



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2014

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HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we get into the agenda, the topic for late debate tonight is:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage the Minister of Internal Services to provide substantive answers to the many questions that have been raised about the FOIPOP process in Nova Scotia.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Pictou East, coming to a channel near you at 5:30 p.m.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a petition on behalf of the member for Eastern Shore:

“We, the undersigned, request that the Department of Natural Resources place a 5 stream garbage/recycling system at Conrad’s beach in order to protect the beach and its surrounding ecosystem.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 114 names, and I have affixed my name to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 51 - Motor Vehicle Act.

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

Bill No. 64 - Limitation of Actions Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Before I read my statement I’d like permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to draw your attention to the east gallery, where we have with us today a very special Grade 9 student, my youngest daughter, Marina. I ask Marina to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY: DAUGHTER - INTRODUCE

HON. LENA DIAB: M. le Président, aujourd'hui je suis ravie d'être une participante in the Take Our Kids to Work Day, and proud to have my daughter, Marina, who is a Grade 9 French immersion student qui ne parle seulement l'anglais, mais aussi le français et libanais.

Marina, I'm so excited to have you join me to explore your interest in a political career path. Marina is the youngest of my four children, and she truly captures some of the best qualities of her three older siblings. She has her sister Stephanie's keen entrepreneurial spirit, her brother Antonios' passion for both the medical sciences and the arts, and her sister Monica's drive for athletic abilities and environmental engineering.

She is my heart and soul, and I believe this is a great opportunity for her and for all the kids who are joining us today to experience a little bit of my life. With her abilities and enthusiasm, politics would be lucky to have her. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind the honourable minister that that was a member's statement, not a statement by a minister.

MS. DIAB: I realized that after I started.

MR. SPEAKER: We'll add this one to the learning curve for our new routine.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY - GRADE 9 PARTICIPANTS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Take Our Kids to Work Day is an annual national event in which Grade 9 students have the opportunity to accompany their parent, guardian, relative, neighbour, or family friend to their workplace for the day. The students have a chance to learn of the many career choices open to them, which skills are required in today's workplace, and the value of staying in school. They also develop a better understanding and appreciation of the important work their parents do every day.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the many businesses across the province that have participated in this very worthy program, which is now celebrating its 20th year. I

would also like to thank the many Grade 9 students who are taking advantage of a very worthwhile opportunity. I hope you have a very enjoyable experience.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MILLER: I would like to draw the attention of members of the House to the east gallery. I have two young ladies with me today. First of all, Erin Houseman, a Grade 9 student at Hants East Rural High, also in French immersion, so I'd like to offer her the warm welcome of the House. (Applause) The second young lady is also my heart, my granddaughter Paige. For anybody who is not a grandparent yet, the best is yet to come; they don't get much better than grandchildren. Please look forward to that. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY - WORK ATTITUDE

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address an undercurrent of our work in this esteemed House. As we sit together, debate, and pass bills, and work to better the prospects for our constituents, we must carry out this work with an attitude of hopefulness and gratitude. It goes without saying that times can be tough in Nova Scotia, across Canada, and the globe. We are given countless opportunities to be consumed by grief and despair, but it is rising above all of this that we can find success.

Nova Scotians are known to be unique, inviting, and determined. These intrinsic traits provide us with the foundation for unfettered growth and prosperity. Throughout the remainder of this sitting I encourage all members to keep their eyes set on the many strategic advantages and strengths we share as a province. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

DUNN, ROBERT - PRISONER OF WAR (WWII)

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, prisoners of war are a product of any war. By the end of World War II hundreds of thousands of soldiers, airmen, and sailors had been held as prisoners of war. My uncle Robert Dunn from Trenton, Pictou County, a member of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, unfortunately became a prisoner of war. He rarely spoke of his combat experiences and only once did he speak to me about his incarceration in a German prisoner of war camp. Information from Europe arrived to his home stating he was lost in action and presumed dead.

