



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2014

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HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause is:

“Whereas the Monk Road in Baker Settlement has been in a serious state of disrepair for several (30) years and our school buses have to travel across this road to take children to Newcombeville Elementary School, Hebbville Academy, and Park View Education Centre.

Therefore we, the undersigned concerned citizens demand that the Government of Nova Scotia take whatever steps are necessary to repair and resurface the Monk Road during the 2014 paving season.”

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 74 signatures, to which I have affixed my own.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause: We, the undersigned consumers of Nova Scotia, want the option of sourcing our poultry without any interference from the styled organizations such as the Turkey Farmers of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Turkey Producers Marketing Board, or the Chicken Farmers of Nova Scotia, and with no restrictions as to where they are processed, which is to say not necessarily in a provincially or federally inspected abattoir, as we trust our farm gate producers to oversee the safe, clean, humane processing of their poultry.

There are 1,800 names on this petition and I have affixed my name as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that petition under advisement while I review the rather lengthy operative clause.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to table a petition and the operative clause is: "We, the undersigned, ask the Government of Nova Scotia to retain the historic T. & E. Kenny Dry Goods Building (Dennis Building) at the corner of George and Granville Streets in Halifax and not to demolish or dismantle it."

Mr. Speaker, there are over 1,000 signatures, and I have also affixed my signature. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I hereby beg leave to table the Workers' Compensation Board's *Report to the Community* for the second quarter 2014. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, if I could have your indulgence to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: In the east gallery we have three men who are here today advancing the cause of men's health in our province during Movember. We have Peter Mallette, executive director of Prostate Cancer Canada Atlantic - if you could just stay standing for a moment - Mike Milloy, senior policy analyst with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board and co-chairman of the Halifax Movember Committee, and Mark Peyton, owner of Sailor Bup's Barbershop in Halifax and men's health advocate.

I'd like to say that Mark and his team from the barbershop are going down Monday morning to shave some of the crew of the Iroquois, who will be engaged in Movember and taking pledges if anybody is around and would like to take that in.

I'd like to say here, as the Minister of Health and Wellness, I'm pleased to be able to say that our government and the department will support the Prostate Cancer Canada desire to make sure that the PSA testing is available in our province. Peter is a testimony to the value of that test.

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 503

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

Whereas men in Canada have a one-in-eight chance of getting prostate cancer in their lifetime, 1,000 men - Canadian men - will be diagnosed with testicular cancer this year, and one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem each year; and

Whereas Movember Canada is committed to raising awareness about men's health issues and their effect on fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, boyfriends, and husbands, across Canada and the world; and

Whereas Movember Canada encourages men to grow a mustache throughout November to raise awareness and funds for men's health;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House support Movember in any way they can.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 65 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 11 of the Acts of 1993. The Railways Act. (Hon. Geoff MacLellan)

Bill No. 66 - Entitled an Act Respecting the 2014 MLA Remuneration Review Panel Report. (Hon. Michel Samson)

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

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would ask that Bill. No. 65 and Bill No. 66, which were just introduced, be added to today's order paper for second reading to take place this morning.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a long-time champion for arts, culture, and heritage, it is my belief that progress in Nova Scotia . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Is that a notice of motion? You have a member's statement. Next item of business - are there no notices of motion?

We'll now move on to members' statements.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

ARGYLE-BARRINGTON MLA - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. (Interruptions) I know, it's like yesterday all over again.

I rise today both on Halloween and on another important day: I rise to wish my colleague, the member for Argyle-Barrington, a happy birthday.

We spend a lot of time in this House trading barbs, and I know that, looking in from the outside, many sometimes might expect that the barbs, which occasionally come close to or cross a personal line, may result in feelings once we leave this Chamber. But the great thing about our democracy is that we can have sometimes-heated debate, sometimes strongly agree on the facts or disagree on the facts, and at the same time we can and do work together.

I'd like to use my time today on my very first member's statement to wish the member for Argyle-Barrington a happy birthday. We'll be kind and not ask him how old he is. I would also like to congratulate him on his very scary costume as a member of the PC caucus. (Applause)

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

DENNIS BUILDING - PRESERVATION

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a long-time champion for arts, culture and heritage, it is my belief that progress in Nova Scotia does not preclude protecting, revitalizing, and celebrating our historic buildings and heritage sites. Tourists don't come to Nova Scotia to see skyscrapers. They come for the natural beauty, culture, and heritage. Most world-class cities are renowned for their built heritage, which their governments had the foresight to preserve for hundreds, even thousands of years, as a source of cultural pride and tourism dollars.

In Halifax, the 150-year-old Dennis Building is the oldest building around Province House Square. I'd like to thank the Minister of Internal Services for his personal assurance that this building will not be demolished but instead refurbished. Preserving our past is essential if we want to earn a reputation as a truly world-class destination - after all, a civilization that destroys its past is a civilization that loses its soul.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

ROGERS, SAM - HIST. FOR KIDS YOUNG CITIZENS COMP.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not having much luck with these members' statements, but we'll try.

Sam Rogers, a 10-year-old from Lower Onslow, Colchester North, created a four-minute video which outlined the exploits of a Second World War Special Service Force known as the Black Devils' Brigade. Sam's great-grandfather was a member of the brigade and the inspiration for the video. Sam entered the project under the Canada's History for Kids Young Citizens national competition and is one of 22 students from across Canada - and only one of two from Nova Scotia - who was chosen to spend three days in Ottawa with a parent, where he will attend the Governor General's Awards and visit Parliament Hill, Rideau Hall, the War Museum and the Canada's History Forum, where his video will be played.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MASON, CATHY: SPECIAL OLYMPICS - VOL.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Cathy Mason is the regional coordinator of the Special Olympics in Pictou County. She has been volunteering with Special Olympics for approximately 20 years. Cathy has coached soccer, softball, floor hockey, track and bowling. She has had the opportunity to be part of several provincial winter and summer games. She also attended seven Special Olympics National Games and two World Games, where her roles have varied from head coach, associate coach, mission staff and Chef de Mission.

Cathy's exceptional dedication has been appreciated by everyone involved with Special Olympics. Through her strong leadership, she has recruited many athletes, coaches, committee members and volunteers, who in turn have touched the lives of thousands in her community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FIREWOOD SUPPLY - SOLUTIONS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on October 30, 2014 the Minister of Natural Resources requested some solutions to come forward to address the shortage of firewood and access to Crown lands for firewood suppliers. Let us review just a few for the minister. The first solution was a request for an emergency meeting of the Resources Committee. The second solution was a review of a flawed, clumsy permit system. The third solution was to meet with firewood suppliers.

Due to the time limitations set on Statements by Members . . . to be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

FIREWOOD: PURCHASERS/SUPPLIERS - CONNECT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, for the information of the House, all of those ideas have actually already been moved on in our department starting back in March and May this past year. I'd also like to table another advertisement for firewood, more people selling firewood in the province. I would urge all members to encourage anyone who needs firewood to please consult with these ads. Hopefully we'll be able to coordinate firewood where it is with people who need it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

AVONDALE SKY WINERY - LT.-GOV.'S MEDAL

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Nova Scotia Wines was established by Lieutenant Governor J.J. Grant to recognize the exceptional quality of locally sourced and produced wines.

Located on the Avon Peninsula in Hants County, Avondale Sky Winery has one of the oldest vineyards in the province and one of the newest wineries. An interesting note is that part of the new winery was a 168-year-old church from Walton which was purchased for \$1.67, the same price the congregation paid for it in 1844, then floated to Newport Landing in 2011, where it was transformed into their retail shop.

Avondale Sky Winery Martock, 2012, was chosen as one of the three best among all Nova Scotia wines submitted for consideration and was presented the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Nova Scotia Wines in July. Congratulations to Avondale Sky Winery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SM. BUS. MO. (10/14)

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, as October ends, I would like to recognize that it was Small Business Month in Canada. This month provided us with an opportunity to celebrate the important contributions entrepreneurs make to the economy and to their communities. I know from personal experience that running a small business can be challenging and also very rewarding. Things are particularly challenging for businesses now due to the difficult economic times we are currently facing here in Nova Scotia.

Pictou West, and in fact Pictou County, is home to many small businesses. I urge members to be aware of the small businesses in our communities and to frequent them as much as possible. We must encourage and support our small business owners and, in doing so, inspire more people to consider opening their own small businesses. Thank you.

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

FIREWOOD SUPPLY - SOLUTIONS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on October 30, 2014, the Minister of Natural Resources requested some solutions to come forward to address the shortage of firewood and address access to Crown lands for firewood supplies. Let us review another solution. Solution number four: have tenders for Crown lands that firewood suppliers could benefit from.

Now I will simplify for the minister the reasoning behind these solutions. Number one, understand that wood heat can reduce energy costs to a household. Number two, opening Crown lands to firewood suppliers will help lower overall costs for firewood. Number three, if Nova Scotians burn seasoned, dry firewood, it will be safer for all Nova Scotians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

FIREWOOD: PURCHASERS/SUPPLIERS - CONNECT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have another advertisement here for firewood that's available in the province. I would encourage all members to share these with their constituents if, in fact, their constituents are looking for firewood this winter. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER The honourable Minister of Justice.

HFX. ARMDALE CONSTITUENCY

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually delighted to get a turn today to rise on my first member's statement to speak about the good people of my Halifax Armdale riding, who have made a deliberate decision to be welcoming, who want to play a part in building a vibrant society. They recognize that Halifax, and indeed Nova Scotia, welcomes a cohort of new immigrants each year comprised of family and business immigrants, refugees, international students and temporary workers. These newcomers bring skills and experience that contribute culturally and economically to our community's development. A practical way to help newcomers overcome cultural shock is to be welcoming.

On behalf of my constituents, I ask that we all take an active role in creating welcoming neighbourhoods. Indeed, this is a tradition we Nova Scotians are all known for. Merci beaucoup. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BLUE CATS BAND (PICTOU CO.)

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Blue Cats were the first rock and roll band in Pictou County. Five Pictonians joined and created this dynamic group in late 1957. They were one of the first bands to have Black and white musicians on the same stage. This group played for the first time in the IOOF Hall in Stellarton in 1958. The band went on to play all over the Maritimes and Quebec and Newfoundland. Five fan clubs were formed around the Maritimes because of their popularity.

Harold Borden, a popular and well-respected gentleman presently living in New Glasgow, was the vocalist for this group. Jim Haggart, Bob Ferguson, Bob George, Reggie O'Haggen and, later on, John Carrigan were the members who performed with this popular band. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SCHOONER COVE MARINE/HOSKIN FAM.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the Hoskin family, owners of Schooner Cove Marine in Boutilliers Point, Nova Scotia, are committed to ensuring customer satisfaction by providing a premier boating experience. Schooner Cove Marine has won many industry awards and has been featured in boating magazines. I would like to congratulate Schooner Cove Marine and the Hoskin family on the continued success of their business as well as their significant contribution to the local economy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HALIFAX ARMDALE - DOWN'S ZOO

HON. LENA DIAB: Halifax Armdale has some unique history that I'm sure most people are not aware of. It's the home of North America's first zoological gardens. These gardens were started in 1847 by Andrew Downs, a naturalist, taxidermist and zoologist who created this zoological garden along what today is now known as Joseph Howe Drive, next to the area occupied by the Armdale traffic circle. Downs' zoo included a museum, aquarium and greenhouse. It's noteworthy to point out that it opened 16 years before Central Park Zoo in New York. The Halifax zoo attracted people from all over the world, royalty and famous people alike. Even King Edward VII visited, as did Prince Jérôme Bonaparte, the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel II and the African explorer Captain Sir Richard Grant - all people who mingled with the local population at picnics and municipal events. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

AGRIC.: TURKEY PROCESSING - SAFETY

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to thank the Minister of Agriculture for the transparent and appropriate way that he and his department and support staff have addressed Nova Scotians' concerns regarding turkey processing. As we all know, the conditions under which Nova Scotians can have animals slaughtered drew much public attention and concern earlier this Fall. However, through all of the conversations, it was the minister who reassured Nova Scotians that no matter what the conditions, the most important issue has been and always will be food safety. All Nova Scotians deserve to know that their food has been processed in clean, inspected and approved facilities. This has always been the intent of this government despite hearing statements from Opposition members claiming that we are somehow stifling business.

Mr. Speaker, it is this government that found the right way to protect the safe food supply in Nova Scotia. Again, my thanks are extended to the minister and all department staff for their dedication in ensuring Nova Scotians have access to locally grown foods that are prepared in state-of-the-art, inspected and safe facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. HERITAGE MUSEUM

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak about a very special place in Dartmouth which I am certain is familiar to many members of this Legislature, the Dartmouth Heritage Museum. The Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society has existed in many forms and under many titles, and the museum, of course, has had many homes over the course of the past 40 years.

Today, the museum exists at Evergreen House and Quaker House in Dartmouth. It offers interpretive and educational programming through its collection of tens of thousands of regional artifacts and photographs of industry and society in the downtown Dartmouth area.

The Dartmouth Heritage Museum will soon transform into a regional heritage museum that will remain in Dartmouth, as voted by Halifax Council. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to the volunteers and to all of the directors of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum for their dedication to the preservation and the promotion of our collective heritage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SHEET HBR. - E. RIVER BRIDGE PROJ.

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise the House of a major and historic project which this government has undertaken in the community of Sheet Harbour in the Halifax Regional Municipality. This strong community, the sentinel of eastern Halifax Regional Municipality, is blessed with an abundance of water resources which have been tapped for many decades to provide hydroelectric power for the provincial grid. Both the East and West Rivers flow relentlessly to the Atlantic, providing both a great fishing resource and power to the people of the surrounding communities.

