want to look at a hub model, there were no criteria for the communities or the school

board to follow. Even though we passed the legislation in the Spring, we made sure that we put together criteria for the hub model, shared that with the communities in question, shared that with the school board and asked them to use those guidelines to take both community and board through the process of building a hub model. We did that because we understood the anxiety in the community and the difficult decision that the board had to make.

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

ERDT: PROGS. - ONLINE POSTING

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier. This Spring, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism said they were delivering on their promise of, and I quote, “. . . accountability and transparency when it came to investments being made . . .” on the taxpayers’ behalf. I’ll table that.

In total, I’d like to ask the Premier, which ERDT programs that award public cash to corporations will be posted online?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I’ll let the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism respond to that.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I believe to date, all of the investments made by Nova Scotia Business Incorporated have been posted. I believe the investments made for the Yarmouth ferry have been posted as well. I’ll have to verify and see if there are any other specific programs, but any of the programs that remain in ERDT are programs that applicants would apply to and it would be a process. It’s not a decision that would make it to the ministerial level. In fact, the CII program, which used to be in our department, will now be over with NSBI for their administration.

I would remind the honourable Acting Leader of the NDP in case she wasn’t aware that the website she is referring to - Nova Scotia is the only province in the country that has such a transparent website for economic investments in the province.

MS. MACDONALD: I thank the minister very much for that answer. On October 22nd, the government introduced a new tax incentive and rebate program that could dole out \$30 million to big business in this province. It will be administered, I believe, by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board.

My question to the Premier is, will the Premier commit to posting that particular tax break online in the same format as other investments being made by ERDT?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will refer that question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the tax credit itself only applies to investments of over \$15 million. I'd love to say that we have a ton of companies in Nova Scotia that would be looking to make such investments. Unfortunately, there is a very limited amount; I believe most members would probably be able to guess which companies those are. The actual decisions on the tax credit, of who will actually be approved, are going to be under the responsibility of the Invest Nova Scotia Board, for which its first members I announced today. Thank you.

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

EECD - WENTWORTH CONS. ELEM. SCH.: REVENUE - DIRECTIVE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Today, the minister received her report from the Minister's Panel on Education. The students and families of Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School are wondering how it will help them. Their school board has told them that their school will close unless they can come up with \$244,000 a year in outside revenue. That revenue has to come from 700 square feet of available space.

I know that the minister has asked the school board to delay its closure decision and I applaud her for that, but when the parents of the school asked the school board where the directive came from to get so much money from such a small school, they were told it came from the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. So my question to the minister is, can she confirm if it was her department that is asking for such a large amount of money from such a small school?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer. It helps the parents get closer to the problem, because you see, \$244,000 from 700 square feet of available space equals almost \$350 a square foot in new revenue. That would make Wentworth Valley the most expensive piece of real estate in the world, because today, the most expensive piece of real estate is actually in the West End of London, where available space is going for US\$272. The next most expensive is in Hong Kong at US\$183.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. BAILLIE: My question is to the minister, can she tell us where in the review there is hope for a better day for the parents and students of Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School, given they are being asked to make their school the most expensive piece of real estate in all the world? And I will table that report.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, over 19,000 Nova Scotians responded to the education panel request for opinions, ideas and suggestions. I would expect and I would hope that

many of those parents, teachers and community members who did respond were from Wentworth, River John, Noel and any other small community that is concerned about their school.

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

PREM.: JOB LOSSES - CONCERNS

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Every time this government is pressed on job losses, the Premier throws up his hands and basically says, not my problem. Well, he talks about his economic environment, but while he is sitting by and watching 9,000 jobs leave this province, if you extrapolate that out, by the time this government is finished its four year mandate, this province will have 36,000 fewer jobs.

Today the *Cape Breton Post* called the response to Nova Scotia job losses as meaningless and described our workforce as largely at the mercy of companies who employ them. My question to the Premier, is the Premier at all concerned that his do-nothing approach to the economy is leaving families feeling they do not have anybody on their side?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no, I think Nova Scotia families know they have a government on their side.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. When it came to taking rights away from health care workers in this province, the Premier was very happy to leave his Minister of Labour and Advanced Education in the dark on such matters. But when there are another 130 job losses in Cape Breton that we can ill afford, the Premier thinks it is appropriate to call on the minister to offer advice on retraining, career transition support for the women and men who just lost their jobs.

Really, to the Premier through you, will he be upfront with Cape Bretoners and admit that his vision of our economy is one that has our unemployment lines filled with the best trained workers in Canada?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know the honourable member has been around this House for a long time and I have had a great opportunity to engage him on many opportunities, but he is better than that question. He knows that as a former minister of that department that any time there were job losses that department would have reached out to that employer to provide support to those employees that might be losing their jobs. He also recognizes that well trained Nova Scotians are as good as any workers in the world and they will find employment and create employment in this great province of ours.

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

TIR - HWY. NO. 103: TWINNING - THRESHOLD

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, sadly this past Monday another life was lost in a head-on collision on Highway No. 103. RCMP have identified a 40-year-old Lunenburg County resident and I can say our thoughts and prayers are certainly with her family. Between 2008 and 2012 there were 22 fatalities along the entire highway, 13 of those fatalities happening between Exit 5 in Tantallon and Exit 12 outside Bridgewater. In recent media reports, the minister indicated that the highway beyond Exit 6 does not meet the threshold for twinning, and I will table that document.

With the tragedies mounting, can the minister clearly tell Nova Scotians what the threshold would be for twinning Highway No. 103?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I would also like to echo his comments about the victim, the victim's family and friends, obviously our condolences. It is a tough day in Nova Scotia when we lose people on the highway to tragic collisions so our hearts go out to them as well.

With respect to the question, when we had the conversation with the reporter, what I said was that we talked about the first section between Exit 5 and Exit 6. Based on our investment with the Ingramport interchange, we are getting in a position where we could twin the highway from Exit 5 to Exit 6. That did qualify for the twinning based on the volume, Mr. Speaker, based on the volume per day of anything over 10,000 vehicles per day.

Once we get that section completed, then we move down the highway to do those traffic counts again and figure out what pressure was relieved by that twinning. Certainly there is more work to be done. We are actually conducting a safety review of the entire Highway No.103 now. We will have those answers and we'll make them available to all Nova Scotians.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much for that answer. Many of my constituents travel Highway No. 103, as I do on a weekly basis; we understand where the good parts are and where the dangerous parts are, as well. According to the media report, the minister indicated the Highway No. 103 Operational and Safety Review will be in hand by December. He also said that the immediate improvements such as rumble strips and signage may be needed, Jersey barriers and maybe a whole bunch of other things.

My question to the minister is, has he or his department earmarked any funds to cover immediate safety concerns that may arise from that review?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the reality is that with the Capital Program there are a significant number of investments we make on an annual

basis on behalf of Nova Scotians. Certainly the partnership with the federal government on a large-scale capital projects are helpful.

With respect to the question, we will certainly act on those. There are a number of short and medium-term decisions we can make that will immediately improve safety. We will look at the barriers. Obviously, head-on collisions are part of the issue. We will look at those barriers, rumble strips, signage, alignment, access to the highway, ease of transition for those alignments - all those pieces come into that safety study. We will have all those details in December and we will certainly make them available to the member and to the Legislature so we can all take a look together, and they'll know what decisions we make based on the information we have.

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

COM. SERV.: PROPERTY TAX REBATE - SENIORS/CORPORATE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Community Services. Yesterday the Minister of Internal Services was commenting on the need for improvements to the property tax rebate for seniors. He opposed the bill because, in his words, "... we have a fiscal reality in this province." That is true, and now Nova Scotia's fiscal reality involves \$30 million in corporate tax breaks for big businesses. So my question through you to the minister is, why does she feel big businesses need additional tax breaks instead of seniors?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you. I would say thank you for the question but I don't actually agree with the question. We have actually done quite a bit over the last year in mandate, especially toward seniors. We have certainly kept that seniors' property tax rate, and, in fact, just two days ago announced close to \$54 million in improvements to many programs in housing, some of which will actually affect seniors in adaptations and helping them make upgrades to their homes, to keep them in their homes.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Under the previous government in July 2013, seven per cent of the population was considered to be living in poverty. This is the lowest number percentage of low-income Nova Scotians on record for the province, because the NDP has focused investments to help seniors and low-income Nova Scotians. My question to the Minister of Community Services is, does she think large corporations need \$30 million more than Nova Scotian seniors, who have a tough time just making ends meet?

MS. BERNARD: I'll tell you what I don't believe in, and that's trying to balance the books on the backs of the poor by reinvesting an accounting thing where \$17 million would have been removed from one month so that welfare cheques in the month of March would have been late for every low-income Nova Scotian in this province. We reversed that, Mr. Speaker, so that wouldn't happen.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: BROTEN TAX REVIEW - REPORT RELEASE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. We are all anxiously awaiting the results of the Nova Scotia Tax and Regulatory Review, and Mr. Speaker, the government did fly somebody in from Ontario for this one. The contract with Ms. Broten states that the report will be delivered on October 31st. Can the minister inform the House whether we will receive Ms. Broten's review tomorrow as our Halloween treat?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important to set the record straight that Laurel Broten, who was engaged to do the tax review, lives in Hammonds Plains and is raising a family here in Nova Scotia. There should be no mistake from either the Progressive Conservative Party or the NDP, there should be absolutely no question that she and her family are making their future here in Nova Scotia.

MR. HOUSTON: I guess we call that plus one job, minus 9,000 overall.