Robert resurfaced after the war was over and returned home to the surprise and great enjoyment of his family and friends. Robert is one of the many brave Canadians who we will remember on November 11th. Thank you.

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

GREENFIELD ELEM. SCH.: RURAL BROADBAND - CONCERNS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the students and surrounding areas around Greenfield Elementary School have sent the Liberal Government a letter about their concerns around rural broadband. In their words: The South Shore Regional School Board has tried different ways but nothing has worked.

They feel they are not being given the same equal opportunities as students in other schools across the province. They are hoping the government will come up with a plan to address this issue. I would encourage the government to fix the issue for the community in Queens-Shelburne. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. SOUTH - NSCC & AVIATION INSTIT.

MR. ALLAN ROWE: Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Dartmouth South, Pleasant Street is home to both the NSCC Waterfront Campus and the Aviation Institute at Dartmouth Gate. NSCC Waterfront Campus is renowned for its environmentally friendly facilities, its diverse range of programs, of course, and it serves over 2,500 full-time students. It is situated right on the Halifax Harbour. Not far from there is the Aviation Institute, a place where students apply their training, with all the very latest in technology, to aircraft in the fields of avionics, structures, and mechanics as well.

As many of the members of this House are aware, students at all of our NSCC campuses enjoy small class sizes, specialized programs, and always receive hands-on learning and work placements. It is no secret that many of the NSCC graduates also have a high employability rate.

I would like to mention on behalf of Dartmouth South, we truly value the presence of all the NSCC students, staff, and educators in our community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

WINDSOR FD: FIREFIGHTERS - THANK

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, whether it's an early-morning house fire or a long-weekend car crash, the Windsor Fire Department and its volunteer firefighters are

always at the ready to respond to the emergency. Although the Windsor Fire Department was formed in 1881, the Veterans Association did not begin until 1998 with the understanding that firefighters could only join once they served 16 years.

On October 4, 2014, the Windsor Fire Department handed out 16-year fire service medals to nearly 80 active firefighters, veterans, and family members of deceased firefighters. Of those awards which were handed out, 20 active firefighters received their 16-year medal, 34 active veteran firefighters also received their commemorative medal, and 24 awards were presented posthumously to those who are no longer with us. I would like to take this opportunity to offer a word of thanks to the Windsor Fire Department firefighters for all their hard work, not only during the emergencies they respond to but also for the countless hours spent on training and safety exercises. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ARGYLE EMERGENCY FUND - FUNDRAISER

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on October 2, 2014, the Municipality of Argyle had the opportunity to highlight their heritage and culture at an event held at a fundraiser for the Argyle Emergency Fund, recently created to assist residents in need.

A showcase of food, music and talent sponsored by the municipality offered guests a chance to sample cuisine from local restaurants and businesses, followed by performances by local talent in music, storytelling and more. A promotional video was introduced, entitled *Argyle: A place we are proud to call home*, which provided a glimpse of the municipality through the eyes of residents living there either as newcomers, long-term residents or entrepreneurs.

I want to thank the organizers of this event and encourage them to continue their great work in the Municipality of Argyle.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, today is a dark day for the history of our province. We have seen today the interests of the big tobacco industry being put in front of the interests and wellbeing of Nova Scotians. We all know that study after study have shown the negative effects of tobacco that they have on the health of our population, and especially in more recent years, the introduction of flavoured tobacco. Flavoured tobacco is marketed directly to our youth and to new smokers.