Currently on the East River, a \$17 million bridge replacement project is underway to replace the 60-year-old iron bridge structure which spans this historic waterway. This important infrastructure project will maintain the integrity of Highway No. 7 and provide a reliable and safe route for the communities and their commerce.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

LAPIERRE, PATTY - COMMUN. DEDICATION

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to speak of a volunteer in my community who is dedicated to protecting the natural beauty of our panoramic seascapes. The community of Herring Cove, in particular the beautiful park - the look-off in Herring Cove - which is a popular parking, hiking and walking spot, has become littered with trash. Garbage cans were desperately needed. Along with the help of the Minister of Natural Resources, we were able to obtain garbage cans for this area.

Patty LaPierre, a local resident, stepped up to the task and has been taking care of the garbage throughout the summer. She's been emptying the garbage cans and making sure the look-off is no longer strewn with litter. Now people can drive to the look-off and enjoy the view without being distracted by the pile of litter in the area.

On behalf of the residents of Halifax Atlantic, I'd like to thank Patty LaPierre for her dedication to her community, her efforts to preserve the natural splendour of the look-off. Love you, Patty PT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to remind the government of the importance of infection prevention and control. With flu season upon us, infection prevention and control are keys to maintaining the good health of Nova Scotians. I am pleased to share that health care staff in Cape Breton have created a creative infection prevention and control program, Clean Hands: Safe Hands. A local infection control database was developed that allows real-time auditing and reporting and hand hygiene is tracked.

Additionally, the seasonal influenza vaccine is free of charge for all Nova Scotians six months of age and older. The vaccine protects against three strains of the flu predicted to circulate this season, including H1N1. Vaccinations continue to play a key role in preventing infection and controlling disease. I ask the members to engage in healthy practices in terms of infection prevention and control by engaging in diligent hand washing and getting their flu shot.

I urge the government to continue to develop and drive initiatives that support infection prevention and control. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

AVON RIVER DAYS FEST.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, the new festival Avon River Days was formed in 2014. Formerly celebrated as Sam Slick Days and Windsor-West Hants Summer Fest, it is celebrated each year on Natal Day weekend. The Avon River Days Committee and many volunteers worked hard to make this year's festival a better celebration for the Windsor-West Hants locals and visitors to the area. Many find it is a time for family reunions and celebrating our heritage.

The three-day festival included more than 45 activities, which included our first-ever evening street concert, with performances by Broken Circuit and our own local rising country music artist Josh Macumber. It ended Sunday evening with a spectacular show of fireworks.

Windsor-West Hants residents and those who return home to Nova Scotia each year for this festival look forward to next summer's event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**NEW GERMANY & AREA PROMOTIONS SOC.
- HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, four years ago the New Germany and Area Promotion Society hosted its inaugural Health and Wellness Expo. Just yesterday it hosted its 4th annual expo with 55 booths set up at the local high school, each with a specific message to send but one overall theme: to educate. The expo is a rare opportunity for members of the community and surrounding areas to gather and gain valuable information about health and wellness.

Health providers and services are on hand to talk about how they are part of the healthy community, promoting healthy living, good physical, mental and spiritual health. There is a unique opportunity information specific to your concerns through one-on-one discussion, presentations and demonstrations. It is another example of a community taking ownership and responsibility, in an effort to improve itself now and for generations to come.

I wish for you all to join me in congratulating the society for its continued efforts.

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

WCB: PFD DEMO - EAST. PASSAGE

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to speak about a future event within my riding. On Thursday, November 13th, the Workers' Compensation Board will be promoting the use of personal flotation devices and offering demonstrations of different types of PFDs to our fishermen in Eastern Passage. This will be followed up with a man overboard drill.

This great initiative is being promoted by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, along with the WCB, to ensure safety in the workplace. The fishermen in my community will be leaving shortly for the lobster season and we want them to return home safely to their loved ones.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

AGRIC. MIN. - FACEBOOK PG.: TURKEY MARKETING BD. - COMMENTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to talk a little bit about food sovereignty. Nova Scotians have been growing their own food and their own turkeys for hundreds of years and recently we have seen the government standing behind the Turkey Marketing Board, using the expression of “food safety” as a reason to close down local, small abattoirs.

I want to bring the attention of the House to a Letter to the Editor that Mike Sangster submitted where he went on Minister Colwell’s Facebook page and he asked some questions about the Turkey Marketing Board’s regulations. Mr. Speaker, he was surprised when he went back to that Facebook page the next day to see that not only was his question gone but the minister’s comments on the regulations of the Turkey Marketing Board were gone as well.

So it is not about food safety, it’s about - there’s something more sinister at issue here and we just need to protect the right of rural Nova Scotians to grow their own food.

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind the honourable member not to refer to the honourable minister by name, please, and I am bordering on the use of the word “sinister”. We’ll make a note of that.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

EECD: EAST. HRM - SCH. REPLACEMENT PROG.

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise the House of this government’s commitment to education in Eastern Halifax Regional Municipality, which I am privileged to represent here in this Legislature. Currently a school replacement project has been committed to by my government, which will see the replacement of four facilities, with one new, state-of-the-art, P to Grade 12 school to serve the citizens from Tangier to Mosher River, located at Sheet Harbour. This new facility, a milestone in the history of the catchment area, will replace facilities that are in excess of half a century old. The citizens of the area are notably excited by the prospect of enhanced learning facilities for their children.

Congratulations to all the parents, educators, the Halifax Regional School Board members and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development people who are working together to see this multi-million dollar project through to completion.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

ANTIGONISH COMMUN. TRANSIT

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as a parent of young children, I am well aware of the song *The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round*. Well the wheels on the bus are rolling in Antigonish County these days. After years of hard work and countless volunteer hours by people in the Antigonish Community Transit organization, they have officially launched a pilot transit service in the Town and County of Antigonish.

The town's bus service has been operating since early September providing service to the hospital, university, businesses, grocery stores, and various stops throughout the town. The county route will officially be launching today in the Community of Pompquet and all the county routes have various stops and also a Dial-A-Ride option for those a little farther off the official route.

The Antigonish Community Transit successfully received money from two Nova Scotia initiatives, for which I wish to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his staff for providing those funds. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

HANTS EAST & DIST. C OF C - COMMERCE PARK

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak for a moment about the Hants East and District Chamber of Commerce. Recently the Chamber of Commerce opened Commerce Park, a serene getaway in the Elmsdale Business Park near the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre. This project was a result of public and private contributions and immense community support.

Clients of businesses in the Elmsdale Business Park, municipal employees, and families visit the library and health services near the park, and they have been graciously provided an escape where they can sit in the quiet grove of trees or enjoy ducks playing the pond while standing on an entirely accessible observation deck.

I would like to congratulate the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce for their many hours of work to bring this wonderful addition to our community, the legacy of the chamber's work will be enjoyed for decades to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth-South.

**PRINCE ARTHUR JHS/SOUTHDALÉ-N. WOODSIDE ELEM. SCH.
- REPLACEMENT**

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in this House of Assembly to once again speak to the concerns of parents, students, and school

administrators of Prince Arthur Junior High School and Southdale North Woodside Elementary School in our constituency of Dartmouth-South.

For many years the Community of Woodside has been hopeful for a new school that will replace both of those two schools and will support grades primary to grade nine. Last December, I want to remind Mr. Speaker and the rest of the people that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development reinforced our government's commitment to construction to a new school in that area.

I'd like to just take a moment to thank the families and school administrators in Woodside for all of their patience, and reassure them that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, in fact, working very hard with her department to finalize the plans for that new P to 9 school as we all eagerly await the announcement of its location and, as well, the details of its construction timeline. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax-Atlantic.

SPRYFIELD VILLAGE HARVEST FEST.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, September 18th to the 21st marked the second annual Spryfield Village Harvest Festival. The opening of the festival was held at the urban farm and other events were held throughout the Spryfield area. This year's festival was a huge success with attendance exceeding all expectations. The four days were filled with numerous activities such as a giant yard sale, a dance, a family fun day, and a talent show. This event, like I said earlier, was attended by thousands of people and a few special guests including our mayor, Mike Savage, and our MP, Megan Leslie.

I had the pleasure of volunteering at the pie-in-the-face booth, there were lots of laughs and an abundance of whipped cream - and I don't know why, but there was a line-up out the door to put pie in my face.

Once again, the Spryfield and District Business Commission did an outstanding job organizing the festival, and I look forward to next year's event. I ask the members to congratulate the business commission on its successful Harvest Festival and a special thank you to Donna Flemming, Bruce Holland, Ryan Brennan, and Eric Caines, to name a few. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LUN. BANK OF MONTREAL - ANNIV. (125TH)

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker. This year marks the 125th Anniversary of the Bank of Montreal in Lunenburg. It was 1889 when the local branch,

then part of the People's Bank of Halifax, first opened its doors less than a year after Lunenburg's incorporation as a town. In 1905 it merged with the Bank of Montreal; the branch was originally located in what was then the Metzger Hotel at the corner of Montague and King Street, where it remained until moving to its current location, the distinctive Dome Building at 12 King Street in 1908.

It is one of the many age-old businesses, both large and small, family owned or incorporately owned, that makes up this unique, dynamic, UNESCO World Heritage Site. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the years of service of the Bank of Montreal in Lunenburg. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned earlier today, it is Halloween, so I would just like to remind all members in the House that we should encourage and remind people to be extra vigilant on the roads tonight with kids who are going to be out there trick or treating. And I encourage those of you who are parents to make sure that you get your children dressed appropriately. Take into consideration all the safety considerations around this important night, because I think it's going to be fun and, again, keep safety and precaution at the forefront of our minds tonight with all the kids on the streets.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

SHOWCASE PRODUCTIONS (AMHERST)

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend an Amherst institution, Showcase Productions Society. On Sunday evening, Showcase Productions will stage the opening night of Silver Donald Cameron's play, *The Prophet at Tantramar*.

This is a story of the well-known, world-renowned - well-known at least - Leon Trotsky who during World War I spent a month in the internment camp in Amherst. I would like to say a few words about Showcase Productions, a theatre company that has been dedicated to providing quality theatre, entertainment and training to people of all ages in Amherst for approximately 20 years. So to my friends at Showcase Productions, break a leg.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I would move with the unanimous consent of the House that we recess until the commencement of Question Period at 10:00 a.m.

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

The motion is carried.

[9:41 a.m. The House recessed.]

[10:00 a.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 BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - EFFICIENCY N.S.: SAVINGS - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It is time for the government to be upfront with Nova Scotians about what is truly happening with their power bills. In 2015 Nova Scotia Power will send \$35 million to Efficiency Nova Scotia - that's \$35 million that is not a savings for ratepayers; it will, in fact, be recovered from them, with interest, and Nova Scotia Power will profit from that interest. I would like to ask the Premier, will he confirm that there are no savings coming from Efficiency Nova Scotia and instead it is just being deferred with interest for another day?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, no, in actual fact what has happened, we have seen just a few months ago that the new stand-alone Efficiency Nova Scotia entity is actually driving down fuel costs, which in turn will ensure that power rates go down. It is working exactly as we hoped it would, which is providing competition on the fuel side to Nova Scotia Power. I want to remind all members of this House that the efficiency tax that was put on these bills will be coming off as of January 1st and power bills will be going down.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Power has actually written a letter outlining their agreement with the government that our deferred charges, including fuel charges of almost \$90 million, should be spread out over a number of years so that they can actually profit from it, from the interest. Nova Scotia ratepayers are not saving anything; they are just pushing it forward to another day where the power company will actually get all that money back, plus interest. Will the Premier confirm that someday Nova Scotia will have to pay the fuel surcharge back and the efficiency charge back to the power company with interest?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no I won't. What I will tell the honourable member, as we said during the election campaign, is we are going to hold Nova Scotia Power accountable. We are going to provide competition to Nova Scotia Power and we are going to do it so that all Nova Scotians benefit on their power bills.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what the Premier told Nova Scotians during the election is that next year they would save \$42 million. He said it in the CBC TV debate, I know because I was sitting right beside him when he did. But what he didn't say was that they would have to pay \$35 million to the power company instead, plus interest. That is what was not said during the election.

That is why it is time to be upfront with Nova Scotians and tell them that, in fact, they don't save anything; they just pushed it forward to another day. It's a shell game; it's not a real saving. Will the Premier admit, finally, it is a shell game and put forward a real plan to save Nova Scotian ratepayers money, not just defer it to another day?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for the opportunity to remind Nova Scotians that not only will they save \$42 million on their power bill, we went even further. We put together Efficiency Nova Scotia, which is competition directly on the fuel side, which is driving down fuel costs, which means there will be more savings for Nova Scotia ratepayers.

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

PREM.: BIG BUS. TAX BREAK QUESTION (10/30/14) - ANSWER

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. In April the Liberal Government announced a new website where information about provincial investments and companies will be posted. At the time the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism was quoted as saying, "Nova Scotians now have more access than ever before, so they can understand the reasons for, and the result of, investments made on their behalf."

Yesterday I asked the Premier if the new big business tax break, which would cost taxpayers \$30 million, will be put on this website. My question to the Premier today is, would he provide an answer to that question that he wasn't prepared to provide yesterday?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism continues to provide leadership in ensuring that department is the most open and transparent it has ever been in our history. Every Nova Scotian will know, when we spend their tax dollar, how it is being spent.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, well again I didn't hear whether or not the new big business tax rebate would be posted on this website. I want to ask the minister responsible for the website, will the new big business tax credit be posted in a transparent fashion on that website?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the large capital tax credit that we have provided mirrors a federal tax credit, the Atlantic Investment Tax Credit, which currently exists for companies within the Atlantic Provinces. The federal government, through Revenue Canada, will be administering this tax credit on our behalf. Staff are currently working with our federal partners to find out exactly how much information we can disclose because of federal guidelines.