Mr. Speaker, we're still curious to see if we can expect that report to be made public tomorrow and when will the government respond to the recommendations that will be contained in it?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the tax review, I never promised October 31st. We said we would receive it in the Fall of this year, and I expect that we will receive it in November, about mid-November is my expectation. We will then make it public and have the discussion on what's in it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

PREM.: GAS PRICE REGULATION - ELIMINATION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Gas price regulation protects a margin for retailers of gasoline, which is particularly important for rural areas of the province. We've seen over the years many rural stations close. My question to the Premier is, is the Premier serious about his commitment to eliminate gas price regulation, or will he continue to protect convenient access of gasoline for rural Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: There is no evidence, Mr. Speaker, that gas regulation has indeed protected rural gas stations. As we've seen across this province, they've closed. We continue to have a public conversation about how to best ensure that we continue to make sure that gasoline is affordable to the people of this province, and as a government we'll continue to analyze that.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I've actually received information, correspondence from rural gas station owners who say the reason they are still in business is because of gas price regulations. I'll be happy to table that at a later date; I should have brought it with me today.

There is, no question, some debate on this matter, but in the area I represent it's very rural, we have a lot of roads, and people need to be able to purchase gasoline close to where they live. I believe it's working, Mr. Speaker. I think the reason we could see a change is - well, I'll just ask the question, I know we're a little shorter these days.

Mr. Speaker, the companies that are providing gas in more urban areas can depend on volume. That doesn't exist in rural areas, it's just not there and that's why the protection of a profit margin is important. Why doesn't the Premier realize that to remove regulation would be making a mistake and would reduce access to gas for rural Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that I live in rural Nova Scotia and not only do I live there, but I interact when I'm in that community. I understand the plight of small businesses across this province and in rural Nova Scotia. As a matter of fact, before I entered this House that is what I used to do.

The fact of the matter is that no one has been able to point that gas regulations have saved rural gas stations. What we have seen is that business models have changed, to provide from what used to be the two-bay garages where people made a living fixing cars, that is no longer happening in many of those communities, it is happening at the large dealerships. So what they've done is they've transformed their business model.

Gas regulation has been part of that. Some people, and I want to acknowledge the member opposite, some business people have actually created a business around gas regulation and are providing some service to rural communities, particularly where the honourable member is. It's one of the reasons why we're continuing to have that conversation, to ensure that the decisions we make do not negatively impact that business model, and we can provide an opportunity to all people to be able to make a living for themselves in those communities.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: AFFORDABLE LIVING TAX CREDIT - CHANGES

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. The Affordable Living Tax Credit was introduced in 2010 and, as of April 2013, the program has returned over \$178 million to Nova Scotians with low incomes.

In December 2013, in response to a question in this House, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said that the Affordable Living Tax Credit “. . . will be looked at in the comprehensive tax review that we’re undertaking.” I’ll table those two documents, Mr. Speaker. So my question for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is, what change is the minister’s review going to make to the Affordable Living Tax Credit?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I appreciate it. I have no idea what’s going to be in the tax review. My earlier statement was simply that we were looking at all taxes and how they interrelate, and how we can get a comprehensive, good system that is simplified and fair for Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank the minister as well. The tax review is ongoing, as the minister has said, but she has already made some substantial changes in the system. For example, we’ve seen the elimination of the Graduate Retention Rebate and the introduction of a multi-million dollar corporate tax rebate, as two examples.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, is, will the minister please reassure us that she won’t do to the Affordable Living Tax Credit what was done to the Graduate Retention Rebate - eliminate it?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it would be premature to make any statement about any of the taxes until we see the full report, but I will acknowledge that the Affordable Living Tax Credit was brought in to help Nova Scotians when the NDP raised the HST by 2 cents, which was taking another \$400 million out of the pockets of Nova Scotians. That’s the value of it to Nova Scotia’s budget.

It was brought in to help low-income Nova Scotians, and we understand the importance of that. I’ll certainly not make any decisions at all on these kinds of changes without speaking to my colleagues in Cabinet and caucus as well. Thank you.

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

TIR - TOLL HWYS.: INTRODUCTION - MIN. PLANS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the previous session, I asked the minister what his government’s thoughts and intentions were regarding toll highways for the province. At the time, he stated that no conversations had taken place yet, but believed that the current model at Cobequid was effective. I’ll table that.

My question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is, since the last session, has there been any discussion within or outside the department in regard to introducing more toll highways in this province?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. The quick answer to that is no. There have been no plans or discussions with respect to TIR working on toll highways. I did say that about the Cobequid Pass. If you look at the infrastructure, I think it's one that has had a measure of security. It has certainly been a solid highway, notwithstanding the weather issues.

One thing I would want to say on this issue - my department pointed this out. I've obviously only been here for a year, but what they've said is that they've never received more public input and more public feedback and suggestions about the toll conversation with respect to Highway Nos. 103 and 104. It has really brought a lot of Nova Scotians out to talk about those ideas.

As we've said on many issues, we're a government that's going to listen to the people. If they have ideas, if they bring them forward, we'll have those conversations. We're not opposed to that. We want to know what Nova Scotians think, and how we move forward with infrastructure. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: As the minister knows, Nova Scotia already has an infrastructure deficit that needs to be addressed, but not on the backs of Nova Scotians or tourists. One toll highway is more than enough. My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, can he assure the House and Nova Scotians that he will not go back to the Liberal ways of the 1990s and that there will be no new toll highways in Nova Scotia?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we have a five-year capital plan, which we're very proud of. That's something that came from the department. It's something that's based on engineering science. At this point there are no plans for tolls. There's nothing built in, but again, I want to make it very clear that in 2014, Nova Scotians understand. The member mentioned infrastructure deficit, and he's absolutely right. They understand the position we're in.

We have many challenges. We're going to do our best to address those. Safety studies and reviews are part of that. We're listening to Nova Scotians. When they have ideas, they can bring them to our attention, and we'll certainly look at every option. We want to keep Nova Scotians safe. We want to develop our highways and our road infrastructure, and we're going to work with Nova Scotians to do just that.

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

TIR: DIRT ROADS - GRAVEL/GRADING

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Roads certainly have been an issue for all of us. I live in a rural area, of course, and there are a lot of roads that need attention. There have been many complaints coming across my desk concerning bridges and potholes, and

ditches and brush clearing - and a lot of those have been addressed, and I'm very thankful for that.

A number of concerns have been raised concerning the dirt roads that are in my constituency. They are complaining about not enough gravel being available in order to do the proper grading, and I even talked to a grader operator and he said the same thing. So my question is, how often should these types of roads be gravelled?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the standard we try to apply with the tens of thousands of gravel roads we have under our inventory with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, we try to, on an annual basis, lay gravel and flatten it with a grader. The dust control, the brush cutting, all of those components that keep a gravel road maintained, of course, that's over and above the actual infrastructure work we have to do when these roads become eroded and their back breaks, so to speak.

It certainly is something we endeavour to do on all gravel roads each year, whenever we get the opportunity. But like everything else, this is something that certainly isn't controlled in downtown Halifax. Each region has a budget for those gravel roads, and our local folks on the ground make those decisions as best they can.

I want to assure the member that any time there's a specific road that really needs that service, if he brings it to me we'll get it to the appropriate people and we'll get it looked after as best we can.

MR. HARRISON: Thank you, I really appreciate that. My other question is, is there an actual plan of what roads could be done, or areas that could be done, on a yearly basis?

MR. MACLELLAN: Basically there is a set budget for each region for the gravel roads for each of the components, whether it's brush cutting, dust control spray with magnesium chloride, or the gravel. What happens essentially, just like the local roads plan, it's done on an annual basis, based on the need.

When the folks are on the ground they get out and inspect each and every road. They look at what the priorities are, and they do the worst ones first and then they fill in the blanks as best they can. At the end of the year, if there's any slippage in other areas, then we would reallocate that money for things like gravel.

Again, it's basically based on the condition of the road. Any time we have to address it we get on the ground, take a look and see what we can do.

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

COM. SERV.: FOOD BANKS - INCREASED USAGE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. A recent story by the CBC has drawn attention to the increased stress in the Bridgewater Inner Church Food Bank. Last year business to the food bank increased by almost 1,000 from the previous year, and it is expected to rise again this year. I'll table that report.

Furthermore, food bank volunteers say more and more unemployed young people are coming in for assistance. My question to the minister is, will the minister concede that continued job losses under the watch of this government have made it more difficult for Nova Scotians, and particularly young Nova Scotians, to make ends meet?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: We work very closely with Feed Nova Scotia to look at the needs of every community in the province, to make sure their services are being met and the need is being met in the community. That's why the announcement two days ago of \$9.4 million in rent supplements is so important, because by leveraging that money, along with the private partnerships that we've made, it will allow close to 500 people to access rent supplements instead of taking monies out of their food budget to pay for their rent, and that really is going to help in terms of food bank usage all over the province.

We're looking at a benefit structure reform, as well, that will make the system more efficient in looking at things like food security.

MR. ORRELL: Thank you for that answer. According to Statistics Canada, the number of unemployed people in southwestern Nova Scotia has gone from 5,400 in September 2013, to 6,600 in September 2014 - that's another 1,200 people without work. Mr. Speaker, I'll table that as well.

Mr. Speaker, life has not gotten better for Nova Scotians since this government came to power; in fact, it is getting even harder for Nova Scotians to get a good job, pay their bills, and put food on the table for their families.

My question to the minister is, will the minister admit the Liberal Government's failure to provide jobs is sending more people to southern Nova Scotia food banks?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, what I will do is tell you what we have done in the past year. One of the most significant things that we've done is invested \$75,000 to each family resource centre across the province. Many of them actually run food security programs within their existing organizations, including the one that is in my riding, which is leveraging that \$75,000 to actually open up a food learning centre which is going to help people in my community.

The other thing that we also did - and this goes to the previous member's question - the Affordable Living Tax Credit, we actually increased the cap of that this year from \$25,000 to \$26,000, which captured 1,300 more children within this arrangement so that they would be eligible for that tax credit, which puts money directly into the hands of low-income people.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - GRAD. RETENTION REBATE: CUT - EFFECT

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Last Spring, when the minister cut the Graduate Retention Rebate, she heard, as did many of us, from many Nova Scotians who were receiving the rebate. In a redacted letter I've received through a freedom of information request, one of the letters the minister received says, "You have taken \$10,000 away from my family. Maybe to you that isn't a big deal, but for my family it is. Do you know how much of a difference that money can make?"