I think we need to ensure as we move forward and bring public policy forward that we don't bow down to the big business of the tobacco industry, but we ensure that the

health and safety of our residents, especially our youth, is the number-one concern we should be worrying about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to rule that member's statement out of order as per our rules that all parties agreed to. A statement should not be used to debate any legislation or resolution currently before the House.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BUDDEN, KAELYN/HOCKEY TEAM - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a young hockey player named Kaelyn Budden. Kaelyn has been playing hockey since she was five. Last season, her AA Peewee team won the provincial championship, with the final game being played at the Spryfield Lions Rink, the rink that Kaelyn first played hockey in. Kaelyn was chosen by Hockey Nova Scotia to represent our province in the Under-15 Female division at the Atlantic Challenge Cup, held in Moncton October 10th to October 13th. Kaelyn and her teammates went undefeated throughout the tournament and claimed gold. As goalie, Kaelyn kept the puck out of the net and had two shut-outs.

I ask the members to join me in congratulating Kaelyn and the Nova Scotia team on their huge success at the Atlantic Challenge Cup. We should all be proud of our young athletes who train so hard to be the best they can be at their sports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

PICTOU WEST WOMEN'S NETWORKING EVENT

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, on October 21st, I was honoured to participate as a panellist at a women's networking event that took place at the Wellness Centre in Pictou West. The evening was organized by Jen Hames Belliveau, Nicole LeBlanc and Heidi Sinclair. The goal was to provide women the opportunity to meet other women and discuss topics under the theme of personal, family and community values. The other panelist included Lisa MacDonald, CAO of the Town of New Glasgow and Rae Gunn, coordinator of Active Pictou County. The moderator for the evening was Stephanie Cooper, co-owner and director of customer experience at BaKED food café in New Glasgow. Participants enjoyed the evening and we all look forward to the next networking event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, rural residents in Queens-Shelburne continue their fight for adequate broadband service. Residents in rural Nova Scotia want improvement to broadband access, and Eastlink has not met all the

government Party's expectations that it delivers broadband services to 100 per cent - I repeat, 100 per cent - coverage of Nova Scotia. Students in Greenfield, North Queens, are a great example of those who are waiting for this service to be used as an educational tool. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction today.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct the members' attention to the east gallery, where we are joined by some staff from Labour and Advanced Education and also some children of staff from Labour and Advanced Education. If these folks would please stand up as I mention their names: from LAE, we have Mahogany O'Keiffe - who is already standing - and we also have Susan Slaunwhite, and with us today are children Luke Davison, Sarah Slaunwhite, Sophie LeBlanc, Emma Cooke, Caleb Kauffman, Alexandra Daly, and Samantha Sampson. I would ask the members to give them a warm welcome from the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CANNING VOL. FD/PORT WILLIAMS VOL. FD - GRATITUDE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, two very recent barn fires in Kings North remind us of the special role that volunteer fire departments have in keeping our communities safe. The Canning Volunteer Fire Department and the Port Williams Fire Department both had primary roles in trying to save these barns. Other fire departments locally also responded, providing assistance or coverage in the excellent mutual aid system in operation in the Valley. All of our volunteers commit thousands of hours to training in emergency response, they respond to every kind of emergency and have a very key role in keeping our communities safe.

I know all members of this House have just such fire departments and will join me in acknowledging our gratitude to our local volunteer fire departments.

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

CDN. FORCES: MEMBERS - REMEMBER/ACKNOWLEDGE

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the government of the important role that youth play in honouring and acknowledging our veterans and current Canadian Forces members. I recently had the privilege of speaking at the Canadian Youth Remembrance Society dinner.

Organizations such as these are important in raising awareness amongst Canadian youth about the contributions that our veterans, and current members of the Canadian Armed Forces, make for Canada - this is especially relevant as we approach November 11th, a day when we collectively pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, and in the wake of the death of two soldiers on Canadian soil.

The actions of our youth like Ceilidh Bond, a cadet from the 1917 Vimy Ridge Cadet Corps in Florence, who has stood guard at the cenotaph in North Sydney to honour a fallen soldier, are a reflection of understanding of the critical role that our Canadian Forces members play in the fabric of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to educate our youth, and indeed all Nova Scotians, on the role that our Canadian Forces members play, by remembering and acknowledging those who choose to serve and protect.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

WAR MEMORIALS (OVERSEAS): SACRIFICES - REMINDER

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the peaceful society we enjoy has been created by the efforts and sacrifices of generations of Canadians who have placed their lives in harm's way in the cause of peace and freedom around the world.