It is certainly our hope that those negotiations are going to result in our ability to post that information. But again, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that all investments that have been made have been posted on that website, and I do hope we'll be able to do that for this one as well.

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

PREM. - POWER BILLS: SAVINGS - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia ratepayers are not really saving on their electricity bills. The government is just delaying the payment to another day, with interest: \$35 million in efficiency charges delayed to the future, with interest; \$90 million in fuel surcharges, plus interest, all to go to the profits of Nova Scotia Power.

When it comes to asking Nova Scotians to pay later with interest, the government has nothing on Leon's, who are famous for that kind of scheme, Mr. Speaker. So I'll ask the Premier, before he gets up and thanks Leon's for their great job in furniture sales, why not just be upfront with Nova Scotians today and tell them they're not saving anything, it's just being delayed to the future, with interest?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, through you, I will again tell the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that Nova Scotians will be saving \$42 million on their power bills. I want to remind the honourable member that we've set up the efficiency corporation that will drive savings on the fuel side, which in turn will lower power rates in this province.

Mr. Speaker, through you I want to remind the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party that it was his plan that was going to freeze power rates. It was our plan that was going to do exactly what we said, which is drive power rates down.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier read our plan, because step one was to get rid of the fuel surcharge and leave that in the hands of the power company,

which actually would have avoided this whole problem. The Premier's answer is not to save money on power rates but to push it forward to another day, with interest, just like they do with the budget of the province - the bills are put forward to another day. That is not a savings at all.

So do you know what, Mr. Speaker? The lesson here is you shouldn't make a promise that you can't keep. That's the lesson here, and Nova Scotians are going to learn it when they pay that bill, plus interest. So I'll ask the Premier, why not just admit the obvious? We are going to make all these payments in the future, with interest.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that as of January 1st, \$42 million will be coming off power bills across the Province of Nova Scotia. Why is he opposed to allowing Nova Scotians to pay less for power in this province? If we had followed his plan, we would have frozen power rates and \$42 million would have been in the pockets of Nova Scotia Power, not in the pockets of Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

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

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board told the House that she never promised the tax review by the end of October. Instead, the minister expects it in mid-November. Ms. Broten's contract says that it should be delivered on or before October 31, 2014, so my question is, will the tax review be delivered to the department today, as is written in Ms. Broten's contract?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, it is a good opportunity to just clarify what the process is. The woman who is engaged to lead that tax review is Laurel Broten, and her work is complete at the end of October. Then the report will be written and published and so on, so it's off to the publishers soon.

MR. HOUSTON: Section 1.4 of Ms. Broten's contract says that the agreement may be extended if both parties consent in writing, so if the report has not been delivered to the department as of today, then that means that the agreement must have been extended, so the minister must have agreed to a new deadline for delivery of the report. Now we are left wondering when the date that the report will be delivered is. Will the minister inform the House what new deadline was agreed on in writing, and will she table the extension agreement with this House?

MS. WHALEN: Thank you very much. I really appreciate the honourable member's interest in this entire subject, which is important. We're all anxiously waiting for the results of this tax fee and regulatory review.

Ms. Speaker, for the knowledge of the House, there has been no extension on the contract. Ms. Broten's work is complete, and now they are putting in charts and diagrams, as I understand it, and it will then be sent to be printed and ready for release. So mid-November is the time.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - HOME CONST. IND.: KICK-START - PLAN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Single detached housing starts in Nova Scotia are dropping, and they are expected to drop even more, quite dramatically - 57 per cent over the next two years. Paul Pettipas, the CEO of the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association, is concerned, as we all should be. He is calling for the province to drop the HST on new home construction to kick-start the industry. I'll table that article.

My question for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is, what will the government do to kick-start the home construction industry in Nova Scotia?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I do think it's really important for us all to note that there is a big decrease in home sales, particularly in new home sales, and that is one of our major economic indicators of good health in the province. So for me this is certainly a concern and I think it is for all of us in our communities.

We've looked at the evidence of a tax credit for the sale of homes, and it doesn't do very much at all, if anything, to stimulate home sales. There's also a problem about what date you start it, because there are a lot of new homes on the market that could be orphaned or left out if you didn't have the right date. That happened the last time the NDP introduced that kind of a tax credit.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we're all very concerned. This does indeed indicate weakness in our economy. I think that someone who is as knowledgeable of this sector as Mr. Pettipas needs to be taken seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister again, what assurance can the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board give the home builders' association and Nova Scotians that the results of her tax review will indeed provide the stimulus that this industry needs right now?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, what I can assure the industry of is that we will continue to work with them. We are more than happy to keep talking about what can be done, what their suggestions are. We don't believe a tax credit is the right way to go, because it has to include the entire inventory of homes. We really feel it has been

improperly done in the past and not had good results in other parts of Canada and in other places we've studied it.

I think the important thing to know is that with every sector of the economy, we're willing to sit and work with those people who are directly affected. I think, if I have a moment, that it's important to note that this is a reflection on demographics as much as it is the economy. Both factors are very much involved in this trouble.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

ENVIRON.: FRACKING WASTE WATER - DISPOSAL

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today will be for the Minister of Environment. In recent days we've heard about a plan to dispose of fracking waste water in Debert, through Atlantic Industrial Services and the Lafarge concrete plant in Colchester County. I'm wondering how long a process that is, if the minister could answer that, and is there a plan to dispose of the balance of that being held in Debert the same way?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. The process for disposing of the water has gone through a pilot process, so I just want to set everyone - provide the information update that it is a clear and transparent process. All the information related to the pilot test results is available on our website.

With respect to the specific question of timing, the application was for five million litres of the 10 million currently stored in Debert at the AIS facility. That process is estimated to take about 165 to 170 truckloads at approximately five truckloads per day. Thank you.

MR. PORTER: I thank the minister for his answer and as a follow up to that he would also be aware that in the Hants County area there are holding ponds that also contain contaminated fracking waste water. Would there be a plan, similarly, to dispose of the water in these ponds as well?

MR. DELOREY: That's correct, there are approximately another 20 million litres in the Kennetcook - Noel areas and the water, the 10 million liters currently in Debert, also stem from the same operation. With respect to plans from our departmental perspective, Mr. Speaker, we wait on the proponent who is responsible for disposal of the water and proper treatment to submit their application to the department. We review the technical aspects of it to ensure it's safe for the environment and the health, before providing approval. At the present time AIS is working on the water that they have and we're still working with them and waiting to hear an actual acceptable application from Triangle Petroleum, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ERDT - SM. BUS.: GOV'T. ASSISTANCE - EFFECT

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. We all know that this month is Small Business Month and that yesterday the Canadian Federation of Independent Business released its business barometer. There was some alarming news in this report: only 39 per cent of businesses owners in Nova Scotia say their businesses are in good shape; that is among the lowest proportion of any province. Will the minister admit that this government's failure to create the conditions for businesses to grow and thrive has let too many Nova Scotia businesses down, thank you?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it is the exact opposite. Once upon a time small business owners used to come to government saying that they couldn't access any capital to grow their business or to invest in their business because private banks wouldn't lend them money. Those days are over because through the Small Business Loan Program through the credit union movement, we now see that small business can access that type of capital.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that that loan program was enhanced when the Premier made a commitment to double its budget from \$25 million to \$50 million, to put the guarantee up from 75 per cent to 90 per cent to give the credit unions more confidence. Small businesses are gaining access to capital; we're listening to them directly; we're encouraging more entrepreneurship and by doing all of that we will be helping not only small business but all businesses in Nova Scotia grow.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer. However this week's report showing such low confidence among Nova Scotia business people comes only one week after we learned Halifax fell from 17th to 38th on the list of places to do business in Canada. That fall happened in the year that this government has been in government. The evidence is piling up. Nova Scotia businesses are at a competitive disadvantage. I'm wondering if the minister can help us understand why small businesses are losing confidence in this government, thank you.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing just the opposite. Last night I had the opportunity to attend a function and one of the leading businessmen in our province was praising the work that our government has been doing in establishing transparency in arm's length decision making when it comes to investment on behalf of taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, the message we are hearing from business is that this government, under the direction of this Premier, is doing exactly what it said it would. It has taken the cheque book away from Cabinet and picking winners and losers in this province. Those days are over and business is welcoming the transparency and the changes.

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

LAE: CONST. IND. - N.S. WORKERS

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question through you is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Mr. Speaker, new home construction can be a real economic driver in the province but Nova Scotia Home Builders Association is concerned about the sudden drop of new home construction throughout the communities across Nova Scotia. I would like to ask the minister, can the minister tell us how many Nova Scotians work in the residential construction industry?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I don't have that number here with me right now but of course I would be happy to provide it to the member at a future time.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I think what I was asking - the answer should have been there are many, there are 22,000 indirect and direct jobs - so I'll save some work for the minister - who work in that industry in our province.

AN HON. MEMBER: But it's getting fewer.

MR. DAVID WILSON: But it is getting fewer. With a single detached housing starts in Nova Scotia dropping 57 per cent last year, the construction industry is worried, Mr. Speaker, about losing their skilled trade workers to the West. I'll table a document that was tabled earlier from the Home Builders Association that contains a quote from an employee that reads: Well there it is folks, I'm moving to Fort Mac to work as a framer. It isn't great that I have to move away, but I have to go where the work is.

So I'd like to ask the minister: what assurances can the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education give the home building industry that their skilled workers will not all need to leave for work in Alberta?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. We have taken a number of steps since we came into office to help keep our skilled workers here and help train our young apprentices. For example, we have created the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency and we have, in fact, made it easier for them to proceed through their apprenticeship training. In the past, our apprentices would take two years longer than the average in Canada to complete their apprenticeship training - and it wasn't because our apprentices are not smart, they absolutely are but we've taken measures so that they can be attached to the workforce and actually get their training on time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: OUT-MIGRATION - ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. The briefing note prepared for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and obtained by our office, said, "Over the medium term, Nova Scotia's economic outlook is expected to be largely determined by the pace and scale of major projects such as the national shipbuilding procurement strategy . . ." However, the document also stresses that economic growth depends on the medium-term demographic assumption that net outmigration trends reverse in Nova Scotia.

Thousands of Nova Scotians have already left the province this year. My question is, how does the minister really expect to benefit from these large opportunities when the trend towards out-migration has not reversed, and is getting worse?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, again the economic condition of the province is of great importance to all of it. It does eventually come back to the revenue of the province and how many people are working, and so the demographics are the bottom line and the member opposite has certainly hit on that.

But as the projects come underway and get going, we know there are many Nova Scotians who will return, or others who would like to come here. I hope we'll welcome them with open arms and I hope that we won't accuse them of being from somewhere else; I hope we'll welcome them and say you have a job in Nova Scotia and we want you to work and make your life here.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, of course we all share that hope and we all do recognize that it all depends on the revenues, as the minister said.

In that same briefing note, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was advised that the barrier to economic growth poised by our demographic challenges could be overcome through, among other things, natural resource development. In light of this information, would the minister explain why she is supporting the Premier's ban on shale gas development, which is a new way of creating jobs and a new way of developing our natural resources?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I work very closely with other members of the Cabinet and caucus, with the Premier and with the people in Nova Scotia and we want to consult and we want to go forward in a prudent, planned, very deliberate manner to look at all of the resource opportunities in this province, so that's how we're going to go forward.

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

LAE - EMERGENCY RESPONDERS: WCB PTSD - COVERAGE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is through you to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Emergency responders need automatic coverage through Workers' Compensation when diagnosed with PTSD due to accumulative exposure to traumatic events. When I asked the minister last week about this, she indicated, "Any time we go to change our coverage, it has a financial impact on the Workers' Compensation Board's bottom line." And I'll table that.

It's been just over a week and I'm wondering if, through you, I can ask the minister, has her department done any early estimates of the cost of making such a change?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, we value the important, difficult work that our first responders do. In fact, in this past year alone I've had occasion to come into contact with first responders on several occasions - first, when I had my own workplace injury here at the Legislature and was brutally attacked by Joseph Howe and sustained a minor concussion, but recently this past week I had a neighbor who suffered a heart attack. I want to say that the first responders who came to his aid were excellent.

I understand that first responders see things that we often, as regular citizens, do not get to see and we certainly value the work that they do.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I think we all have had experience through that, but can you just imagine that same paramedic going to traumatic event after traumatic event? That is why we need some change.

On Wednesday, CTV News interviewed Kelly Murphy from the NSGEU - I'll table that article. Ms. Murphy said accumulative exposure to traumatic events that emergency responders deal with take a toll and she said, "They come to us when we're in our time of crisis. . . so what they see on a day-to-day basis is crisis after crisis."

In the last seven months, 24 first responders have taken their own lives in Canada so I'd like to ask the minister, doesn't the potential loss of life outweigh concerns over the cost of this policy change?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, as the member is aware, the Workers' Compensation Board recently changed its psychological injury policy to ensure benefits are expanded to be more reflective of the types of stresses that our first responders face on the job. I don't want to make any promises I cannot keep. I think we saw that happen with the previous government where they committed to expanding Workers' Compensation Board benefits to firefighters and they did not keep that promise. I do not want to make promises that I cannot keep.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

EECD: DR. W.A. MACLEOD ELEM. SCH. - RENOVATION BUDGET

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. It has been a very difficult road for the students and staff at Dr. W. A. MacLeod Consolidated School in Riverton. They are paying the price for construction delays and they are working and studying in a construction zone. It is now believed that there is a budget shortfall of \$1.5 million for the project and the school advisory committee is concerned that the cost of fixing the existing boiler, the roof and other general maintenance have depleted funds earmarked for renovations to the upgrade to a proper P-8 school.

My question for the minister today is, why were these maintenance issues not budgeted for in the first place and why are the maintenance issues taking away from the renovation budget?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. As the member would know Dr. W. A. MacLeod was the school that was converted from an elementary to a P-8 school and that required a couple of areas to be addressed: one was the infrastructure and the other was to provide spaces to accommodate and provide the PSP.