My question for the minister is simply, do you know just how much of a difference that money can make for a family in Nova Scotia with one or both partners who have attended post-secondary institutions?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, absolutely we understand that that was money that people were receiving and that they liked to receive it, it helped them, it made a difference. But when the previous government brought in that program, they brought it in to stem the out-migration of Nova Scotian graduates. The program wasn't effective in doing that, and other people who earned far less than the recipients of the GRR were still paying full taxes and staying here and perhaps not getting the right help they need.

We need to look at all of the balance on the taxes. It was a program that simply wasn't doing what it was set up to do.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on Page 6 of the minister's briefing note on this, it says, the ". . . GRR led to an improvement of about 542 persons per year NOT leaving the province." That's for 2009. That's for 1,600 people.

My question to the minister is, how does the minister think driving more young graduates out of Nova Scotia is helping our province?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, this has been the subject of a point of order that I had already raised here in the House. You have yet to give us . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He did.

MR. SPEAKER: You missed it.

MS. WHALEN: Oh, I'll continue. Anyway, at any rate, I still take great exception to it, so I'll take a moment to say so. I'll simply read the next statement in that briefing note, which says, "However, looking at Newfoundland and Labrador (which has no such credit/retention in place), they experienced an even bigger drop in out-migration . . ." Therefore, the implication is there is no connection to the Graduate Retention Rebate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**ENERGY - HILLSIDE FLY ASH REPT.:
HEALTH & WELLNESS MIN. - CONSULT**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Earlier this week, I gave the Minister of Health and Wellness a report on the impact of the fly ash in Hillside on Peter Boyles' Hillside environmental group. I would like to ask the Minister of Energy, would he commit to reviewing that report with the Minister of Health and Wellness and meet with myself and Peter Boyles before Christmas about its content?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Sure.

MR. HOUSTON: I would just like to thank the minister for that. Maybe when he's down to Pictou County to meet with us, I'll spring for lunch that day.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 62.

Bill No. 62 - Shared Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 62, entitled an Act Respecting Shared Services for Crown Corporations, Government Departments and Public Sector Entities, be now read a second time.

This legislation will enable the government to make necessary changes in the way the public sector does business. This legislation is a key step in moving forward with our commitment to establish shared services in the public sector. When government created the Internal Services Department this year, our mandate was clear: to help government be more efficient and to provide better services to Nova Scotians.

We know government must lead by example. Various corporate support functions were combined into one department that's focused to finding efficiencies across government. The Department of Internal Services is making sure we are best aligned to support our clients who deliver services and that we make the best use of taxpayer dollars.

Today we're moving forward with legislation that allows for the consolidation of some public sector services such as procurement, information technology, and large construction projects. The groups currently working together are the provincial government, school boards, district health authorities, the IWK, and some Crown Corporations.

This is an exciting new direction for government and for Nova Scotia. Changes like these take time and, while some changes are already underway, this bill allows us to continue to move forward on the shared services project over the coming months and years. We're very mindful of the good work that is presently being done, and I know that talk of change can create unease for employees, that's why it's my intent to be thorough and thoughtful as we do this work, so that there is as little disruption as possible.

Planning on a future model has been, and will continue to be, done in collaboration with employers, employees, and unions to ensure employees are supported throughout these changes in their workplaces. Nova Scotia is not alone in adopting this approach; work is underway in each of the other Atlantic Provinces to look at regional co-operation and strategic procurement at a provincial level.

I look forward to working with our partners in finding new ways to work efficiently and effectively and to provide better services to Nova Scotians. Legislation is a key step in moving this initiative along. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to say a few words on this bill this afternoon.

This is an idea that we're certainly supportive of. Finding efficiencies in the way the government operates is always very important. It's important to Nova Scotians and it's important to us. Nova Scotians know, they understand the value of a dollar. They work hard for their dollars and they are very careful with them, and they expect their government to do the same. They expect their government to respect their valuable tax dollars and use them in an efficient manner. We do believe that tax dollars are best spent in areas where they help Nova Scotians and not on inefficient processes.

This is a step to spend tax dollars more wisely. We are excited about the potential of this opportunity, and it's something we've advocated for, for years. We're happy to see an initiative going forward. There is going to be more room for consolidation as the minister moves forward with this into other areas, obviously, and maybe looking at incorporating other Crown Corporations and stuff.

We're hoping that as this starts to unfold the government will be forthcoming with the plans and updates as the initiative starts to move forward. We will be interested in how this is happening and how it's working. There are lots of details to work through here, and one thing we're hoping the government will be very mindful of is the possible impact on Nova Scotian companies, both small and large, that service the government as a customer - things like changes to the process, or how do you get on the government's vendor list, who you're going to interact with.

All these things are going to be important to business, so we just will be watching and hopeful that the government is communicating those things and is working with business and is open with any changes to the process that may impact business. That's something that we'll be watching and that we'll be interested in. We'll also obviously be very interested in monitoring the savings: how do the savings materialize, and are there in fact savings realized from this process? I'm sure it's something that the government is going to have to make changes to as things evolve as they unroll this, and we'll be watching those, and we'll be here to offer any feedback should it be requested. We want to make sure that Nova Scotians still get the services they need and that this change is useful for everyone.

You know, it might be something - the government might entertain tabling a report periodically on how savings are materializing, updating the members of this House with maybe quarterly updates on the plan, just in keeping with the theme of transparency and accountability to make sure that we understand what is happening and Nova Scotians understand what is happening and to keep everyone accountable. The legislation itself is going to put a lot of stuff to the regulations, so there are a lot of details to be worked out in the regulations, and we'll be anxious to see how that happens.

Madam Speaker, I was just looking through the part in the bill where it talks about "A shared-services organization shall provide the shared services it is required to provide as prescribed by the regulations . . ." So the services that the shared-services organization is

meant to provide are going to be spelled out in the regulations. It's going to spell out some that they are required to provide, and the regulations will also spell out some services that may be provided.

That's really where the meat of this is going to be, in the regulations - what services are the shared-services organizations meant to provide - and then we have to look back and see if they are being provided. There are obviously going to be some fees. The shared-services organizations - of which I think there are three to begin with, but the option to make more - are going to charge fees to their internal customers, whether it's a Crown Corporation or whatever. There is going to be a lot of work to be done around how that fee is calculated. It's just another detail that has to be worked out.

The bill does spell out the initial shared-services organizations, and as I've mentioned, there are three of them. There is going to be a shared-services organization - the Department of Internal Services, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and the Public Service Commission, and any other department designated in the regulations.

It seems to me that everyone may want their own shared-services organization, so we need to be careful that that doesn't kind of spin out of control and we get to a point where we have a shared-services department to manage all of the shared-services organizations. But these are things that I'm sure the minister will be mindful of.

This is all to say that I do believe this is a good idea. It's an idea that I'm certainly supportive of, but the success of this idea is going to be dictated by the execution of it. There are a lot of things to be determined, and then the plan has to be rolled out. I'm hopeful that this is properly executed, because I do think it has the potential to benefit Nova Scotians.

So I look forward to getting more information from the minister as this happens. I look forward to getting more information at the Law Amendments Committee and I do look forward to working with the government on making this move forward, so I thank you for your time today.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. It was interesting in my stint in government when you realize that we have been around as long as government has been; it was fun but short. It was one of those things that you almost said well, as they say, a V-8 moment. All these people were buying the same product from different people within government and there was no go-to area. I believe this bill will establish that go-to area. I think one of the examples the minister used the other day was about pacemakers but there are issues, whether it is buying fuel in bulk, all these things.

We live in a day where sadly there are not a lot of mom-and-pops around where one time government would go to those things. It is the big fellows that we are left to deal with. I think that by buying like that, there will be - I don't think we should sugar coat this - there may be a few losers in this but it's not the intent. I think if I am reading the minister correctly, the winner at the end of the day will be the taxpayer of Nova Scotia because we are buying these goods and services at the proper level and at a competitive level.

I will sit down when I say this last piece about it. I would hope that if there is to be any job loss over this, and as mentioned earlier by the minister, that it will be done through attrition and that there will be as little injury done to those workers as possible. With those few words, Madam Speaker, I look forward to supporting this bill going forward.

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

MR. LLOYD HINES: Madam Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to stand and speak to Bill No. 62. This bill has many merits and, as you know, applies to Crown corporations, departments of government and public sector entities. I am especially pleased hearing my colleagues' opinions on these important issues and impressed with their ability to recognize what the intent is here, to filter the savings through to the taxpayers.

I am also very pleased to see the minister apply his extensive private sector experience to the business of government, Madam Speaker, and that's what government is, it's a business. In this instance we're talking about a \$10 billion corporation. The shareholders are the citizens of the Province of Nova Scotia and the taxpayers, and the dividend is sort of a reverse dividend: instead of your dividend going up, we want to see that dividend, which is lower taxes and flat-lining taxes, decreasing.

This legislation will enable the government to make necessary changes in the way the public sector does business, resulting in improved outcomes for our clients, the citizens of Nova Scotia, Madam Speaker. This legislation will help our government be more efficient and provide better service to Nova Scotians.

I know this is something we hear a lot about from the Opposition, justifiably so, and I think they agree that this is the right thing to do. We are making sure that government is best suited to supply our clients who deliver services and make the best use of taxpayers' dollars.

Changes like this take time, Madam Speaker, the bill allows us to continue moving forward on a shared services project over the coming months and years, to ensure the most strategic deployment of the important resources of the taxpayers of our great province. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Madam Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 62.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 62. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: With the very useful assistance of my colleagues across the floor, Madam Speaker, would you please revert to the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Would you please call Bill No. 64.

Bill No. 64 - Limitation of Actions Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 64, Limitation of Actions Act be now read a second time. It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon and give the honourable members of this House as well as the general public a few of the reasons why this Act needs to be amended at this time. The current legislation is not only archaic, it is outdated and it is confusing. It hasn't been amended probably since its inception, so we are talking over 100-plus years ago.