I had the opportunity to visit numerous Canadian memorials and war graves in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany in 2011, including the gravesite of Sergeant John McCrae, author of the poem "In Flanders Fields."

The numerous memorials, too many to mention, were absolutely breathtaking. The Passchendaele Canadian Memorial in Belgium, representing the captured Crest Farm in 1917; the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, a remarkable site representing the Canadian capture of Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917; and in Belgium and France, Canada has 13 battlefield memorials commemorating the service of Canadians and Newfoundland troops in World War I. These memorials are a fitting reminder of the debt we owe those who fought and continue to fight for our freedom.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

NEW GERMANY & PARKVIEW SCHOOLS - SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I stand here, not to be outdone by Antigonish - the sport of soccer has seen quite a boom in Lunenburg County recently. It has always been a strong sport in our region, but with the opening of an indoor soccer complex several years ago it has really taken off, and the results are there to prove it.

This past weekend three Lunenburg County schools were awarded provincial championships: the Parkview Panther Boys won the Division 1 final by defeating Citadel High by a thrilling 2-1 score; the New Germany Saints Boys team won the Division 3 title with a 2-0 victory of their rival Bridgetown; and finally the New Germany Saints Girls team defeated Dalbrae by a score of 3-1 to be named Division 3 Champions.

I would like to congratulate these teams, first for their victories but most of all for their hard work and dedication.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

NATL. DOWN SYNDROME WK.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this week is National Down Syndrome Awareness Week, a week when we focus on the unique strengths and abilities of people with Down syndrome. By doing so we work to ensure opportunities for all Canadians with Down Syndrome, it is a time for us to demonstrate that our province is a place where we embrace diversity and where every person is valued.

Mr. Speaker, I have a new cousin. This year we welcomed Sadie Leahy into our family, and we look forward to the joy that she will bring to her family and to the world around her.

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

ANL. COW BAY MARKET (3RD)

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a few words today about the 3rd Annual Cow Bay Market, which took place on Sunday, October 26th, at the Cow Bay Hall. A small venue was full to the doors with happy vendors and buyers. The many local artists, farmers, and artisans offered an exciting variety of edibles and creations. Being able to buy local from my own community members is a great feeling. I would like to thank the organizers for bringing this great event to the community. I spent a lot of money there, and I look forward to the next one. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

PICTOU WEST FOOD BANK

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the Pictou West Food Bank serves many people throughout Pictou West. It is unfortunate that there remains a great need for this organization in my constituency. I fear that with the cold months just coming on, the need for the services of the food bank will grow as constituents struggle to heat their homes, pay bills, and buy groceries.

I would like to draw members' attention to a recent donation made to the Pictou West Food Bank. A donation of \$2,000 was given to the food bank from the New Caledonian Masonic Lodge No. 11. I thank the Masons for their generous donation, as I know it is very much needed.

I also want to thank all those who volunteer at the Pictou West Food Bank. By giving their time, they are making a positive difference in many lives. Thank you.

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

N.S. HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN - PREM.'S APOLOGY

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, as the member responsible for the Upper Hammonds Plains and Lucasville communities, I wanted to take a moment to recognize the public apology that was made by the Premier to the residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. I do so very humbly. I made a point to engage residents within my community, and through them, made a contact who actually lived in the home. She kind of shared a little bit about her time there. I won't go into too many details about that - I think we've been through a little bit of that - but she spoke very positively about the Premier's commitment to recognizing what happened in that home and apologizing to the residents and their families. I wanted to just say thank you to the Premier, and thank you to this government for enabling the healing process.