There were two parts to the original request that came in from the board for funding and that \$3.7 million was approved. That has been passed on to the board who are administering that. I understand there may be some challenges with that project.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the minister for that answer. Because of the impact of these unforeseen maintenance expenses, the school advisory committee is worried that necessary renovations and expansions may be delayed. The Chignecto-Central Regional School Board has requested additional funding from the province, but the board is unsure of when they will get word from the department on a funding decision.

My question for the minister is, will the minister assure the students, parents and staff of the Dr. W. A. MacLeod School that this funding will not be delayed any further by board mismanagement or red tape and that the people of the community will get the school that they need and deserve?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member to speak with the board representatives because we have provided \$15 million last year, which went to all boards, a number of schools, about 60 schools received support, and it was for things like windows and roofs and so on. Those requests came in from the boards. We provided that money. It is my understanding that the Chignecto board did not request any of that money for W. A. MacLeod.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ERDT - NOVA STAR FERRY: CONSULTANT - DETAILS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Our caucus obtained a list of untendered consultant work regarding the *Nova Star* ferry that found \$7,000 was given to an individual for advice and assistance with freedom of information application and reviews. I can table that.

My question is, can the minister clarify what sort of advice this individual would have provided, especially since the department already has freedom of information personnel?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: If the member would be so kind as to tell us who the individual he is referring to is, it would be much more helpful in being able to answer his question.

MR. HOUSTON: The individual was Robert Doherty. I'll table that for the House.

On my redirect, maybe I'll go right to the Minister of Internal Services. The minister stated previously in the House, regarding freedom of information personnel, that when people leave their positions we have other people within departments who pick up the slack. Those were the minister's words, not mine. This creates confusion as to why an employee within the Public Service could not provide advice on these freedom of information requests without costing the taxpayers \$7,000.

Can the Minister of Internal Services explain why resources were not provided internally to meet the needs of the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as I am not familiar with this exact contract that was put out there, I can't provide information. What I can say is that I find this question confusing, because on the one hand the Progressive Conservatives are complaining that we're not providing freedom of (Interruptions) Are you guys done?

On the one hand I find this question confusing, because the Progressive Conservatives want us to provide information within the time frame allowed, and when they don't get it and we actually move to resources outside of government to provide that, they start complaining. They can't complain on both ends, Mr. Speaker.

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

TIR: BRIDGES REVIEW - DETAILS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. As of July of this year, there were 344 bridges identified to be in poor or worse condition. A lot of these bridges are in rural communities. A letter dated July 4th from the department stated, "Bridges will be looked at on a case by case basis when they have reached the end of their functional life to determine if they are still required as part of the road network."

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, which bridges have been identified as not worth repairing?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The reality is, and this is something that I've spoken about many times, we've got hundreds and hundreds of bridges. Obviously when their timeline comes to an end, we have decisions to make. At that point, on any particular bridge, we will take it on a case-by-case basis. We'll consult with the community.

We're in tough fiscal times. We have to make tough fiscal challenges, and the reality is that if there's an alternative in an area where we don't have to replace an expensive bridge that is not used and there's not a high traffic number, then we'll have those conversations. We're not imposing that on any community. We're going to have those conversations. We've got to make tough decisions, but we're going to make sure our road system is in good shape, and we'll certainly continue those conversations with Nova Scotians.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, rural communities rely on these structures in cases of emergency, for personal use, and for transportation of goods and services. They are a vital part of the road network.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, when the time comes, will residents and businesses be consulted and have a say in whether their bridges stay or go?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, if there's a bridge that is required for emergency purposes, transportation purposes, or anything to do with the community, then of course that information is at the forefront of what the decision process would be.

With any decisions, just like bridges, just like our roadwork, anything that we're going to do in transportation, we will consult the public first and foremost, in particular those communities that are impacted. These are honest conversations that we're going to have with Nova Scotians, and we'll allow them to be part of the decision-making process. Thank you very much.

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

SWSDA BANKRUPTCY: SM. BUS./EMPLOYEES - PMT. ENSURE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, when the South West Shore Development Authority declared bankruptcy in 2011, it owed its creditors nearly \$2.8 million, including many small businesses and contractors from the Yarmouth area. In April 2013, my friend and colleague the honourable member for Yarmouth rose in the House and asked the former Minister of ERDT, "Will he take the necessary measures to ensure that the small businesses and their employees receive the money they are owed from SWSDA?" I'll table that, by the way.

My question is, will the current Minister of ERDT take the necessary measures to ensure that small businesses in southwest Nova Scotia receive the money that they are still owed from the South West Shore Development Authority?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it is quite unfortunate what took place with this regional development authority. In fact, that authority no longer exists. In fact, the province has moved towards regional enterprise networks which, I can say, have much more stringent controls to ensure that some of the unfortunate situations that we saw in a few of these RDAs is not going to happen again in future. We're going to ensure that there's appropriate training given to the board itself, that there are going to be independent audits, that they're going to hold separate bank accounts for all the projects that they're working on. As a result of that, there will certainly be more transparency and more accountability when it comes to these economic development agencies.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for that answer, but it still falls to the point that there are still a number of creditors that are still waiting for some funding. One of those creditors is Garian Construction, which helped build a beautiful school community centre at École Par-en-Bas.

Being held in a confidentiality agreement, Garian Construction cannot disclose the particulars of a settlement that they did receive. However, after the settlement, the owner of Garian noted in *The Chronicle Herald*, "It's not what we were originally owed. We're still a creditor of SWSDA." I'll table that, as well. The good member for Yarmouth advocated in this House for Garian to be paid close to the \$400,000 that was owed, but we know this hasn't happened yet.

My question to the minister is, is he willing to review the matter and help find a solution once and for all in order for Garian and the rest of the creditors to be paid their full amount?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, the circumstances that the member speaks of preceded our government. In fact, I believe it may have even gone to the former administration he served in when some of these unfortunate incidents took place.

As I've indicated, those RDAs have been wound up. We are now moving towards the regional enterprise network system, which I can tell you is going to give much more accountability to the people of Nova Scotia. We're working closely with our municipal partners in establishing these regional enterprise networks to ensure that not only are they working with us to do economic development, but that transparency and accountability to taxpayers is paramount.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

AGRIC.: TURKEY PROCESSORS - SHUTDOWNS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture. When the NDP Government moved to shut down small businesses in 2013, the Liberal Leader called the situation absurd. "Instead of growing their businesses and serving their clients, these small business owners are forced to focus on fighting an absolutely senseless law," he said in a newspaper story at the time, and I can table that.

The question is, will the Minister of Agriculture admit that what is happening to small turkey processors is absurd and that they would be better off growing their businesses and serving their clients?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: This is indeed a very important topic to rural Nova Scotia. It is a very important topic around food safety as well. Under the Act and the regulations, the Turkey Board has the authority to shut down operations that aren't approved by either federal inspection or provincial inspection. That's what happened in this case.

We are presently working with the Turkey Board to make some changes in the process. However, I also want to point out to the member, there was a lawsuit filed in 2002 regarding the processing of turkeys and poultry in a non-licensed facility. That was won by the Turkey Board. It was appealed again; it was again won by the Turkey Board. So this regulation has been tested in court and, indeed, did stand up.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. In the same article that I just tabled, the Liberal Leader also said, "Unfortunately, you can't legislate common sense - but in this case, the premier has the authority to rein in the Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. and put a stop to what is quickly becoming a needless headache for this government."

Will the minister let common sense prevail and use his authority to allow small turkey processors to continue doing business?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, again, maybe the member didn't get the message. This is about food safety. This is about a court case. Indeed they tested this in the past and it did go through court, it was appealed and the people and the Turkey Board did win the case both times. I can't stress enough - this is about food safety in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER MARKETING - FUNDRAISING

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture. In August the Nova Scotia lobster industry was caught off guard by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister's announcement that he would impose a 5-cents-a-pound levy starting this Fall. A few days later we found out that in the minister's excitement to announce the new levy, he had misspoken, and in fact the 5-cent levy would only be imposed on one mystery region of Nova Scotia, with the rest of the province getting a 2-cent levy.

Mr. Speaker, in the past two weeks the minister has backed away from this levy promise; in fact, on October 14th in this House the minister said of his proposed levy, "... I have no idea what it will be called at the end of the day." My question for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is if the minister is no longer just looking at a levy, what other options is he considering to raise funds for the marketing of lobster?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: This is a very important topic in the lobster industry, and indeed it is about the price at the wharf. At the end of the day what we are after here is a higher price at the wharf and a higher price for that very valuable product. Lobster presently is viewed as a commodity product rather than the quality product that it really should be and we are in the process of consulting with industry on a process that will put money into marketing, that will make this happen, but we need to work with industry in that behalf.

In the past there have been all kinds of great ideas, the levy is a great idea, there is some buy-in from industry, but not all industry agrees with it. We want to put a system in place that will work for all the industry, and indeed put a higher value at the wharf for the processors and indeed on the international market for Canadian, and in particular Nova Scotian lobsters.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since the Maritime Lobster Panel released its recommendations, and while P.E.I. lobster fishermen are voting this week on whether or not to accept a 1-cent-a-pound levy, in Nova Scotia the Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister doesn't really know what marketing programs will look like yet. My question for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, can he tell this House, specifically, what consultation he has held in the last year with industry members on the

Maritime Lobster Panel's recommendations and can he table the list of those meetings by the end of the day? Thank you.

MR. COLWELL: We are in the process of working on the pilot project we talked about, which is the key part of this whole process, and in the fullness of time I will provide that information to the House, when it is appropriate. Thank you very much for the question.

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

NAT. RES. - STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: In August 2011 the Department of Natural Resources issued an action plan for implementing the Natural Resources Strategy. According to a September 2nd briefing note prepared for the minister and obtained by our office: "The action plan items currently overdue are: reports on the State of Biodiversity and the State of the Forests, a redesigned Integrated Resource Management (IRM) process, and an evaluation of effects implementing an annual allowable cut (AAC)." Will the minister update the House as to the current status of these action items?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We will be releasing an update on the Natural Resources Strategy, probably sometime after the Legislature has finished its current session.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the minister has had a year to take charge of those strategy items. It seems like things are starting to get a little blocked up so I am hoping that by November things will be available to us. As I have said, in light of these new delays, will the minister instead commit to providing a full and complete update before the end of 2014, maybe by November, so that Nova Scotians can judge for themselves whether the strategy is on track or not?

MR. CHURCHILL: Our focus coming into this government was to create an air of transparency when it comes to land use and management in this province and to create a high level of engagement and trust with our population. For the first time in the history of Nova Scotia, when it comes to long-term allocations on our Crown lands, we have released maps for everyone in Nova Scotia to see - that's the first time that has happened. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are working on new models of engagement for stakeholder groups and communities all across this province. It's something we're very proud of and we're getting a lot of positive response from as well.

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

EECD: CURRICULUM REVIEW - SCOPE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Liberals campaigned on a promise to start reviewing education curriculum in the first year of government. I'll table that. Then, a few months after getting elected, the minister announced a broad review of the entire education system. According to the minister, you can't just review curriculum, she said: "If you're looking at curriculum then you're also looking at what we offer, how we offer it, the length of time students have to commit to that particular discipline, and the outcomes that we expect. . ."

My question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, why did the Liberal Government commit to a curriculum review in the first year of their mandate if the minister knew it couldn't just be a curriculum review but a review of the entire education system?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. I find it strange that the member would want us to do a review of only one part of a huge, complex system that is public education.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: That was not the point, Mr. Speaker, the point was once again a hollow promise was made during the election and then a change afterwards.

In February 2014, when the minister announced the sweeping review of the education system, she said: "It's my hope that some of those changes may be implemented early in the 2014-15 school year. Now the minister is saying that it will likely be next September before any changes from the review are brought in.

My question for the minister is, why is she asking Nova Scotians to now wait two full years into the Liberal Government's mandate before seeing any changes to the education system when before the election, and shortly afterward, she said it would happen within a year?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would say that we certainly have embarked on a very comprehensive review of public education. We had that report tabled yesterday and I would say to all members in the House that I did provide a personal invitation to both of the critics from the Opposition Parties to come to the briefing yesterday so they could learn first-hand what the panel said, what the media were talking about - I believe that many of the NDP Opposition questions could have been answered had they been there.

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

TIR: SYDNEY RIVER BRIDGE - COMPLETION DETAILS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, last year the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal took the undertaking of replacing the Sydney River Bridge. A company from outside Nova Scotia was given the contract and the local people in the unions were not happy that this happened. But that company came around and realized the expertise of some of the employees, and workers in Cape Breton and did get some work.

My question to the minister is will the Sydney River Bridge be completed on time and on budget?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: It looks like the closers are in the ballgame here for Question Period.

With respect to the Sydney River Bridge, the member and I have had a very good dialogue with the trade unions that were part of the discussions on the Sydney River Bridge. Without question, it is good news when the company, Caldwell & Ross, from New Brunswick, indicated to us directly about the quality of the local content here in Nova Scotia, so that's certainly good news for the province.

I can tell the member that the schedule is on track. There were a few hiccups early with the superstructure, but they're on target to be open in December, and they are on target to be on budget. We'll keep the House updated, but right now it looks pretty good.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Again today in the House when the Statements by Members was going on, the Minister of Natural Resources got up and I believe took time to talk about issues in his responsibility as a minister - easy for me to say - but I think he has an area to do that in and it's not right where he is doing it and I look for a ruling from you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to express my disappointment in the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development with her comments yesterday and today with respect to my non-attendance at the announcement . . .

MR. SPEAKER: That's not a point of order, that's a disagreement of facts.