It sets out various time limits to bring actions forward, depending on the basis of the claim. I am not going to bore everybody in the House with various time limits that are set out for each and every claim, but there are a number of them, depending on which action a person wishes to launch.

The current legislation is creating uncertainty and confusion on both sides and can lead to complex and costly litigation. This is true for lawyers. It's true for self-represented litigants, so these are people who are representing themselves in court, and for companies that are operating in multiple jurisdictions where the legislation may be different across various provinces in Canada.

Madam Speaker, the new bill proposes standard limitation periods for all claims. Specifically, it establishes a two-year, basic limitation period for most civil claims, such as those that involve personal injury, breach of contract, et cetera. What that means is you have got two years to start an action from the date a person discovers that they have a legal action. It also creates an ultimate limitation period of 15 years for legal claims which may not be discovered right away. What that means is, 15 years from the day on which the act or the omission, which the act is based upon, has occurred. That is the ultimate limitation period.

This is in line with what is happening in many other jurisdictions. It's also in line with the model put forward by a national law reform body called The Uniform Law Conference of Canada, that proposes a more modern model for all jurisdictions. New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have already adopted modern limitation legislation. We want to develop a consistent approach to limitations law across the country.

Perhaps most importantly, Madam Speaker, this bill does not impose time limits for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence who want to file law suits. There is one exception in the bill where time limits will not apply. The existing Act gives a one-year limitation period for sexual assault claims. There are a variety of exceptions that could suspend the limitation period, but they are difficult to understand and to apply. So I'm pleased that we are able to put forward a bill that better protects and respects the rights of victims in this case.

In addition to eliminating time limits for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, the bill also does not set limits for assaults involving dependants or people in intimate relationships. As in the current Act, there will be no time limits for any claims involving children. This means limitation periods are suspended until children turn the age of 19. Time periods also don't run while a claimant is incapacitated, so the ultimate limitation period is suspended if there is willful concealment of a wrong. That is the case at the moment, as well.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I want to highlight the benefits for small businesses and professionals who may be involved in lawsuits. I want to say that if someone has done something wrong, they should be held accountable. However, the law should also set limits so that people cannot be sued into infinity. That is where the 15-year ultimate limitation period comes in. This will allow businesses and professionals to have more certainty and long-term stability.

The new bill strikes a fair balance that respects the rights of everyone involved. It will also support internal trade and labour mobility among provinces by making our laws similar to other jurisdictions. Again, as I said, our closest neighbour, New Brunswick, has already adopted this more modern legislation.

To summarize, this legislation is about creating laws that are more consistent and clear. These are laws that will better support vulnerable Nova Scotians, small business owners and professionals. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I look forward to comments from my colleagues in the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for her remarks. Having consistency with other jurisdictions is, I think, a good thing. I also think the fact that there is at some point a cut-off where people who are involved - and I think of engineers, I know they were quoted in a press release by the government - to be able to have a point where after a reasonable period of time - maybe it's 15 years, maybe other people would suggest other periods - but I think those seem reasonable to me.

I'm sure we will hear from people in Law Amendments Committee. I've received a couple of pieces of communication already on this, but generally it seems to make sense. The fact that other jurisdictions have adopted a similar approach and we can be consistent with them makes sense.

I think these things are important as I saw somebody had said they don't have to be keeping file boxes of projects they may have worked on years and years ago and putting them in storage and carrying them around in case they are sued at some point in the future, to be able to draw upon those documents to defend themselves. That seems reasonable, that after a certain period of time - in this case 15 years was being suggested - that there has to be some point. Now, Madam Speaker, maybe we'll hear otherwise in Law Amendments Committee. I'll certainly listen to comments if they are provided at that time by Nova Scotians and people who are affected by this legislation.

I want to draw attention to the exemption for people who have suffered sexual abuse. I think that's important. There is still some question in my mind about - although the minister, I must commend her, has certainly been open to discussing the matter with me and answering my questions. Sometimes these things can be complicated. I'm not trained as a lawyer, but I'm starting to get used to reading bills in this Legislature and there can be a lot to them. Sometimes, of course, there are other Acts that come into play. Perhaps we'll hear more from others. I know I'm consulting now to see if this exemption - I think going forward, it certainly works for anybody who suffered sexual abuse to be able to file claims, and that is a very good thing.

I do think of people historically who have suffered sexual abuse who may be limited. They were limited under the old Act and this bill doesn't really change that. I think in the interest of - sometimes, I think in legal discussions, maybe the less said, the better. I'm going to stop talking now and continue to look at this bill.

But generally I will say that it looks like something we will be supporting. I want to thank the minister for bringing it forward and certainly for her openness to discuss it in and outside of this Chamber. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I will say just a few words on this bill. It's a good bill. I know we're anxious to watch it go over to Law Amendments Committee and see what interveners may have to say over there.

On its face, the bill moves in the right direction because the litigants and all those involved in proceedings like this - it's the old saying, "Justice delayed is justice denied." One would hope that this would give the impetus for people to come forward in a more timely and reasonable manner.

As these things go through and whenever somebody sees something being backed off, from time to time one wonders where the higher court, the Federal Court, may look at these things and say if we act in a reasonable nature. Again, on its face, these changes look extremely reasonable, but I'm not a jurist, so I wouldn't know that.

One would hope this bill would get passed and if there were ever to be a challenge to this that it would be upheld, so I support this bill going forward to Law Amendments Committee and seeing its passage in this House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Madam Speaker, I wish to provide my strong support for the passage of a modernized Limitation of Actions Act as the Minister of Community Services and Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

I'm glad that this government recognizes the importance of removing any time limits to pursue actions in cases involving sexual assault and indeed for any assault involving dependents or people involved in intimate relationships, even if not in a sexual nature. Based on my previous work and experiences, I know that this change is particularly appropriate because people may not be ready to come forward immediately. Often, an assault produces a state of mind that needs to process what has happened. A survivor of childhood abuse may be unable to name what happened until the affected individual becomes an adult.

There can never be a legislated time frame on healing. Survivors need to know that they can feel safe in coming forward at any stage, including years later. Sexual assault is an affront to human dignity, no matter where or when it occurs.

While sexual assault can happen to anyone regardless of their sex, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or where they live, we do know that those at greatest risk are women and girls. They need to know that their voices will be heard. Nova Scotia is moving forward by respecting the rights of victims of sexual assault and domestic violence to speak up at any time. I'm pleased to reaffirm our government's commitment to improving the situation for victims, families and communities, in particular with this important legislative change.

I'd like to take a moment in support of the efforts of those who do their part to address these crimes and work to prevent future occurrences. I wish to thank everyone for the important work that they do each and every day. All Nova Scotians must play a role in changing the culture that enables sexual assault and sexual violence. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, I just want to speak a couple of moments to this, a lot because of a good friend of mine - my official agent, Del Boudreau. At the age of 11, my friend Del was sexually abused by a priest. He lived throughout his life, wrote a book about it recently and, of course, has had a lot of healing in the last number of years. I think he's 71 years old - I hope I don't get that wrong, because he would be mad at me if I got that wrong.

But he was 11 years old. He had, I would say, a tough life. He was an alcoholic, had lots of anger issues. Through that, his loving wife, Sally, took care of him the best she could. They had a lovely family, but the issues were always there. When you talk to Del today, he will say, it took a lot from me throughout my life because I wasn't able to participate the way maybe normal people could. There was always something there that he couldn't admit to, he couldn't understand until much later. It wasn't until someone else came out - I think his brother was in that too - that he had this realization that, gee that happened to me too. From that realization it was the time it took to actually tell someone about it.

There are a couple of landmark times in there of when the abuse happened, when you realized it happened. As a child, especially in our Catholic communities at that time, the priest wasn't wrong so the kids were making this stuff up. So, the kids, at 11 or 12 years old were asked by their parents - that didn't happen to you, you made that up. Sometimes they believed that, and that is what they believed. If you go throughout life - and it could be 30 years later or 40 years later - you go, holy mackerel, that happened to us, that happened to me.

Once you get through the embarrassment of it, then you finally tell someone, then finally you make it public. You grieve a little bit but you start to put things back in perspective and start healing. I think the bill that is before us is one that allows that process to go on because we are not talking about a couple of years here. These things are 40 years long in a lot of these cases that we are talking about today with abuse with priests, abuse with teachers, or abuse with whatever the abuser is. It is a very difficult situation.

To the minister, I think this is a good bill going forward and one that I hope will allow more people to come forward with their issues through time, to go to court with these things if that is what the process requires, not to limit these things because the healing process is one that is very long. I thank you for that opportunity to speak today.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you Madam Speaker. It gives me pleasure also to stand here today and speak to Bill No. 64, the Limitations of Actions Act, and also to give credit to the Minister of Justice for bringing this forward at this time.

I think this is also a very urgent and important issue. I wasn't going to speak to it today but I do feel moved to share some knowledge about this as well. The other thing is I wanted to commend the member for Inverness for his statement and his beautiful speech the other day in the House about victims of sexual abuse, male victims, many of whom have felt shame and not been able to come forward. It was nice to see three gentlemen here in the House the other day who had suffered at the hands of authority figures and had felt strong enough to come forward.

When I was a kid growing up in Truro, these things weren't really talked about too much. But I remember one day walking home from school and making a short cut through a hotel property and an older man, a gardener, came out and said hey, little girl, come over here, I want to show you something. My curiosity as a child was piqued and I started to go to see what this guy was going to show me and then all of sudden something just told me to stop. He got kind of angry, and was trying to say, no, no, no, come over here, come over here and I was quite close and he almost grabbed me and I just remember the instinctual feeling inside of me of that fear and survival mechanism that just kicked in.

I didn't know what could happen, but I knew it wasn't going to be good. I realized I didn't know this person and I didn't necessarily trust this person all of a sudden and I ran, and I ran, and I ran, and I ran. I don't even think I ever told my parents about that incident. In fact, I don't think I've ever mentioned that incident until today. It's interesting because it has stayed with me; and over the years as you grow up as a young woman and then an older woman, out in society, it is amazing how many times you have to rely on your instincts to help guide you through different situations, and sometimes these things can happen when you are least expecting it.