I do have a ruling, one moment please. I will take this opportunity to provide a ruling on the petition tabled earlier by the member for Pictou West. We have reviewed that along with the Clerks. They have gone through the large package and provided me with advice that there were three different versions of the petition contained in the one single bundle. Unfortunately, none of the three asked the House to do anything. They were merely statements of opposition or support or opinion, not requests.

Accordingly the materials will be returned to the honourable member.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 66.

Bill No. 66 - House of Assembly Act and House of Assembly Management Commission Act and Members' Retiring Allowances Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 66. This bill makes the legislative changes required as a result of the Review Panel Report and as a result of decisions made by the House of Assembly Management Commission and I would so move.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 66. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 65.

Bill No. 65 - Railways Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 65. I am going to take a few moments of the House's time to talk to the members and Nova Scotians about the situation here. I'm going to go off script a little bit so I know the department is probably cringing, but I'm going to speak in my native Glace Bay language here and lay out the situation as we have seen it unfold over the last little bit.

First and foremost I would like to take this opportunity to mention that we have the significant support here from the Opposition House Leaders; of course our House Leader - the MLA for Cape Breton-Richmond, the Minister of ERDT - has been tremendous in getting to today and I want to thank all three House Leaders and of course the Opposition members, particularly the members for Cape Breton Centre and Northside-Westmount who were there for the bill briefing today and provided comment to the media about their support for this bill. It is certainly appreciated. Again the MLA for Cape Breton Richmond and the MLA for Northside-Westmount who were there for the bill briefing today and provided comments to the media about their support for this bill - it's certainly appreciated - and again, the MLA for Cape Breton-Richmond and the MLA for Victoria-The Lakes, who were here to support this. It's a good thing, for sure.

For the clarity of the House, essentially what this bill provides us with today are two things. It's about a timeline, and it's also about a process, a very important and critical process that we have as part of our system here in legislation that had a loophole and today serves as a way for us to tighten up and strengthen our impact and our ability to influence decisions that are made on critical infrastructure.

Where we are essentially is that the Cape Breton rail line known as the Sydney Subdivision is in jeopardy. There are two main lines in our province. There's the Hopewell line, which encompasses Truro to St. Peter's Junction, followed by the Sydney Subdivision from St. Peter's to the port of Sydney. There's certainly a perilous situation facing the rail system. The traffic numbers have decreased, obviously, since the days of Sydney Steel and the Cape Breton coal mines, and now there's a decision to be made.

We've said many times that this is about the business case, and we want to be able to assure Nova Scotians that we're not going to operate the rail line, but we want to know that there's a viable business case and we want to do what we can to support it.

Where we are today is that the owner/operator, Genesee & Wyoming, have decided, without question, that they are not interested in operating this portion of the Nova Scotia railway any longer. We've met with them on a number of occasions. They've made it very clear. They are a private sector entity. This is not part of their business model moving forward. We respect that without question - that's their decision that they make. They don't want the Sydney Subdivision. They do want the Hopewell line, the main line

here in Nova Scotia and the mainland, so obviously there's a motivation of profit here. That's what the private sector should be doing, and we're certainly not taking away from that.

That's their decision, and they've made it, but we have a decision to make as well. The way this process has been identified and laid out, it doesn't give protection to Nova Scotians who have been investors in this particular rail line. So we want to tighten that up today, and I think that our legislation gets us there.

Just to give a little bit of the history as to where we've been with this conversation, on June 26th we had a very open and frank meeting with CBRM Mayor Cecil Clarke and members of council. It was a public conversation in the Chambers on the Esplanade in Sydney, and we put out all the situation. We put it out there about where we are and what had to be done in short order.

Resulting from that meeting, there were two requests from the stakeholders and from Cape Bretoners, elected and otherwise, about what we have to do. First of all, it was about time; second of all, it was about information. We can't allow a rail line to operate to infinity without some kind of business support and business case. We need the private sector - like the Premier says in many instances - we need the private sector to drive this type of infrastructure maintenance and the operation. That was for sure. What we also know for sure with respect to time is that there are very specific opportunities on the horizon for Cape Breton that we are investing with resources. The CBRM mayor and council are investing those resources. We've got opportunities in the port, and we've potentially got opportunities with Donkin Mine.

There are very real things in front of us that are on a very specific timeline. These aren't infinity; these aren't 10 years away. These are things that are in front of us now that we have to get answers to in very short order. This is the whole point of this timeline.

The other piece of the conversations on June 26th was about information. We have to know where the traffic potential is. We've got to know what liabilities are on that line. We also have to know what the impact is on transportation options and the intermodal piece for eastern Nova Scotia should this line become abandoned. These are the conversations that we have to have.

At this point we really have no idea what efforts were made by Genesee & Wyoming to create traffic on this line. We know that their numbers say that there are 500 cars per year, and the breakeven is 10,000. We have no real way to verify that. We don't know what their marketing efforts have been. It's a private company, and that information is privy to their shareholders and their decision makers. We don't see that, so we have to figure out how we go about this.

So what we did is we established a Minister's Rail Advisory Committee, very solid individuals. All three levels of governments are represented. The municipalities in Cape Breton are represented, we have private users that are represented on that committee as well, and of course, our deputy ministers for Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and Economic and Rural Development and Tourism are also playing a role there.

What we've asked MRAC to do, in consultation with the wider public, is to get information on what the traffic could be moving forward, what the liabilities are. We've heard different numbers from Genesee & Wyoming. It could be in the 100 million, according to their information. We had our experts ride this line, take a look at what we're seeing, and Hopewell and the Sydney subdivision.

The reality is we don't think the number is that high for the Sydney subdivision, and that makes it a much more viable asset. What we've learned is that this isn't a dog and the liability that it originally was presented as. There's a future in this rail line. It's good quality rail. Ironically, it's good quality rail that was produced in Sydney at the SYSCO site, so we know that it's solid rail. We know the assets are there, but there are certainly questions.

Again, I don't want to lose sight of this - there has to be a business case for the Sydney subdivision, and we're focused on that. What we're going to have is an interim report from the MRAC committee in December. We're going to have a final report in the Spring, which will encompass all these questions about traffic, about liabilities, about intermodal transportation.

These are important things that we have to get on the docket. It's not only important for government, but it's important for all Nova Scotians to get this information and see exactly how we're making our decisions and what data and statistics and potential is out there for us. That's the point of this endeavour. What we need is time and we need information. The process laid out now doesn't do that and that's why we're here today for this legislation.

Just to highlight the main points of Bill No. 65 for the House, what this does is separate discontinuance from abandonment. To explain it to the members of the House, discontinuance is the company's ability to stop operating the line. The infrastructure stays, the rail remains in the ground. They are permitted to discontinue. Currently, the way the system works, the way the URB process is mandated, they apply concurrently for discontinuance and abandonment, so they can discontinue, stop the service, and then they can abandon and literally remove the tracks from the ground.

These are two very separate conversations from our perspective, and it's a conversation that we have no ability to impact at this point. It goes to the URB. They don't decide whether or not they give abandonment. All they are mandated to decide is the

timeline. That doesn't work for Nova Scotians and it certainly doesn't work for us, given the critical nature of this conversation.

What we've done is separate discontinuance from abandonment. On the discontinuance piece, we've set a minimum and a maximum discontinuance period that the URB can give to Genesee & Wyoming. The minimum period is six months; the maximum is one year. To give you an example of this, let's say hypothetically that the URB decides on January 2nd that they will allow the minimum period of six months. That means that Genesee & Wyoming will be required to operate the service until July 2, 2015. At that point, they are permitted to discontinue, and there is a process identified for how they discontinue.

The abandonment piece, which is the part that ties into the government, will be - you can't apply for six months from that date. So July 2nd, they can apply for abandonment on January 2, 2016. That's the timeline that we've established based on giving information for the discontinuance and based on the information for the abandonment.

The abandonment process has no teeth. It has no real mechanism whatsoever present day. That's what we're changing here with Bill No. 65. What we're going to do with abandonment, it will be a process that is applied - the operator of the day for a line will apply directly to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for abandonment. That process will be identified and regulations will begin right away. We'll have an idea of what those regulations look like probably by June, so we'll still be in a certain measurement of the discontinuance process, we'll have those regulations. Obviously that's something that we'll share with all Nova Scotians. That will be out there so people will understand what we were looking at.

For the abandonment decision itself, there are a number of specific components to that. Safety is a factor for abandonment that should be considered. Access, ownership and the environment - very critical pieces. Right now, if Genesee & Wyoming were to abandon this line, it's over; they removed the tracks, they removed the valuable assets, we have no impact on that decision. What this bill does is change that. It gives us a mechanism whereby we can consider all of the factors in the equation.

This is a significant decision. It's not just about industrial Cape Breton. It's not just about Cape Breton. This is a Nova Scotian asset. It's one that has tremendous value. It's one that has potential if we give it the opportunity to at least explore that, and that's what we're going to do.

The abandonment process that we will identify in regulations will give us specific parameters to ultimately grant the abandonment of this rail line. We're not taking away the opportunity for a company to abandon a line, but we're putting in measures where really there was a loophole in the Railways Act that didn't exist before.

I'll give one example - this is probably the clearest one for the Sydney subdivision - if anyone has taken the Iona route through Cape Breton, they've travelled across the Grand Narrows Bridge. At this point if Genesee & Wyoming were to abandon the line, they would take the rails, the very high value, lucrative rails that are there now. They have no requirement to address the fact that there is a train bridge crossing the Bras d'Or Lakes, crossing the Grand Narrows corridor. So who is on the hook for that, Mr. Speaker? It is the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

This is the problem. There is a full history, a gamut of projects that were operated; they became obsolete one way or another: infrastructure, developments, sites, unsightly premises, what have you. The companies leave. Who is holding the bag? It's the taxpayers. We can't allow that in this situation. We have done it many times. Everyone is aware of the fiscal challenges we have as a province; this is just another example where a company walks away - again their decision - this is what they are allowed to do. For us, we are left holding the bag and writing a cheque for reclamation and environment cleanup that was not our responsibility.

We want this rail to stay in the ground, Mr. Speaker. We want these assets to be used. If there is a process for abandonment, it is not fair that we are left holding the bag as a company moves away and makes a profit. This is the whole point of this legislation today. We have got to protect ourselves. These are conversations we have to have with the public. The regulations will be developed by consultation; we'll get into these communities; we'll see what's happening. We are going to do the environmental assessments. We are going to figure out what the liabilities are. We are going to look at the traffic, and hopefully this is all moot conversation because we'll have an operator in place and we'll have that economic developmental activity take place in Sydney that will create the viability on this line ourselves and we don't have to play a role. We will allow the private sector to do that and that is what we are looking at.

In closing - I know I'm going to turn it over to members of the Opposition to say a few words on this - but I want to be very clear. Mr. Speaker, this line is profitable. This is a Nova Scotia asset - from Truro to Sydney this is a profitable line. The member for Cape Breton Centre, in his remarks today, said this is something that has been paid for and built by the people of Nova Scotia. Certainly over the last 10 years Genesee & Wyoming has received \$23 million in subsidy from the taxpayers of Nova Scotia to keep this line alive. That is our stake. We built the line and we have invested in the line in recent times, as recent as September 30th when the final subsidy lapsed.

We are investors in this. This line makes a profit. There is no question; that's coming from the company. That's not our information; that's coming directly from Genesee & Wyoming. How is it fair that a Nova Scotia asset, an important provincial asset that will be tied to the future with natural gas with other developments that will take place in eastern Nova Scotia not just in industrial Cape Breton, Mr. Speaker - how does that

process exist where they can just be evaporated and removed and we have no role to play other than clean up the mess when the abandonment takes place?

What this is about, I want to be very clear, this is about establishing a process by which Nova Scotians can have an impact on the abandonment, that is what today is about. If we are going to make decisions and remove critical assets, Nova Scotians should have a way to impact on that, to interject, to give their concerns. They do that by the way of their government and they do that by the way of their elected officials and I think that's an important process.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, this is not about impacting, influencing, being heavy handed with the private sector. We need the private sector, despite disagreements politically and different messaging that we can convey, at the end of the day we need jobs in this province desperately. We need revenue, we need development and we need growth in GDP. We are not trying to impact on any of that; in fact, it is the contrary. For us we don't have an operator going to knock on the doors here in the Sydney subdivision if the rail line doesn't exist. To be very clear, once this is gone, it is gone forever, so that's where we're at.

Again to be very clear, we are not looking to operate this line. We are looking to create the environment where an operator can come in and make this viable for the people of Nova Scotia. This decision today will echo for generations, it is an important one for our social infrastructure. It is important for the province. It is a good thing for Nova Scotians. We are doing it right today and we appreciate the support of the Opposition and of course our own government. This is a good thing so we should be proud of ourselves today, thank you very much.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, we are proud that this bill has been introduced today as the people of Cape Breton and as the people of Nova Scotia. It is a good bill because it is what the people are looking for. Before the June 26th meeting of council in Sydney, myself and the member for Sydney-River Mira-Louisbourg had the opportunity to meet with some of the people in my constituency who depend on that rail line for service. They depend on that rail line to bring in raw materials so they can produce goods and materials and ship them all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, before we talk about any further development, before we talk about anything, there are 300 well-paying jobs associated with that rail line in these companies in Cape Breton. Companies like Polysteel Atlantic, Copol, Atlantic Preforms, all bring in raw materials to be used in their factories to make their goods to ship all over the world. We're told that for every railcar that comes in that would require four to five truckloads of raw material on our highways. When you look at that on our roadways, the cost of the infrastructure of the roadway is phenomenal.

So we have two costs associated with it when it comes to that. When we met with the operators of these businesses back in early May and June and they told us the importance of this rail line to their business, it really hit home because some of the people who work in those industries are our neighbours and our friends, and without them working it's going to be another loss to our province, to the taxpayers, to the tax base. That would be huge.

When we have our community people having to leave because of an asset that we could probably save, that's important to us. It's important to us as politicians, it's important to us as community members, and it's important to them as business people. When we lost the mines and the steel plant, the traffic on that line went down greatly. In saying that, the necessary repairs and stuff had to be made and the people who used that line were trying to get as much security on it as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we know without that rail line future development in Cape Breton is going to be lost. We're hearing things like the Donkin Mine, development of the port in Sydney which is actually in the Sydport area, and we heard of a steel company that may come to Sydney to produce steel ingots to ship to the steel plants in our country - they all rely on rail as part of their operation.

Any dangerous goods that come in by rail would have to be shipped over the highway. I've heard over the last six months or so opposition to the railway, there are rail cars sitting on tracks with dangerous goods on them, but if we had to run those dangerous goods through towns and cities in this province that would be a lot more detrimental than it would be on a railway.

The cost to business and development in Cape Breton will be astronomical - actually, Mr. Speaker, it would be detrimental. We can sit in this Chamber and argue about the jobs we're losing and Nova Scotia's closed for business, but I can guarantee you if we lose this rail line, Cape Breton would definitely be closed for business. We'd have to put a gate up on the causeway or tear it out altogether because without that, development on Cape Breton Island is gone. When we went to that June 26th meeting, it was obvious from the people there - business owners, public, community - the necessity of this rail line to keep business and development alive in Cape Breton.

It's good that this bill comes into place, because we're hearing that there are people looking to develop - one in the port - and the hope of the Donkin Mine developing and putting people back to work in Cape Breton is amazing. The talk has people abuzz, but with the loss of this rail line that would all be dashed. I know the process of separating discontinuance from abandonment is something that's pretty important right now because even if Genesee & Wyoming discontinue the line, if they pull up the assets to it, that were made at Sydney Steel, they were some of the most top quality rails ever produced, would be gone and, Mr. Speaker, once they're gone, they're gone.

The way we're told as in southwestern Nova Scotia, when the railbed was pulled up it will never go back there again. Without the railbed, the development that we talked about is not going to be there. We have good quality industry already using that rail line, they employ our people, they're good companies to work for - actually they're in my constituency. The loss of those companies alone - they tell us they may be able to operate for a little bit but the cost of producing their goods if they have to truck in their raw materials would put them out of business, or have them relocate somewhere else in the country. I don't want to see that and I'm sure all the members in this Chamber don't want to see that. I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal doesn't want to see that as well, hence the bill that comes forward.

Myself and the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg have gone to the rallies to save the railroad, we've gone to meetings with council, we've gone to meetings with local businesses, and we can't stress enough the importance of this railway to the people of Cape Breton.

We will be supporting this bill. We think it's essential that we get the time allowed, that the process take the time to find the business case for the railway, allows the businesses on the line to maybe increase their business, their use of the railway. But it also allows the municipal government, through the leadership of Mayor Clarke and his council, to try and find a business case by development in industrial Cape Breton to allow more traffic on that line to make it profitable.

We're told that the whole line, the Hopewell line and the Cape Breton line, including the Cape Breton line, makes a profit. We know private business doesn't operate at a loss. They don't want to operate at a loss and we can understand that. But if they're going to abandon this line and pull it up, the loss to society, the loss to the Province of Nova Scotia and the loss to Cape Breton - like I said, I just don't want to try and imagine it.

We know there's future development on the horizon in Cape Breton. We want to make sure that we can keep every available asset there so that it will be attractive for businesses to come to Cape Breton. We have a great workforce, we have all kinds of space and we have all kinds of opportunity and we have all kinds of potential. Let's not lose that potential by allowing this rail line to be torn up and taken away. Let's buy the time for the citizens and the community, the mayor and the council and all the elected officials from Cape Breton - the time to allow a business case for the line, to get some business on that line to keep it operating and keep our people at home and keep our people working there. We know we have great people. We know they don't want to go. Let's do this to make sure that doesn't happen.

Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this bill. Thank you very much.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to stand with all my colleagues in the House today and do the unusual and be unanimous in our voice on Bill No. 65. I was privileged to sit over in the bill briefing earlier this morning. I realized that as much as people go on about politicians, the one thing they really dislike most about politicians is when they agree. It would seem to confound a lot of people.

I would hope that in the few minutes I'm going to take - and I'm speaking also on behalf of my colleague, the member for Sydney-Whitney Pier - the reality is we're talking about a piece of infrastructure that's - you know, I can go on and on about what Cape Breton has done for this province, but this is the reality of something, that you don't separate these two things out. The continuation of this rail line is good for Nova Scotia. I can wrap myself in the Cape Breton flag and say all those things, which I truly believe in, but I also believe in this great province.

To use a mixed metaphor, you are as strong as your weakest link. If we get rid of our rail link, then we're in trouble. That prosperity is going to be - I will never be as despondent and say it's never going to happen without the railway, but certainly it will make it all that much more difficult if we do not have that vital piece of infrastructure.

Earlier today, when asked about this bill and are we intruding on the private sector, my answer was simple; the people of Canada, the people of Nova Scotia, built that rail line. This country indeed was founded on linking us sea to sea to sea with rail lines. Now, we can debate in this House about government moving in or out of the short line services and all that stuff, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? I'm not interested in today's debate to get into a history lesson.

What I really want to talk about is our economy and the vital link that this rail line is. Previous speakers have talked about businesses that use it, but really what we're talking about is the potential. There has been talk about moving some of CBRM's garbage along that line and there are some issues about that. Maybe we can work them out. There are issues there and I'm not blind to those. I was in the government that sat down with the owners and helped provide the subsidies as the previous government did. We have that investment, as the minister said, that shows that we're all committed to it and that we have, as they say, skin in the game.

To say, is this bill perfect - well, what bill ever comes before this House that doesn't have some room for improvement? But the reality of this bill is its intentions. The intentions of this bill are to keep that rail line intact so we will leave no stone unturned when it comes to keeping it and helping with our economic future.

We have a hard row to hoe when it comes to rebuilding our economy. There will be days we will rise up with our swords again and fight government over issues and that. But today is not that day. Today is the day to say, we will put our political stripes aside and say

we are going to stand with a government bill because it's a bill that stands with all the people of Nova Scotia. (Applause)

I am proud, as I said earlier, to be from Cape Breton. In line with the minister, we both grew up the hard way - sons of coal miners, where there were more dinnertimes than dinners. Doesn't look it now, but I know hard times. I come from a family of 15. I have nine sisters, so I was lucky I did not get to wear any of their hand-me-downs. I got to wear a lot of my brothers'.

We knew what that was like. We knew that when the train came down from the short end of No. 12 Colliery and they shunted to take the coal cars out, we knew there was work around. We knew it, - I will date myself on this - I remember when the coal company went from steam locomotives to diesel locomotives. But those things - we knew what that meant. Even as a young child, you knew what that meant. I'm sure many who are from Cape Breton remember the Sydney and Louisburg Railway. All those things, those are vital pieces of infrastructure that kind of fell into the realm of history and a bit into lore.

But we can't allow this line to be torn up. We can't allow the people of this province to be on the hook for the environmental aftermath to be foisted upon our people. I stand here proudly, proudly in support of this bill. Maybe not all of the time will I agree with this government, but I will do this and I will say it on the record in support of my colleague and my friend, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that this is a good bill. This should be fast-tracked, pardon the pun.

We've got to do this, not just for Cape Breton, but for the people of Nova Scotia and the people of Canada, which we are part of. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to follow that impassioned speech, but that really goes to the fact that Bill No. 65 is one that crosses political lines and one that we have worked on as a government and have reached out to the Opposition and have invited them to some of the meetings that have taken place and have asked them to be part of the solution, which I think you are seeing today, based on the remarks on Bill No. 65. I do as well want to thank the Opposition House Leaders and the members who have spoken, who have agreed to allow us to bring the bill in today and have it be dealt with at second reading so that it can go on to Law Amendments Committee schedule on Monday evening, which is approaching.

Mr. Speaker, we all have an attachment to that rail line and Richmond's attachment has become a bit lessened over the years in the change of the route but the rail line did used to run right into St. Peter's. In fact when you pass the River Tillard Bridge over on your right you can still see where the old rail bridge would have crossed over River Tillard at

that time. I remember when we still had the VIA Rail service and the stop was over in Port Hawkesbury, there was a stop once upon a time in Louisdale - that was when I was quite young - but at the end of the VIA Rail service the stop was in Port Hawkesbury and I actually was on the very last VIA Rail train out of Cape Breton.

I remember we were going up to Université de Moncton to visit some friends who were in university and I remember the train was packed and it was quite a lively discussion because you had a bunch of Cape Bretoners on a train complaining about the fact that the Brian Mulroney Government was cutting rail service through VIA Rail and ironically, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that I wasn't leading the discussion. It was folks from throughout Cape Breton Island that were upset at losing that rail service, a service that had connected them to Halifax, to Truro, to Moncton, and to places even further. There was a real sense of loss when the VIA Rail passenger service ended in Cape Breton and that continues to be the case.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say how impressed I was, not only at the co-operation that we have seen here amongst our provincial colleagues but the leadership that was shown by our municipal colleagues. This is one of those issues where the municipalities affected could have easily, simply criticized the government of the day, not offered solutions but just criticism. We have seen that happen in the past and it hasn't been very productive. This has been the exact opposite.

Mr. Speaker, it was so refreshing to see how our municipal leaders in Cape Breton Island, the minute that this became an issue that the rail line was going to apply for discontinuance and abandonment, that they rallied together and it was they who came forward and said - how can we be part of the solution?

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to commend Mayor Cecil Clarke, Warden Duart MacAulay from Inverness, Warden Bruce Morrison from Victoria, former warden Steve Sampson from Richmond County, and Mayor Billy Joe MacLean in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. They came together and I know the member for - I want to say Cape Breton North, but I know his riding name has changed - Northside-Westmount, I believe is the riding now, I know that he and the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg - changed his as well - were in Arichat at the council chambers where former warden Steve Sampson had called together a number of the partners, and I know that my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, was in attendance as well. I phoned in as I was attending ministerial meetings at the time and was unable to attend.

Mr. Speaker, it was the mayors and wardens that immediately saw that there was an opportunity here for them to be part of the solution and they have worked very closely. In fact, when it came to the decision by myself and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to set a railway advisory committee, the majority of that committee is our municipal partners. It is not provincial civil servants or provincial representatives, it's our municipal partners, and to their credit they made decisions that it should be their

chief administrative officers of the municipal units that would work directly on this advisory committee, and certainly looping back to the elected officials as well.

I certainly want to extend my thanks to all the members of the Railway Advisory Committee for the work that they have done and for the work that we hope they will continue to do in helping to find solutions.

Mr. Speaker, as government you are always hoping that when such situations arise that a solution can be found without requiring legislation. It became very evident in this case that legislation would be an absolute, especially, as the minister has pointed out, when it comes to the abandonment process, there really were no rules to the game. We have a duty to ensure that whatever is done with that infrastructure is done in an appropriate and environmentally-sustainable fashion, and that it respects the obligations to the communities where that rail line crosses.

As well, I want to extend my thanks to our colleague the MLA for Victoria-The Lakes, who has been a strong supporter of this issue and has a number of constituents who are impacted by this. I want to thank her for her support.

Such legislation would not be possible without the support of our Premier, our Cabinet colleagues, and all of our caucus members, who have supported the members from Cape Breton on this issue. I want to extend my thanks to them. I look forward to seeing this bill go through the Law Amendments Committee process, and look forward to seeing the continued co-operation that we have seen in this House.

I would point out that we shared the details of this with our Opposition colleagues as soon as we were able to. I believe that is reflected in the comments that you see here today. It's extremely refreshing - I believe for all Nova Scotians, especially Cape Bretoners - to see that at the end of the day, regardless of political stripe, issues of economic concern to the social and future well-being of our people will always trump politics in Nova Scotia. Merci, M. le Président.

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to give my heartfelt thanks to all members who spoke on this today. It's very true, and to echo the remarks from the Minister of ERDT, who put it so eloquently, this has been an issue of co-operation.

It's one where there's a long road ahead. This doesn't solve any of our overarching issues about rail and economic development in Cape Breton, but it's a good start, and it's good that we're united. So I thank all the members of the House for supporting this today.

We look forward to moving forward and trying to figure out a solution to this very complex problem. With that, I'll close debate. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 65. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, 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. 18.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Energy, I now move third reading of Bill No. 18.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to quickly speak to this bill, which in effect codifies the stringent offshore development regulations that Nova Scotia has in concert with the Government of Canada.

It allows for an orderly and proper protection of our offshore environment by putting in place pretty strict regulations to be governed jointly through the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to ensure that the benefits, jobs, and opportunities that flow from our offshore resource flow to Nova Scotians as the principal beneficiary of those resources, and also that that activity is done in an environmentally-sustainable way - something that I'm glad we all agree on for our offshore - all of us in this House, presumably, or we'll see when the vote comes. But also, there is such substantial agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia on how to properly, safely, and responsibly develop our offshore natural resources.

I can't help but point out at this time how ironic it is that the government does not have the vision to see that we can have that exact same process, that same benefit, that same type of regulation for our onshore resources, including shale gas. Gas is gas, Mr. Speaker, whether it's onshore or offshore, it's development. You'd have the same benefits done in a responsible way in a strictly regulated environment. Just like we have as a very real example off our coasts, so too can we be doing on our shores.

I hope that as this particular bill receives the support of this House, that all members on all sides reflect on the fact that we have come to a consensus on how to protect our offshore environment and responsibly be the beneficiaries of the resources that are underneath our offshore. In fact we have for almost two decades done exactly that, and why it is that at the same time in the same session as we're making all that happen, that the same government can't see the same logic and reach out and try something new with the same benefits onshore. The irony of accepting something offshore but banning it onshore, is not lost on us as we continue with debate on this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 18. 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. 22.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, I move that Bill No. 22 be now read a third time.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to speak to Bill No. 22, the Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act.