When I was 37 years old and in Hollywood, I remember signing a contract with an agent there and being very excited that I had an agent. Here I was, they were going to get me out there and give me all of these auditions and everything, and this gentleman invited me to go for supper that night to celebrate. I thought, oh, fantastic, this agent who is the head of the agency is going to take me out for dinner, I'm in Hollywood, I'm this young woman from Nova Scotia and I went out for dinner.

At the end of dinner, we were looking out over a waterscape with boats and it was February and I was thinking how great it was to be in the warm, and this guy came up behind me and started biting on my ear. And I thought, whoa, what's he doing? And then he proceeded to try and grope me. And I went, excuse me, but, this is business. I just signed a contract with you. I'm sorry but I don't know what's going on here.

And he tried to make it out that I was mistaken and I was confused about what his intentions were. And I just said, sir, I'm sorry but business is business and yes, I am an actor but a contract is a contract. This is not a personal thing for me and I would hope that we can continue our business relationship.

Well, after that, Madam Speaker, the guy never called me, wouldn't send me out for any auditions. I had a contract signed and I couldn't get out of the contract. He had told all of his associates not to take my calls, not to do anything. I mean, I was stuck. So finally in the end, I called the union and said, look, I'd like to get out of this contract but I don't know how to do it. And they said, well, we would like to know, is it of a sexual nature? Is it of a harassment nature that you want to get out of it? And I said, well, I'd really rather not say because I am just new to Hollywood. I don't want to get in any trouble or anything.

They said, no, no, no, there is a big problem here in Hollywood with sexual assaults and sexual harassment and we want to try and put an end to it. We have a lawyer who is willing to talk to anybody who wants to come forward. If you don't want to do it for yourself, do it for the other women who perhaps did not get away, and perhaps do not have the fortitude that you have to say no, my reputation, my value of myself comes first and so please speak to this lawyer.

In the end I did. In the end it boiled down to a he said/she said situation. They did talk to the man in question and they talked to me, and in the end it was he said/she said. I said, so, what are you going to do? And she said, well, we believe you. You have nothing, no reason to be doing this. You just want to get out of your contract; you're not looking for any money; you don't want to make a big deal about it publicly, so we believe you. You are not the first person who has come and said something about this man, so it's good that we know. In the end he was fined and he was given a major slap on the wrist, and they said that if ever it came to their attention again, this man would be charged.

These things all add up, Madam Speaker, and in fact, it is difficult for women out there in the world, and young men too, because you never know when somebody is going

to try and take advantage of you, if you're vulnerable, if you're homeless, if you are needing some shelter or you need some kindness. Are the people giving you kindness because they want to be kind or are they giving you kindness because they want something from you?

These are very difficult things, sometimes, for young people to differentiate, especially if young people are drinking, then their view and their balance is off. They may do things that they wouldn't do otherwise. I have to say that I think that this kind of legislation, and any other kind of legislation that will help enable people to come forward at a later time, is good. In my case I was sexually assaulted once, and it took me 30 years to overcome that and to stop sweeping it under a carpet, and in fact, to admit it and deal with it.

I realize that it affected me for a long time, Madam Speaker, but I just didn't want to admit that it really had happened to me, because I thought, well, I should know better. But really, sometimes you are in situations where you cannot help yourself and you find yourself in a situation where you can't get out, and that is when I think the law needs to be able to step in and where we need to feel we can go and be believed and have someone on our side who will fight for us and make sure that justice is done.

Again, with those few words I'd just like to commend the minister and also the member for Inverness, and say to anybody who is out there that if they are suffering from any kind of abuse or any kind of sexual harassment, or worse, to please step forward and speak to somebody about it. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I just want to say to all colleagues in the House that I've listened attentively and appreciate all the comments that were made from all members of the Legislature, and I very much look forward to listening to people's views who come to Law Amendments Committee on this.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move that we close debate on Bill No. 64.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 64. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, let's try this one more time.

Madam Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The motion is carried.

[3:32 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[4:21 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I will now take a head count for a quorum.

We have 15 members so the House will now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[4:22 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[4:28 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 18 - Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act.

Bill No. 22 - Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act.

Bill No. 25 - Housing Act and Housing Nova Scotia Act.

Bill No. 26 - Animal Protection Act.

Bill No. 49 - Economic Development in Nova Scotia Improvement Act.

Bill No. 50 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 5.

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

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

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, the Government Restructuring Act, be now read for a third time. These are housekeeping amendments, but they formalize important changes we made to the structure of government earlier this year.

These changes have helped us better serve Nova Scotians by finding efficiencies within government and providing improved services for the public. These amendments are an important step in that process, and I am pleased that they are moving forward in such a timely manner. Thank you.

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

MR. IAIN RANKIN: I am pleased to rise in the House to support these housekeeping amendments that will formalize the new structure of government departments. I will speak to this when I get a chance to reply to the Throne Speech, but I think it's an appropriate juncture to speak a little bit about this bill.

After we came into office, we took a broad look at the workings of government overall. In March, we put into place the changes that will result in efficiencies for government, and more importantly, better service for Nova Scotians. The efficacy of this bill will be realized along with the Shared Services bill talked about today over the course of our mandate.

Municipal Affairs will become its own department, including the Emergency Management Office and the Office of the Fire Marshal. The establishment of Service Nova Scotia as an office, the combining of the Department of Finance and Treasury Board office into a new department, and the formation of the Department of Internal Services - bringing together divisions and services from various departments.

I believe this is not only a good bill but a necessary bill. One way or another, this region - not only our province - must take steps to transform its public sector to be commensurate with revenues coming in. I appreciate a lot of what the Opposition says when they are in favour of bills such as fracking, because I do know that they are watching the revenue, and I appreciate their view that that would bring more revenue in.

I'll repeat what my colleague the Minister of Internal Services said: we have a fiscal reality in this province. I was surprised that the Third Party thinks this is something that is worthy of tabling, because I'll say it again: we do have a fiscal reality in this province. When you're talking about seniors, I think this just drives this point home even more. Many in this House have probably realized that every single month we have 1,000 people from the senior cohort who enter into an age where they're drawing from CPP.

That's why all of our ministers are working assiduously on improving the three Es within their own department. There are many steps being taken to make these departments more efficient and more effective, and to have better economies of scale.

Just a few more points on this bill and why this is so important for Nova Scotia. Wages represent close to 60 per cent of the budget. Why would Opposition caution the loss of what would amount to around 200 FTEs when I've heard both Parties say that it's necessary, going back to even when the Third Party ran in 2009? They promised a reduction of 1,000 FTEs.

Our FTE per capita is way over the national average, and public sector spending in Atlantic Canada is well over \$1 billion past the average. There has to be some kind of restraint on the culture of reliance we have here on our public sector. I've lived in other jurisdictions, and it's not the same when you're walking in the cities. Many people you see in restaurants, walking in suits - a lot of these people are working in the private sector. But when you see it here, it's often people who work in our public sector. It's often senior people working in the public sector that are walking around.

This culture needs to change. We have a \$3 billion infrastructure deficit, and we need to begin to address this. Governments perpetually ignore the PM practices that we do in the private sector until it's far too late. We have to begin to look at our infrastructure, and we can only do that by reducing the public sector.

I've also heard in the House the reference to GDP-to-debt ratio, which is around 30 per cent, so some members think that's not too bad. I think you have to also take into

consideration the federal share, the federal proportion of the debt that we have to have. It would be too complacent to always predict the revenues that we get from that federal government, which is one-third of our overall revenue.

One final point: I think this is a key step in the direction of restructuring our government. I see in the not-too-distant future how we're going to have to do that with our partners in the Maritime Provinces. This region, in almost every department, can do a better job with regional co-operation, so I was happy to see that in the Speech from the Throne - probably the first time that was really mentioned as a key priority - it was mentioned that we're going to have to do more with interprovincial trade. I don't see why we can't go further and work with departments to make sure that we're providing a better way of sharing those services, like we do at the IWK in health. We can do it in tourism, we can do it in immigration, and we shouldn't stop where we are now.

In short, I support this bill. I think it could go a lot further, and I look forward to how we're going to progress forward with the steps we're taking. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 5. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 9.

Bill No. 9 - Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. MARK FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that Bill No. 9, the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act, be now read for a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will accomplish three things. It will allow those who are training to be licensed funeral directors to register with the Nova Scotia Board of Registration of Embalmers and Funeral Directors as apprentices; it will recognize and protect apprentice funeral directors under the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act; and it will provide Nova Scotians with more protection, as this ensures that aspiring funeral directors are properly trained and regulated.

Before now, our legislation has recognized apprentice embalmers under the Act, but has not provided the same recognition to apprentice funeral directors. These changes will now allow apprentice funeral directors in Nova Scotia to also be protected by the Act. The amendments to the Act will improve the quality of the funeral service industry, as it ensures well-trained funeral professionals for the future. It will also provide consumers with protection from potential errors, wrongdoing, or bad practices. With that, I close my comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 9. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 10.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that Bill No. 10, an Act Respecting the Appointment of Statutory Officers at Service Nova Scotia, be read for a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, the pieces of legislation that will be affected by the change include the Cemetery and Funeral Services Act, the Collection Agencies Act, the Consumer Protection Act, the Consumer Reporting Act, the Consumer Services Act, the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act, the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act, and the Mortgage Brokers' and Lenders' Registration Act.

The proposed amendment will streamline the process for appointing registrars and deputy registrars to administer these Acts. I'm pleased to bring forward these changes so that Nova Scotia's consumer protection legislation is up to date and provides more flexibility in administering the Act, allowing government to better serve businesses and consumers. With that, I close my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 10. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 12.

Bill No. 12 - Correctional Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 12, amendments to the Correctional Services Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

The amendments to this bill are minor housekeeping items and will allow us to stay up to date with current technologies and best practices. This includes updating language to reflect current practices, eliminating unnecessary words, reassigning positions that no longer exist, and broadening the definition of “committal order” to include regulation-making authority other than judges.