Harness racing is a valuable business sport to our economy in Nova Scotia. I know that in Cape Breton we have two harness racing tracks that provide a lot of economic impact in our areas, in fuel, hotel stays for people when they come in from out of town, tack shops, hay, the people who work at the track. By adding Newfoundland and Labrador to

the Harness Racing Commission, it should allow us to strengthen the harness racing industry in Nova Scotia, as well as the four provinces.

I hope by doing this that harness racing will continue to operate in the future, employing Nova Scotians in jobs and continuing to support local businesses and economies. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a couple of words.

We have a raceway in Inverness and it's a huge part of the history and the culture of Inverness and, certainly, surrounding communities. Back in the days when people got around by horse and wagon, a lot of their leisure time would be spent with horse racing. One of my grandfathers was a blacksmith, and my own grandfather actually had the papers on the wall in my house of a horse he bought about 100 years ago. It came out of Quebec and, suffice it to say, there's a lot of history that I think everybody in rural parts of this province connect with, with these raceways.

There are three of them in the province, and I think sometimes people question why governments invest in harness racing. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the benefits flow back. There's a tremendous amount of interest, there are a lot of young people who get involved in this from a young age, hanging around the barns in places like Inverness, at the track there. There's investment coming in from people bringing horses in and buying feed. As the member for Northside-Westmount was saying, money is spent on staying in local hotels, and accommodation and travel. I think the money that is invested finds its way back into the provincial coffers.

I will also say this, that there are people who have had great success with harness racing. I know people from Inverness, specifically, who are in Ontario now and they are doing quite well financially as trainers for horses there, where the stakes are a bit higher, but we need these smaller tracks. They are the grassroots of the industry and if we didn't have those tracks we would have a hard time having the bigger tracks where the bigger dollars are bet because we need a place for the sport to grow from a grassroots level.

I just wanted to say a few words in support of this bill. I look forward to supporting it as it moves through the House. Thank you.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to rise to my feet to talk about the Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission Act. I think this is a very good and positive step forward and I commend the government for introducing the bill.

Harness racing is very important to Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River. It is an old pastime that has been going on for over 100 years there. Our track is very important to my community because, as many other members have already stated in the House, it is the little spinoff businesses that mean a lot to people: the people who have the horses, the people who are doing harnesses, the people with trailers, the people with the little coffee shops, the farmers right across the province who provide hay for the horses.

We also had a horse sale just recently and the most expensive horse went for \$10,000, which is not too bad for little country communities. I know that many of the people who bought Somebeachsomewhere live in Truro and the area and that horse has certainly done very well around the world. Now they are having the little babies of Somebeachsomewhere and those are being sold for \$200,000 a pop - just to have a child of that horse.

I think that harness racing is a sport and a pastime that has been popular around the world. In Australia, where I grew up, it wasn't the harness racing but it was the actual Thoroughbred racing that was popular. We were only introduced to harness racing when we came to Nova Scotia, when I was eight. In Australia we used to go to the races every Saturday, when I was a child. The women would all dress up and wear hats and gloves, including my mother and myself; there are lots of pictures of us dressed like that.

It was interesting because at half-time or intermission or whatever, they would have a fashion show and many different models would come from around the world and it turned out to be a really nice event for women and for men to come together and to socialize. It is still a big deal in Australia to the point where, last year or the year before - every year there is a contest for the personality of the year in Australia - the Personality of the Year was a horse and that horse had won every single race. It was called Black Caviar and it had won every single race it ever raced. They used to say that when they took pictures of it, it looked like the horse smiled, so they made it the Personality of the Year in Australia and it also became the Athlete of the Year as well.

So, in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River for instance, last year it was very scary when it was announced by the then existing board that they were going to close down our raceway. They gave the horse owners only a week and said that at the end of the race on that Sunday, the following Monday the owners of the horses would not be allowed to even walk their horses on the track. They had two weeks to find new stables for the horses and the stables are all around the track, on one side of the track.

All of a sudden everybody was thrown into a panic because not only were they going to lose the race track and lose the races, they were not going to be allowed to have their horses exercise on the track and to have to find new homes for them. That was one of those moments where an MLA has to decide what they are going to do - do you sit back and just let things unfold? Do you race out of the gate and say, excuse me but this is not going

to happen on my watch and I'm going to do everything I can to fight this? In fact, that's what I chose to do.

I said that this is not fair to these people, many of whom have put their life blood and their life earnings into this industry, and a lot of these people who are in their 50s or 60s, they don't have pensions, they don't have anything else, they've spent their lives doing this and training horses and putting all of their savings into it and what are they going to do now? All of those drivers and the trainers, and I'll tell you, there are many new young trainers and many new young drivers who are coming up, and it seemed to me like it was just an unfair thing to happen.

When I came out of the woodwork and said we're not going to let this happen, we're going to try to stop it no matter what, people rallied and rallied around the horse owners, around the horse association, and we started having emergency meetings after emergency meetings to say what do we need to do to be able to save this.

Not only would it have affected adversely my constituency, but it would have adversely affected the ridings where there are other horse tracks around the province and around the Atlantic Provinces, because in P.E.I. this is also a very, very important sport. In Prince Edward Island, for instance, pretty well everybody has a horse and a lot of the farmers are involved in harness racing, which is why the Gold Cup and Saucer Race does so well every year.

At this point in time it was very important for me to just find a way to save it long enough so that the business people of the community could come forward and put their own money into trying to find a way to go forward and make this a viable business because, as has been stated, back in the 50s and 60s it was a popular sport. Many people used to come to the racetracks and spend time and money socializing.

Unfortunately, times have changed and now there are many other ways people can spend their money gambling - some people don't leave their bedrooms or their homes, they are just online, gambling, and spending their money online gambling which is rather sad. The problem with gambling is that if you're an addict of any kind of gambling it's not whether you win or lose, it's the anticipation that is what sets you off. So what they say is a gambling addict can't even spend one quarter. It's a like a drink for an alcoholic. As an alcoholic who has been sober for 18 years, I can't have a drink - I can't take one drink because I know that could set off a chain reaction to make me start behaving the way I used to behave when I was drinking, which is you want another and another and another.

Now, with gambling, it's the same thing with money. You put a quarter, for instance, in a machine and it's the anticipation of waiting to see whether you're going to get the big payoff or not that triggers the gambling addict. That's why you see many people sitting at a machine putting quarter after quarter after quarter into it, because they just keep

needing that feeling of that anticipation, which is a chemical reaction and sets off the neurons in their body to want more.

With horse racing it's different because you take time. It takes time between the races, you go, you talk to people, you watch the horses, you go oh, which one am I going to choose this time, and it's only a dollar or two dollars for a bet - and you don't even have to bet if you don't want to. You can eat, there's beautiful food there where people can sit and eat and watch the horses and converse. But even if you do spend a dollar or two dollars or a few, it's not that much and it's a really enjoyable time, so I would like to see this particular sport continue in Nova Scotia and in the Maritimes, because I think that it's something that is good for our rural districts and it's something that's good for the country people and for the farmers who are very well versed in it and who, as I said, provide the food and other things for the horses.

I do commend the Minister of Agriculture for coming forward with this bill and I really look forward to working with him, as we have been working very well together with the racetrack in Truro and the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition. With that, I thank the member and I'll take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the Government House Leader it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minister, I certainly want to thank our colleagues in the House for their kind comments regarding Bill No. 22 and the importance of harness racing to the economy of Nova Scotia and the communities where this is a very popular profession.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we close debate on third reading of Bill No. 22.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 22. 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. 25.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 25 be now read for a third time.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to the Housing Act and Housing Nova Scotia Act today, Bill No. 25. I just wanted to say that when the NDP was in government, we started an affordable housing strategy because we saw the need here in Nova Scotia for more affordable housing for more Nova Scotians.

When we first started talking about it and going into communities like mine in Truro-Bible Hill, talking about the fact that we wanted to try to establish more affordable housing for people, in the beginning there seemed to be a little confusion with the public because many people seemed to equate affordable housing with people who are living on welfare. They would say, we don't want more of these people living on welfare in our neighbourhoods.

What we had to explain was that this is about all people. It doesn't matter what stratum you are in. Many, many people, whether they are on social assistance or not, are having terrible trouble affording rents and even mortgages. For instance, as an MLA in Truro, I oftentimes have many constituents come in who, once you add up the bills they have to pay monthly, at the end of the day they've got about \$85 or \$100 to live on. Many of these people have medical expenses and mental health expenses and they say they can't afford their medicine, they can't afford to see a psychologist; they can't afford a lot of things. If these people are parents and many single parents and many grandparents who are looking after children, they can't afford sports equipment, they can't afford all the newfangled gadgets that kids want today, and they find it extremely difficult.

As we said at the time when we worked on the affordable housing strategy, if you don't have a home and you are couch-surfing and you are going from place to place, which many people are, how can you expect to be successful in your life? How can you expect to be successful in school? A lot of them are students, as well, who have just graduated and they're really struggling.

Affordable housing is one of the main tenets that we need to focus on if we're going to try to make life better for Nova Scotians. When you look at the statistics and see that approximately 90 per cent of Nova Scotians live making around \$27,000 a year or under, that's a scary statistic. I believe that if we put more money into safe, affordable housing,

then it will give more people a better chance and their children will have a better chance in their early years at life.

I'm glad to see the government going forward with this. In fact, Truro was one of the places that established one of the very first pilot projects and it's going very well. People now understand, yes, it's for everybody and it's on a sliding scale of what they can afford. That particular project on Alice Street in Truro, I'm really pleased that we were able to do it and I thank the government for moving forward with this important initiative. With that, I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and Minister of Community Services made a significant announcement earlier this week that will help hundreds of low-income individuals and families find affordable homes. Through Housing Nova Scotia, this government will be investing \$52 million to increase access to affordable housing. Housing Nova Scotia helps seniors stay in their homes longer and helps low- and modest-income families find safe and appropriate housing they can afford.

Bill No. 25 and its proposed amendments are an important step in allowing this government agency to move forward on the Housing Strategy launched last year. Under this new legislation, the CEO will report directly to the Minister of Community Services in order to keep a strong link that focuses on client outcomes. The legislation also provides the CEO with the proper legislative authority and accountability to help Housing Nova Scotia deliver on its mandate.

Few things are more important than ensuring Nova Scotians have access to a safe, suitable and affordable place to call home. Our homes and the communities they are part of shape almost every aspect of our lives, be it education, health or security. We all know that a key way to measure and define the quality of our lives is through our homes. The need for a home is universal and it is one of the key contributors to the overall health of people and society. Home is where we build our lives. It is where we grow up, where we raise our children, gather as families, create happy memories and plan for the future. When we have a bad day or life gets us down, home is where we turn to find comfort and refuge.

Yet too many Nova Scotians do not have access to the protection and opportunity that a home provides. Homelessness and a lack of affordable housing can push our neighbours into the margins, keeping them from achieving their full potential and depriving society of their contributions. We need to change this and create a Nova Scotia where every citizen can realize their full potential and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

This government is committed to that goal. Housing Nova Scotia is a new organization designed to meet the reality and challenges facing Nova Scotians throughout

this province. Kevin Malloy was appointed CEO of the new organization last year and was responsible for initiating the implementation for the strategy.

The CEO of Housing Nova Scotia and his team have been busy over the past year. Many exciting new initiatives are underway, such as housing developments in Halifax, Windsor, Cole Harbour and Truro. There are now more affordable housing options for owners and renters. In fact, the announcement made by the Premier and the Minister of Community Services on Tuesday will help move hundreds of individuals and families who are currently on wait-lists into safe, affordable housing within weeks.

Last summer, the Minister of Community Services appointed the first advisory committee for Housing Nova Scotia, which allows for a new, more participatory and collaborative relationship with tenants, community and partners. Formalizing Housing Nova Scotia's CEO position is a very important step in establishing Housing Nova Scotia as a dynamic and inclusive organization.

Everyone deserves to call a place home. Housing Nova Scotia, with its new Housing Strategy, is making that happen. I speak for both myself, my colleagues and for our community partners when I say I am excited about the progress of the Housing Strategy but recognize there is still much more to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand for a moment and speak to this bill, and more specifically to speak to my constituency and the housing-problem issues that we tend to have. I know that many members of this House have the same kind of concerns and I hope that this bill, and through the new housing department, will be able to address some of them.

The biggest concern that I get, of course, is the quality of the housing that we do have, whether I am in Clarks Harbour, in Barrington, or whether I'm in the Pubincos. They need a lot of work, Mr. Speaker. The houses have windows that are blown out of them, they have flooring problems and they have mold problems. The issues we do have just go on and on so I am hoping that the dollars that are available, the dollars that were left over from the federal government grant, that they will be invested in projects like that, not just huge brand new things here and there but to actually address the things that we have been asking for for a number of years, which are some renovations, some new windows, some new flooring, some new bathrooms, things that make the housing that we have in our areas habitable. In some of the cases we have units that are inhabitable at this point because of long-term neglect.

The other thing that I hope that this creates, if we remember what housing was, if we go back to the early 90s, housing was the responsibility of the municipality. Each municipality did things a little bit differently with a bit of input from the department, but it

would probably be very little. Each district tends to be a little bit different. Left over from those times is that if you live in one district, in my case Argyle, and you wanted to go where the housing stock was, which is Pubnico or Barrington, you actually had to move to one of those areas, live in them for six months to a year, in an apartment or whatever that you probably couldn't afford anyway, before you would even be eligible to move into our housing stock.

Mr. Speaker, that still happens in the Barrington area. I have had a couple of cases that people have been trying to get into the housing and they live right across the line and would like to move closer to where their family is and they can't unless they spend some time in that area, which I thought was the idea when the upload happened in the 90s to the department. So, the upload happened, they set up these housing authorities - in my case it is the Tri-County Housing Authority - yet these old boundaries still remain. I hope those boundaries change.

The other concern that I hear quite often is the age problem, especially where we have some of the senior facilities that we have. We have seniors apartments, and boy, if a younger person moves into that, for whatever reason - mental health issue, disability issue - if they move into a building that is supposedly a seniors facility, oh my goodness, you would think that everything was falling apart. But we have a responsibility as a province to take care of those individuals too. They have just as much of a right to be in those facilities as anyone else does.

Those are the concerns that I get quite often, as a MLA in a rural area. To the further point, as I have said, you see these buildings and specific places, we know where the houses are, there tend to be a number of houses in that housing stock as well. But a lot of times those are families so of course the families are in them and, Mr. Speaker, they tend to be in them for a long period of time. If they are comfortable in that and things are working out well, of course they are going to stay there through their children's school years. So they are not accessible to a lot of people that might be able to access housing stock in that way.

To finish off, just simply, there is a lot of work to be done. I have known Mr. Malloy since I first came to work for the provincial government back in 1998. He's a phenomenal individual and I know he has a big job to do, but I do support his leadership there and I hope the minister and the department provide him with everything he needs to get the work done because it's time that things get done. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the honourable Minister of Community Services it will be to close debate on Bill No. 25.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I thank all three colleagues in the House for their comments. I am listening. I know there's lots of work to do and I'm committed to that. The CEO position will certainly help move that along.

I look forward to touring Alice Street; I've been reading about that for the past year.

So with that, I move to close debate on Bill No. 25.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 25. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that the 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, that concludes the government's business for today. We will meet again on November 4th, next Tuesday, at which time we will be dealing with Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 6, 26, 49, and 50. As well, depending on the Law Amendments Committee, there might be an opportunity to do some Committee of the Whole on Tuesday as well, and possibly some Address in Reply.

Mr. Speaker, the hours on Tuesday, November 4th, will be from 1:00 p.m. until 11:59 p.m. I would so move that the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise, to meet again on Tuesday, November 4th, between 1:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until Tuesday, November 4th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 12:08 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 504**

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (The Premier)

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

Whereas Melita Mary Ann Tobias passed away peacefully on October 13, 2014, at the age of 88; and

Whereas Melita served as the Emergency Measures Officer for Bridgetown, and was the first female Emergency Measures coordinator in the Province of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Melita received several accolades for her expertise in hospitality with Tourism and as Managing Innkeeper of Bread and Roses and Hillsdale House in Annapolis Royal;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize that Melita Mary Ann Tobias worked to make our province and her community a better and safer place to live, and she will be remembered with love by her family, her friends, and all who knew her.

RESOLUTION NO. 505

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (The Premier)

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

Whereas Dr. Andrea Faryniuk and Dr. Rosario Hernandez are doctors at the Cumberland Health Care Centre and volunteered to shave their heads for a fundraising event; and

Whereas the “Mane Event” raised \$18,173 for the Cumberland Cancer Assistance Fund; and

Whereas the Cumberland Cancer Assistance Fund helps people who are financial need to seek cancer treatment in Halifax and Moncton, and 100 per cent of the money raised in this fundraiser will be used to help cancer patients in Cumberland County;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Faryniuk and Dr. Hernandez on their outstanding fundraising efforts and dedication to their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 506

By: Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Chester-St. Margaret's)

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

Whereas anniversaries are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it was once said that a marriage anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance, and tenacity, but the order varies for any given year; and

Whereas on November 16, 2014, Mr. Ivan and Mrs. Rita Langille of St. Margarets Bay, Nova Scotia, will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Langille on this remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 507

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 Cape Breton's St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society, based in Whitney Pier, is marking its 105th Anniversary in 2014; and

Whereas the society played a central role in the establishment of St. Mary's Polish Church, the only Polish church in Atlantic Canada, and has led numerous mutual-aid, charitable, and cultural activities; and

Whereas the society remains very active to this day, contributing to Cape Breton's multicultural mosaic, and recently completed a major renovation of the historically-designated Polish Village Hall in Whitney Pier;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate the St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society on 105 years of dedication to the community and to the cultural fabric of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 508

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation has been awarded the Large Business - Bright Business Award from Efficiency Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this award recognizes best-in-class energy efficient organizations who inspire fellow Nova Scotian companies to practice sustainable business practices; and

Whereas the NSLC was recognized for saving four million kilowatt hours of energy, saving \$480,000 and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by three tonnes;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation and CEO Bret Mitchell, on receiving this award and join me in thanking them for promoting energy efficiency and environmental stewardship.

RESOLUTION NO. 509

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Canadian Council of Insurance Regulators was established in 1914 as a means to harmonize insurance laws across the country; and

Whereas 100 years later the council has developed into a strong forum for insurance regulators across Canada to work together and improve insurance supervision and regulation; and

Whereas Doug Murphy, Superintendent of Insurance at the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, serves as vice-chair of the Canadian Council of Insurance Regulators, giving Nova Scotia a leadership role in the organization;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Canadian Council of Insurance Regulators on their 100th Anniversary and thank Mr. Murphy and others working for our provincial regulator for the important work they do.

RESOLUTION NO. 510

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas 98 Nova Scotians recently earned their Certified Management Accountant designation; and

Whereas these graduates have obtained skills in accounting, management and strategizing that will serve as a solid foundation for great professional careers; and

Whereas they will join 50,000 accredited CMA professionals around the world who continue to make invaluable contributions to their profession and communities;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate these graduates on their hard work and dedication in earning this prestigious designation and join me in wishing each of them continued success in their future careers.

RESOLUTION NO. 511

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation has been awarded the 2014 Mobius Award of Environmental Excellence presented by the province's Resource Recovery Fund Board; and

Whereas this award recognizes achievements from innovative Nova Scotians who have helped make our province a leader in waste reduction; and

Whereas the NSLC was recognized for diverting 95% of solid waste from landfill, for their green procurement policies, and for their strong social and environmental conscience;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation and their CEO, Bret Mitchell, on receiving this award and join me in thanking them for the work they are doing to reduce waste and protect the environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 512

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas 31 Nova Scotians recently earned their Certified General Accountant designation; and

Whereas the skills and knowledge these graduates have obtained will be the foundation for successful professional careers and prepare them to make invaluable contributions to our province; and

Whereas the CGA designation was first granted 100 years ago, when three individuals passed the first CGA examination;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly honour the history of the CGA designation and join me in congratulating all recent CGA graduates on the hard work they have put forth to earn this prestigious accounting designation.

RESOLUTION NO. 513

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas for more than 80 years, credit unions have been an important financial and social part of Nova Scotia's communities; and

Whereas there are more than 200,000 members using the services of the 42 credit unions across Nova Scotia; and

Whereas credit unions are honoured each year on International Credit Union Day and Nova Scotia's credit unions are using the month of October to collect food for local food banks;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly honour the proud history of credit unions in Nova Scotia and acknowledge the good that these organizations contribute to their communities.

RESOLUTION NO. 514

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas Mark MacDonald, a resident of Wedgewood Park and an alumnus of the Dalhousie School of Management co-op program, has built his career in the insurance industry; and

Whereas Mark is committed to mentoring young people and colleagues in insurance and especially claims management and advocacy; and

Whereas he volunteers his time with the Insurance Institute of Nova Scotia and the board of directors for the Chartered Insurance Professionals National Council;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mark on his recent promotion to vice president, regional claims manager for Aon Reed Stenhouse and wish him well in all of his professional endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 515

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas for many years, Nova Scotia's premier editorial cartoonist and proud Wedgewood resident Bruce MacKinnon has delivered to Nova Scotians a steady series of quality cartoons capturing current events relevant to our area; and

Whereas recently Mr. MacKinnon earned international recognition and respect with his second-place prize in the 2014 Niels Bugge Award competition in Denmark, using his imagination and wit to capture this year's theme, "Oceans are in our hands"; and

Whereas this international event brings together the best satirical cartoonists in the world to recognize and honour their exemplary work;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly applaud Bruce MacKinnon on this wonderful achievement and thank him for continuing to light up the *Chronicle Herald* with his vibrant and clever cartoons.

RESOLUTION NO. 516

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas on May 14, 2014, a new Halifax Transit ferry named in honour of a fallen soldier, Christopher Stannix, was unveiled in Halifax after a public naming process; and

Whereas Darrel MacDonald, who served in the same regiment as Mr. Stannix, submitted his name to the city in recognition of his fellow soldier's ultimate sacrifice; and

Whereas the name selection touched the hearts of all Nova Scotians who remember and salute the brave men and women who serve and have served in the Canadian Forces;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank Darrel MacDonald for recognizing the importance of remembering Christopher Stannix and honouring our veterans in this very meaningful way.

RESOLUTION NO. 517

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas each year four Maritime high school students who display outstanding leadership skills inside and outside the classroom are chosen annually to receive the prestigious Currie Scholarship at the University of New Brunswick; and

Whereas Kaley Fitzpatrick, a proud graduate of Halifax West High School in Clayton Park West, immerses herself in community and charity organizations which include contributing to the school's World Involvement Committee, musical production, and yearbook committee; and

Whereas Kaley's outstanding academic and volunteer record has earned her a place at the University of New Brunswick as a distinguished 2014-15 Currie Scholar;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Kaley for earning this scholarship, and wish her the very best of luck as she begins her studies in the Bachelor of Nursing program.

RESOLUTION NO. 518

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Halifax Business Awards were established to recognize those businesses and business people who exemplify the best that our city has to offer; and

Whereas at the 2014 awards Ryan MacIsaac, owner of The Battered Fish - Fish & Chip Company and member of the Canadian delegation at the G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance Summit, earned top honours as the Gold Winner in the Small Business Category; and

Whereas Ryan MacIsaac's well-loved restaurant is deserving of this recognition as it has grown from its inception, through a successful expansion, to six locations throughout our city, including Clayton Park West;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan MacIsaac on winning Gold in the Small Business Category at the Halifax Business Awards, and wish him all the best on his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 519

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury)

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

Whereas each year the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards recognize outstanding individuals from diverse communities who enrich Canada and make it a better place to live; and

Whereas this year Akram Al-Otumi was the only Atlantic-Canadian chosen from over 630 candidates nationwide to receive the honour of making up the Top 25; and

Whereas Akram Al-Otumi, a former international student at Dalhousie, was selected for his incredible entrepreneurial zeal, including his launch of the Azal Student

Agency, an entity dedicated to helping international students acclimate to Canadian society in order to prosper during their studies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Akram Al-Otumi on being distinguished as one of the RBC Top 25 Immigrants, and wish him continued success in his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 520

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Order of Canada distinguishes individuals each year for outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation; and

Whereas on July 1, 2014, Mount Saint Vincent University President Dr. Ramona Lumpkin was appointed to the Order of Canada by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada; and

Whereas Dr. Lumpkin is most deserving of this distinction in recognition of her leadership in post-secondary education and her promotion of community-based learning initiatives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Dr. Ramona Lumpkin for the tremendous work she has done to deserve this honour, and wish her continued success in her work to advance higher education in our province.

RESOLUTION NO. 521

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas this year marks the 25th anniversary of one of the City of Halifax's most well-known and reputable homebuilding firms, Cresco Developments Limited; and

Whereas since 1989, Cresco Developments principals Hossein Mousavi and Taleb Abidali have brought a determined entrepreneurial spirit to our province, building high-quality homes and condominiums for families across Halifax and forging partnerships with overseas investors; and

Whereas a cornerstone of Hossein and Taleb's philosophy is giving back to their community, including advocating for better immigration policies and founding and backing the Al-Rasoul Islamic Society, which serves as a welcoming place for new Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Hossein Mousavi and Mr. Taleb Abidali for their personal success and thank them for their longstanding commitment to Nova Scotia on the 25th anniversary of their wonderful company.

RESOLUTION NO. 522

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Gambia Association serves to educate and empower African children and youth across Gambia; and

Whereas the Halifax West High School World Involvement Committee works tirelessly to extend opportunities to those less fortunate by supporting the Nova Scotia Gambia Association; and

Whereas this year, the World Involvement Committee's efforts, including their semi-annual car wash fundraiser, enabled them to raise over \$500 for an incredibly helpful contribution to the Nova Scotia Gambia Association;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate lead organizer Austin White and the entire World Involvement Committee on the wonderful results of all their hard work and applaud them for the help they have given to youth in Africa who are less fortunate.

RESOLUTION NO. 523

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas on September 2, 2014, a wonderful new playground was unveiled at École Grosvenor Wentworth School; and

Whereas the Playground Improvement co-chairs Amy McEvoy and Colleen Rollings demonstrated endless patience and diligence in their skillful coordination of such an uplifting project for both the school and the surrounding community; and

Whereas Amy McEvoy brought the greater community together to raise an incredible \$50,000 for a playground that would cater to all children of the community, with care and consideration given to ensure the accessibility of the playground to those with physical and sensory disabilities;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly thank Amy McEvoy and all of the exceptional volunteers involved in making this vision a reality for the school and community.

RESOLUTION NO. 524

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas on September 25th, the second annual Archbishop's Dinner was hosted by the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth and Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Mancini at the Westin Nova Scotian; and

Whereas this year Valerie Bobyk was instrumental in the success of the event, giving generously of her time as the event chair as well as serving as a wonderful master of ceremonies; and

Whereas the proceeds from the event will go to programs to help children, and fittingly the dinner's guest speaker, Premier Stephen McNeil, spoke about the importance of families;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Valerie Bobyk and Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Mancini on an extremely successful event and wish them continued success in the future.