I’ll note that amendments also update the victim notification process for routine transfers. We have consulted with our Director of Victim Services surrounding this change, and he had no concerns. The amendments update all references to “electronic monitoring” to “electronic supervision” to be more inclusive of the various technologies available. This change will not result in any change to the current electronic supervision program. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 12. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 14.

Bill No. 14 - Gas Distribution Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 14 - an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1997, the Gas Distribution Act - be now read a third time and do pass.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 14. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 15.

Bill No. 15 - Builders' Lien Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. I move that Bill No. 15, amendments to the Builders' Lien Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

M. le Président, the amendments to this bill build on the changes that were made in 2013 and will further align language and improve practices to provide more clarity and to ensure consistency in the Act. Merci.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 15. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 16.

Bill No. 16 - Police Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. I move that Bill No. 16, amendments to the Police Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

I'll say a few words on that one, Mr. Speaker. The amendments to the Police Act will clarify sections of the Act and remove any ambiguities, allow for joint police advisory boards and protect volunteer auxiliary police officers from liability. These volunteer officers give so generously of their time and skills to improve our society and assist the RCMP. Through these amendments, we will ensure that they are protected while carrying out their important work from civil liability.

The amendments also allow for clarifications surrounding to whom the minister may reassign an investigation if an investigation is removed from the municipality. The current wording only refers to the minister reassigning the investigation to a department. The amendments clarify that if the minister removes an investigation from a municipality, the investigation can be assigned to an agency, which is defined as the provincial police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a municipal police department or another police department.

Also, current wording in the Police Act allows the Governor in Council to enter into an agreement with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to perform the functions of the provincial police. We're proposing that, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, the minister may also enter into an agreement with the Government of Canada respecting policing and the administration of justice. This provides for the approval of other functions related to policing, such as DNA analysis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 16. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 17.

Bill No. 17 - Police Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 17, amendments to the Police Act, be now read a third time and do pass. These are minor amendments that primarily focus on wording changes which will clarify the intent of the Act.

The amendments will allow the Complaints Commissioner to file the annual report, publish statistics and file a notice of a review, rather than the Police Review Board, ensure that investigations that are without merit, or an abuse of process, do not proceed to the review board for investigation; and clarify that the Complaints Commissioner can decide whether an investigation is needed to resolve a matter. They will also explicitly state that the Review Board may decide questions of law and will require the chairperson of the Review Board, or in the instance of two co-chairs, at least one co-chair, to hold a bachelor's degree in law or a degree that the Governor in Council determines to be equivalent. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 17. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

We'll recess for one minute while we get organized.

[4:47 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[4:57 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

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

Bill No. 6 - Petroleum Resources Act.

and without amendment the chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it is about time. It is with gratitude that I have the privilege to be here in this historic room and give my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I am excited to tell you and my colleagues here in the Legislature about what this government and I have been doing for the constituency of Lunenburg and the Province of Nova Scotia. Allow me to quote a famous politician: “My public life is before you; and I know you will believe me when I say, that when I sit down in solitude to the labours of my profession, the only questions I ask myself are, What is right? What is just? What is for the public good?” Those are the words of the Honourable Joseph Howe, considered to have been the greatest of all Nova Scotians and whose very portrait to my left graces this Chamber. I thank my friend, Municipal Councillor Claudette Garland, for reacquainting me with these powerful words, which also serve as our personal work mantras.

Mr. Speaker, he is known as “The Nova Scotian patriot par excellence,” he could use his oratorical powers to influence his colleagues, as no other politician has ever done. He sought, in his own words, to elevate them to “something more ennobling, exacting and inspiring, calculated to enlarge the borders of their intelligence, and increase the extent and area of their prosperity.” In other words, Mr. Speaker, seeking to rise above “the muddy pool of politics.”

Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since this Liberal Government was elected and the October 22nd swearing-in ceremony took place last week. I reflect on the past year and I still have moments when I have to remind myself that I am the elected member for the Lunenburg constituency, though for the most part I do not feel any different. I certainly have been exposed to experience, seeing things that I never came across before.

One of the biggest surprises was the cloud of negativity that some people carry over themselves, because I practise positivity and surround myself with like people. I was astonished by the large number of doom-and-gloomers in Nova Scotia, many who visited my office, emailed me, or called. On top of that, Nova Scotians are bombarded with negative media.

Recently I had the opportunity to listen once again to Mayor Pam Mood from Yarmouth, and if any of you have the opportunity to listen to her speak on what Yarmouth is doing, and how she is promoting her town, you would be impressed. She is definitely a go-getter, she has her community and all of Nova Scotia as her number-one profile, and I'll give an example of one of the remarks she made in a recent speech.

She was talking about how when she became mayor she thought, oh my I'm going to meet wonderful exciting people, I'm going to do all these exciting things, and then when she got into office she was finding out that she was getting calls that maybe her neighbour was putting their garbage a little too close to the curb. She had envisioned her work as mayor as being more empowering and powerful and it was the mundane things that happen day-to-day that she was working on. She said finally one day someone called and said there were three coffee cups on the road on Main Street when I walked by, and I'm calling to complain - what are you going to do about it? Her reply was, I'm going to tell you to go back and pick up those coffee cups and put them where they belong. I agree; it was quite wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, stated in his first Speech from the Throne, our Premier addressed the erosion in voter participation. He said that steps would be taken to engage Nova Scotia in a discussion about our electoral process. In keeping with that goal, government understands the need to strive for a collegial and co-operative tone in this Legislature. It is important for all members to remember that initiatives should not be rejected solely on the basis of the source - of course, vigorous and informed debate is both expected and desired.

To quote the Premier last year: "In essence my government believes that open and decorous debate will contribute to enhanced public trust in the Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Speaker, I would also will like to quote my caucus colleague, the honourable member for Halifax Atlantic, when he seconded the Throne Speech last Fall:

"Everyone in this House has a real opportunity to show people who have grown so cynical of government on all levels that government can do great things when everybody works together with the best interests of Nova Scotians in mind. I ask all of you today, whether you are Liberal, NDP, or Progressive Conservative, to work together, to listen to each other, and to recognize that our decisions affect the people of Nova Scotia."

Further, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the Leader of the Official Opposition in his reply to the 2013 Speech from the Throne:

“Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier’s words inside this Chamber, that he wants to set a new and respectful tone of debate in the Legislature and I just want him to know, and everyone in his government to know, that on the Opposition side we accept that invitation and will return it in kind - it’s time to set a new tone of debate in the House. We may be from different Parties - Liberals, PC, or NDP - but we are all part of the same family, the Nova Scotia family.”

Mr. Speaker, I’ve been appalled many times by the behaviour and the negativity displayed in this Chamber. How can we expect Nova Scotians to think positive and work together in a co-operative manner when the elected Leaders of this province display such behaviour and negativity? Yet the same politicians will repeatedly refer to the Ivany report as leverage for their agendas, but ignore many of the principles that are found in the Ivany report. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I think that is perhaps what the Honourable Joseph Howe referred to as the muddy pools of politics. As the member for Lunenburg, I too, like the Honourable Joseph Howe, ask myself what is right, what is just, what is for the public good. We MLAs - meaning Members of the Legislative Assembly and not the Modern Language Association, as students have told me in schools that I’ve visited - represent 51 constituencies in this province. It is our work to create and amend laws, act as spokespeople for our constituents, and help solve problems. It is the duty of an MLA to represent everyone in his or her riding, regardless of how they voted. And believe me, many are very up front with telling me who they did and who they didn’t and who they will and will not be voting for.

When we took office last October, each of us swore a statutory oath. Mr. Speaker, I take that oath seriously, and each and every day, I do my best to represent my constituents in Lunenburg and the people of Nova Scotia. I participate in standing committees such as Public Accounts and serve as vice-chair of Economic Development, which provides advice to the ministers responsible for particular ministries and areas of government services. I participate in caucus, in which all members are included as equals regardless of their other roles as Cabinet Minister, Speaker, or committee Chairs. I’ve represented the Premier and many ministers over the past year with announcements, and by attending on their behalf. I make statements and resolutions in the Legislature about important events and celebrate my constituents’ achievements.

I meet with groups who have special concerns or interests in specific areas. I exchange ideas with other MLAs, and ask questions of Cabinet Ministers to ensure accountability. I keep in touch with constituents to find out what they think about issues, and follow current events by reading reports, attending meetings and conferences, and

monitoring the media. I listen to my constituents, and many share their knowledge and experience, while others offer suggestions and information at no charge.

Mr. Speaker, I live in my constituency, I work in my constituency, and I travel it often, as it helps me keep in touch with how people feel about the various issues. And I catch up with their news. I am often asked to open an event, make speeches to community groups, and attend performances and celebrations. I attend as many as possible, making my way over coastal and tree-lined roads. Like my other House colleagues, it is rare if my work week is fewer than seven days. Mr. Speaker, if an MLA is doing their job and doing it well, they are working in their constituencies and for their constituents. Our government committed to modernizing this House, making changes to procedures which will result in more efficiency, so that all members can spend more time in their ridings.

We saw the Opposition opposing this and making roadblocks in making this House more efficient. They prefer to sit in the House, spend taxpayers' money, instead of focusing on constituency matters. Mr. Speaker, if an MLA is doing their job, and doing it well, they are working with their constituents and for their constituents. I asked the Opposition, was this right? Was it just? Or is it all right to amend these for the public good of the people. And I think it was.

My office is located at 125A Cornwall Road in Blockhouse, just off Exit 11 of Highway No. 103. I chose this location so that I could be accessible to the constituents. My constituency assistant, Adam Jacobs, greets many walk-in visitors, from all over the world, as we share the building with the Tourist Bureau for the Town of Bridgewater and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg. We welcome these tourists as eagerly as we do our constituents, and are pleased to assist them in any way we can. We especially encourage them to take advantage of our warm South Shore hospitality, and partake of our unique cultural and heritage experiences.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a satellite office in New Germany, in which one afternoon a month I or my assistant will have office hours and meet people within the community. We also take time to go around the community and meet with people and businesses. I can tell you from the visitors to the visitor information centre that the South Shore and all of Nova Scotia has welcomed the return of the ferry service connecting Yarmouth to New England and the tourists and economic opportunities it has created. Tourism operators are encouraged with the increased number of visitors and understand it will take time to get back to their previous numbers. As well, many Nova Scotians themselves enjoyed the hospitality and services offered by the *Nova Star* ferry.

Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago I moved the Speech from the Throne. In that speech I indicated to you that roads in the Lunenburg constituency were of great concern. Well, almost a year and a half later and all I can say is roads, roads and more roads. They continue to be the number one issue in my constituency. I wish I had that magic wand that would turn all the roads in my constituency into municipal roads or one that would pave or

double chip seal every road, dig out ditches and trim roadside bushes. Alas, I do not but I must say that the local Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has been most cooperative and has responded, for the most part, in a timely manner to requests for improvements to our local roads.

Constituents who call or visit the office are often looking for information, assistance or direction on a particular matter. We try to help solve their problem by contacting the proper government department or ministry. Between the two of us, we usually know exactly who to call to avoid confusion and to save time. It gives us satisfaction to help resolve an issue or to provide resources for our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to play an active role in my community and welcome the opportunity to be part of the planning committee for the 100th Anniversary of the old Mahone Bay school. Throughout the year former students, staff, parents and volunteers of the old school and the Mahone Bay Centre, as it is called now, gather to share memories, reminisce and celebrate the past 100 years of this heritage building.

Exhibits could be found at the Mahone Bay Settlers Museum and on the first floor corridor of the old Mahone Bay school. Not even Hurricane Arthur could dampen the spirit of many people who came to take part in the reunion weekend in July. We laughed, we cried, we danced and I found myself, along with former staff member Ted Veinot, doing an encore performance of Georgie and Bessie.

Just last month when we gathered in this Legislature for the Speech from the Throne, students and staff from Bayview Community School walked to the old school to participate in the unveiling of the 100th Anniversary plaque, which marked the official opening of the old Mahone Bay school in September 1914. A student choir under the direction of Rebecca Rock sang *Echoes*, a musical piece composed by former student and teacher Betty Walsh, who is one of my music mentors.

Local dignitaries brought words of greeting and the ceremony ended with the unveiling of the 100th Anniversary plaque. I was unable to attend this event as I was carrying out duties on behalf of the province. Though I missed out on this historic moment of commemorating 100 years of the building in the heart of the community, I was certainly there in spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly wear the pin of the crest of the Lunenburg County Christmas Tree Producers Association. For those of you who have travelled in or through Lunenburg County, you have noticed the highway signs acknowledging the Christmas Tree Capital of the World. That is something that all of us in my part of the province are very, very, proud.

For most Nova Scotians, Christmas comes but once a year, but for the 2000 growers in this province it's a full-time year-round operation. Those 2000 produce 1.5 to 2

million Christmas trees every year. They have approximately 25,000 hectares of land in production. That's 27,500 football fields worth of Christmas trees.

The Christmas tree and greenery industry in Nova Scotia contributes to an estimated \$25 million to \$30 million to the provincial economy every year. As outlined in the Ivany report on the economy, businesses like Christmas tree growers are important, make that essential, to our economy. Especially in rural communities like our along the South Shore.

Numbers are fine and good but let's talk about product, shall we? There is no comparison to a real Christmas tree, is there? Natural Christmas trees are, hands down, the best environmental choice. They are renewable and they are produced with energy from the sun and nutrients from the soil. They are locally produced, right in Lunenburg County and shipped all around the world.

While they're growing, Christmas trees give off oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. At the end of the holiday season they are recyclable. You can compost them, incorporate them into decorations, or use them for firewood.

All those benefits aside, one of the common complaints about natural Christmas trees is about the needles that they shed. As a result, the SMART tree research program was started by Dr. Raj Lada at the Christmas Tree Research Centre in Truro, with much support from the grower. I recently had the opportunity to sit on a SMART tree session given by Dr. Lada when the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers met in various locations of my constituency.

Research is making good progress and has developed superior non-shedding trees. With the SMART tree co-op back up and functioning as originally intended, the future looks bright for our Christmas tree industry in the years ahead, and the possible spinoff into the broader agricultural industry is great.

On October 4th, I joined the Minister of Natural Resources for the presentation of the Woodland Owner of Year Award to retired Judge Hiram Carver and his son Ernest Carver of New Germany, who have expanded from a Christmas tree growing operation to operating a wood lot. The Carvers, a father and son team, are the Provincial And Western Regional Woodland Owners Of The Year. They now manage 142 hectares of woodland and focus on selection, harvesting, and regeneration to protect the beauty and biodiversity of their forest.

The Carvers have set out some of their property for conservation. Receiving this award took second place to the Woodlot Day as Grade 6 students in the region were part of a celebration and a day of activity and planting at the Carver woodlot. Judge Carver was so delighted with seeing these youths engaged and to have a new generation interested in conservation and in the forestry industry.

The Second Story Women's Centre in Lunenburg co-creates a safe place for women and girls to rise to their full potential. Second Story has been serving the women and girls in Lunenburg County for 30 years and also provides services to Queens County upon request.

In 2013, a needs assessment revealed a lack of formal services for survivors of sexual assault in Lunenburg and Queens Counties. These findings led to recommendations for a safe and trauma-informed services where decisions are made by the survivor and supported through a coordinated community-based service-delivery model. In the winter of 2014, this Liberal Government identified the importance of creating a provincial strategy for preventing sexual assault. Along with this initiative, they have granted two-year funding to six agencies throughout the province.

It was truly an honour to host a news conference at Second Story for the Department of Community Services minister and the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act this past March, where she announced funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services for Second Story Women's Centre to work in collaboration with Harbour House to build a community-based service which adheres to the best practices of care, including trauma-informed training for first responders and support staff and a more survivor-centred approach where choice, information, and sensitivity are optimized to mitigate further trauma.

To date, a sexual assault services working group has been established with critical community partners, first responders, and survivors all providing input for improved services. The establishment of the memoranda for understanding between key service providers, outlining specific sexual assault protocol shared and signed, will further formalize a collaborative community-based model with appropriate survivor-centred care.

I am proud that our government developed an action-oriented strategy to combat sexual violence. It is a priority, and another example of this Liberal Government putting Nova Scotia first.

After the stripping of \$65 million by the previous NDP Government, this Liberal Government is reinvesting in education. This Nova Scotia government reinvested \$18.6 million into the education system this year, capping classroom sizes for children in Grade Primary to 2, reintroducing Reading Recovery for Grade 1 students, and ensuring high-needs students are supported. The minister has assured parents that report cards will be comprehensible and include individual comments.

My local school board, the South Shore Regional School Board, and their supporters were among the most vocal in the province when Reading Recovery was cut by the NDP Government. I am pleased to report that under the direction of Gretchen Gerhardt, the Reading Recovery teacher/leader at South Shore Regional School Board, we currently have eight teachers in six schools doing the Reading Recovery program.

As an early childhood educator, I am pleased that my fellow professionals in the field are pleased with the September 25th Speech from the Throne. Nova Scotia's early childhood educators, the Nova Scotia Child Care Association, have written to the Premier to express their pleasure with the September 25, 2014 Speech from the Throne. They heard the Liberal Government's public commitment to reviewing strategies to make early childhood education programs more affordable and accessible for families, enhancing the quality of care, and supporting the early childhood educators who work with Nova Scotia's youngest citizens and their families.

They believe this is a positive step forward for early childhood education and their profession and commend the Liberal Government for recognizing these crucial years as a priority. Investing in more accessible and affordable quality early childhood education is a perfect example of how a public investment will reap rewards across the economy of Nova Scotia by providing developmentally-appropriate learning opportunities for Nova Scotia's children prior to entering the public school system; by increasing tax revenues, allowing mothers to enter or re-enter the workforce, allowing at-risk families to break the poverty cycle by going to school or entering the workforce and creating new jobs.

Without knowledgeable and competent early childhood educators the health and safety of our children, programming, and overall quality will be diminished. Recruitment and retention of trained, qualified early childhood educators are keys to the delivery of programs for our youngest citizens and their families.

Speaking of families, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my family: my husband, Ken; my sons Daniel, Samuel, and Jacob; my sisters Margaret and Christine; my brother Andrew; my brother Phillip, who I lost two weeks ago. But on the other side my family has grown as we welcome our first grandchild, Veronica Peggy. (Applause) Where there is sadness there is always joy.

I would also like to thank my caucus family. They have played an important role in my life in the past year and they have been supportive in so many ways and we support each other, I know we love each other.

AN HON. MEMBER: We tease you.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: And they tease me just like my other family. Of course, I wouldn't be here without my constituency family because I have a wonderful constituency association in Lunenburg and I must say when I started this process, it was very small and I can happily say that the last constituency meeting that I attended, we had to bring in extra chairs and tables for the people who wanted to sit on the executive.

Mr. Speaker, in popular use responsible government refers to a government responsible to the people, not to the monarch or to the representatives, but to the people. Here in Nova Scotia, and all of Canada, it technically means a government responsible to

the representatives of the people, an executive or Cabinet collectively. The key principle of responsibility is that a government needs the confidence of the Legislature to create laws and taxation. The people advocating responsible government, like the honourable Joseph Howe, were not necessarily more democratic. They were people with a particular vision of economic development which they felt was being held back by the old style of government.

Mr. Speaker, this Liberal Government, under the leadership of the Premier, has a vision for economic growth in this great province. Visioning takes time; it is a process which requires setting goals and formulating plans to achieve those goals. It requires listening, debating, thinking, researching, and finally implementation. It also requires all of us to ask, is this right? Is this just? Is this for the public good?

The Premier formed the oneNS Coalition to review the Ivany report and make recommendations. It is an all-party committee and its members are respected leaders from the business and social enterprises. They are from labour, culture, health, education, First Nation, and government, as well as all three political Parties. They will review and make recommendations on the Ivany report. It is a combined effort and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is this right? Is this just? Is this for the public good? And I hope that you will agree with me that it is.

Mr. speaker, this Liberal Government sees that a thriving private sector is essential for Nova Scotia in order for them to prosper. They know we have to create a climate that fosters growth within the private sector. We will do this by supporting sector developments in responsible and sustainable ways, using a world class regulatory regime that reflects the values of Nova Scotians. Already we've changed the way our government does economic development; Nova Scotia is now more open and transparent than any other province in Canada about economic development deals. This government sees that they have to create a climate that fosters and supports growth in the public sector, a thriving public sector, and it is essential for Nova Scotia.

During this sitting of the House you've heard more of this Liberal Government's vision. We have brought forth reading of bills that this Liberal Government is putting forth with a vision. Mr. Speaker, this government will build a health system that thinks and acts like one. On April 1, 2015, a new structure for health care will be launched. The current nine district health authorities will be consolidated into one provincial authority. This unified health care system will allow for greater access for Nova Scotians to get high-quality care in a more timely and efficient manner. We will see consistency in procedure and policy and share the same vision and goals, making the patient and client experience greatly improved.

In the Spring of 2015 our government will introduce a dementia strategy. This is indeed good news for Nova Scotia patients living with dementia, their caretakers, and their families - families like mine, Mr. Speaker, for my mother suffers with dementia. For more than two years she has been a resident of Harbour View Haven in Lunenburg and, as her

health care advocate, I meet regularly with the team that evaluates and provides my mother with the care she needs to function at her maximum level.

Mr. Speaker, I visit my mother regularly at Harbour View. I need a code to get into the unit that houses my mother - yes, my mother is in a locked unit, for her safety. Let me tell you about my mother. My mother grew up in the south end of Halifax and graduated from high school at the young age of 15. Unlike her brother, who attended Dalhousie University, my mother's parents did not allow her to go to university because she was a female. Instead, she attended Miss Murphy's Business School and held positions with Nova Scotia Power and the Technical University before her marriage.

My mother was brilliant, a vivacious reader, a self-learner, a world-traveller who knew the countries she travelled in better than the tour guides, and a cryptquote and crossword competitor extraordinaire. People from the Towns of Lunenburg and Bridgewater, whom she never met, would regularly call her on a Saturday morning to ask questions about The New York Times Crossword, which she would have completed many hours before.

My mother's greatest fear was to have dementia, like her own mother. Each and every day my mother is packed up and ready to go home. She daily strips her walls and packs her bags, and she plans her escape as well. You see, Mr. Speaker, unlike many of the residents in the unit, my mother is higher-functioning - she recognizes her family, she can carry on conversations and she can still whip off a good one-liner, and she can dress herself with minimum assistance. Though she thinks she is living in her home in Halifax and attending Tower Road School, she is not; high-functioning enough to wonder, though, why she is surrounded by people who can't speak or feed themselves.

Mr. Speaker, deep down I think my mother's planned escapes are not from the facility she lives in as much as the escape from the disease that has ravished her body and her mind - and somewhere behind the vacant eyes is her soul.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak of the wonderful staff that daily work with patients with dementia. (Applause) This work is not for everyone. It takes a special person to work in the dementia unit, day in and day out. I know this, as I have for many years worked with people with autism. The burnout rate is high, there are few pats on the back, and each day these health care workers enter their workplaces not knowing how their day will go. Will they get injured on the job while assisting a patient, or be emotionally abused by an overwhelmed patient's family? Will they be assaulted by an agitated resident? Will there be any reward by the day's end - perhaps a twinkle in a resident's eye when they hear a familiar tune played on the piano by a dedicated volunteer, rather than a blank stare?

So I say thank you to the health care workers and families who care for people living with dementia. (Applause) I am so looking forward to the release of the dementia strategy for Nova Scotia. Is it right? Is it just? Will it be for the public good? I think so.

Mr. Speaker, every April the Province of Nova Scotia celebrates volunteerism. I was pleased to sit with my constituency's award winners at last April's luncheon. Myself, being a representative volunteer for the Town of Mahone Bay in 2010, I was very pleased to be a guest at their table. As you know from my reply last year, I value the skills that my volunteer work has given me, especially for fitting me for this job.

Let me tell you about our volunteers. Richard Nowe, a lifetime resident of the Town of Mahone Bay, has been involved in the fire department for more than 30 years, serving three stints as chief. He was instrumental in forming and training junior firefighters, served as an auxiliary police officer in the town, was involved in ground search and rescue, and was a St. John Ambulance first aid volunteer. Richard has been involved with Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, and organized and ran minor baseball programs. He served on the cemetery commission and volunteers at the food bank, and currently serves as the provincial appointee on the town's police commission. A long-time member of the Mahone Bay area Lions Club, he is a past King Lion and is currently serving as treasurer there, and as zone chairman for the region.

Sheila Langille, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's recipient, is involved in her church and community. Living in Martins River, her volunteer efforts stretch well beyond her home community. Sheila was nominated because she is a remarkable example of the commitment shown by thousands of Nova Scotia volunteers who work tirelessly with little compensation, except for the pleasure they receive in helping others. Ms. Langille has served as president of the St. Martin's Anglican Church Auxiliary for 25 years. The group organizes monthly breakfasts, and last year baked more than 14,000 cookies for their annual Cookie Caper fundraiser. (Applause)

She is also a member of the Mahone Bay Lions Club dinner fundraiser team, and part of the Mahone Bay Quilters Guild's Cuddle Quilt Project, which oversees the sewing and distribution of more than 100 quilts each year to various charities. She was also founder and first leader of the Martins River Brownies and Girl Guides Association.

Thelma Blinn, the representative volunteer for the Town of Lunenburg, was nominated by the Parish Council of St. Norbert's Catholic Church, where she has been an extremely hard worker on the church's Ways and Means committee. Over the years she has been the main organizer of many church fundraisers, including breakfasts and luncheons, and has always served as a recruiter for food and refreshment for the church functions, such as funerals, socials, and other events.

She is also a member of the Central United Church in Lunenburg, and she has worked countless hours on the congregation's behalf. Those duties include serving as co-chairperson of the Dreamer's Committee, which each year presents a fundraising quilt show and bazaar in aid of the church. She also serves as a church elder, and is involved in a variety of United Church women's groups.

Mr. Speaker, I could not close my speech today without a little talk about our beloved *Bluenose II*. (Applause) Tainted with negativity over cost delays and another season without sailing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my fellow caucus members who supported me while working on this challenging file. They know the many hours I have put in to find answers to constituents' questions. They know I was, and continue to be, a frequent visitor to the Lunenburg waterfront, seeking answers, observing the progress of the rebuild.

I was particularly proud of my caucus colleagues who sat on the two Public Accounts Committee meetings on the *Bluenose II*. Our Liberal caucus asked the toughest and most relevant questions to the witnesses on both occasions. Our questions were right, they were just, and they were for the public good. That, Mr. Speaker, is transparency.

I will close with these words written by Michael Stanbury and recorded by artists such as Michael Stanbury, Stan Rogers and Ryan's Fancy:

Now, I've got a story to tell
Of a ship that served her people well,
O, the *Bluenose* was her name
And she never lost a race;
She won herself a place
In the history of Canada . . .

Built in a Nova Scotia town
Where the shipwrights had earned the world's renown,
Down in Lunenburg they built
A living legend out of skill, sweat, and pride . . .

Beat to the windward once more,
And up, sheath the fors'l as before,
For your country [and province] will be proud once again
Of the ship and the men
Who sail [and built] her smartly . . .

Blow, winds, blow . . .

For *Bluenose II* will sail once again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. Tomorrow we will meet from the hour of 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at which time we will proceed with third reading of the bills that cleared Committee of the

Whole House on Bills today. We will go into Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and any other business that may come up during the run of the day tomorrow.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise, to meet again from the hour of 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Friday, October 31st.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 5:43 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 499**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Halifax Dunbrack Premiere Women's Soccer team participated August 15 - 19, 2014, in the 2014 Provincial Championships; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication of the team culminated in taking first place in the competition; and

Whereas the team went on to represent Nova Scotia in October at the Premiere National Soccer Competition in Vaughan, Ontario, and claimed 5th place overall across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premiere Women's Soccer team as 2014 Nova Scotia Provincial Champions and on their outstanding ranking at the Premiere National Soccer Competition.

RESOLUTION NO. 500

By: Hon. Gordie Gosse (Sydney-Whitney Pier)

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

Whereas the Medal of Bravery awarded by the Governor General of Canada is one of the highest honours for bravery in Canada; and

Whereas in December, 2011, Michael E. Postlethwaite took part in a dramatic rescue of an elderly lady from a burning house in Sydney, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas on October 21, 2014, Michael E. Postlethwaite was awarded the Medal of Bravery;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Michael E. Postlethwaite's heroic deed and congratulate him on his special award.

RESOLUTION NO. 501

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas the job of a reporter requires interviewing, investigating, researching and rarely sees two days the same; and

Whereas after spending four years in journalism school, one year working for a community weekly newspaper, and the past 33 years as a news reporter and bureau chief at *The Chronicle Herald*, Gordon Delaney will retire on Friday, October 31, 2014; and

Whereas Mr. Delaney will miss the thrill of a breaking news story, the pressure of an impending deadline, and working with informed and talented colleagues, but most of all will miss telling people's personal stories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gordon Delaney on his excellent career as a journalist and wish him all the very best as he enjoys his retirement years.

RESOLUTION NO. 502

By: Ms. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Vince Angst of Pleasant Valley organized his third annual charity golf tournament fundraiser for the Pictou County SPCA; and

Whereas the golf tournament took place at the Glen Lovat Golf Club, had 55 participants, and raised more than \$4,000; and

Whereas the Pictou County SPCA is an active animal shelter, founded in 1979 that will use the funds to assist with the cost of installing a new septic system;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly thank Vince for his continued volunteer work on behalf of the SPCA.