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

**SHELburne BASIN VENTURE SEABED SURVEY:
SHELL CAN. - CONGRATS.**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to congratulate Shell Canada on the completion of their Shelburne Basin Venture Seabed Survey earlier this week. This is one step that will prepare Shell to proceed with its exploratory drilling program. Shell has shown a strong commitment to maximizing its use of our local supply chain to the energy industry, and I'm confident this will continue. The offshore industry has been an important economic driver for this province. We hope that, with Shell's investment, this will continue.

I think I can speak for all Nova Scotians when I thank Shell Canada for their investment in the province and wish them continued success. Thank you. I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

SEE CHANGE PROG. - GRANT

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, we know that it's impossible to make positive change in our communities if we are afraid to talk about the tough issues, like suicide, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and mental illness. This government is talking about the tough issues, and I was proud to stand beside our Health and Wellness Minister on Monday in Ross Creek as he announced a grant of \$100,000 to help young people in our schools rise above the stigma of discussing mental health issues that affect us all.

The See Change program is a unique partnership that gathers together people from the Annapolis Valley School Board, the Annapolis Valley Health Board, the Mental Health Commission of Canada, Laing House, and Two Planks and a Passion Theatre Company in Kings County to bring a theatre-based intervention program to Grade 8 students. This program will strengthen communities in 12 Annapolis schools in 2016. Congratulations to all the partners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

SENIORS - CARE AT HOME

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, solutions to meeting the needs of seniors and all Nova Scotians today and in the future does not rest in convenient thinking. It rests in collective creativity. In my own constituency of Pictou East, I've seen a number of families going through turmoil because such creativity is not being used by the current government. Many families have accessed all the government support that can be provided but they can't access funds to keep a parent at home and they are struggling with the required funding to be able to pay for private care.

Families are often now finding themselves in the position of either having to sell the family home in which their parent lives or surrender their parent to Adult Protection in order for them to receive the care they need. If they do this, it will cost the government thousands of dollars to look after their parent.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very real issue in our communities and I'm hoping that the government is looking for ways to find solutions. Thank you.

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

WINDSOR JCT. COMMUN. CTR.

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about a very important place in my community, the Windsor Junction Community Centre, established in 1947 has grown into two ballfields, a waterfront with lifeguards, a daycare camp and a swim team program. Many dedicated community volunteers, suppliers and government

representatives were able to work together to complete a significant expansion. This expansion allows the centre to accommodate the growing residents and allows the centre to become a year-round facility.

On behalf of all the members of the House of Assembly, I congratulate the Windsor Junction Community Centre on the reopening of its expanded facilities and programs. Thank you.

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

UNSM ANL. CONF. (116TH)

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and the 54 local governments that make up their membership. Today this association is holding its 116th Annual Conference at the Westin Hotel in Halifax with over 300 elected people in attendance.

This conference sees an orderly and relevant agenda dealt with over a three-day period and provides an excellent opportunity for open debate about the issues that affect our communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Municipal government is the very backbone of our democracy and I wish to recognize the terrific job these elected people do in their communities and the great work of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and what it does in focusing the interests of our citizens on the business of government.

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

KRISTALLNACHT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, next week is the somber anniversary of the Night of the Broken Glass, or Kristallnacht, the event that started the Holocaust. On the night of November 9, 1938, more than 7,000 Jewish-owned shops in Germany and Austria had their windows smashed and contents destroyed. Hundreds of synagogues were systematically burned and sacred items were destroyed. At least 91 Jewish people were killed and 30,000 more were arrested. Most were sent to concentration camps.

Within a week the Nazis had circulated a letter declaring Jewish businesses could not be reopened unless they were managed by non-Jews. On November 15th Jewish children were barred from attending school.

Mr. Speaker, Kristallnacht is a sad reminder of man's inhumanity to man. Marking this day ensures that such an event can never happen again. Thank you.

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to do an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. CASEY: In the gallery opposite, Mr. Speaker, I'd like members to draw their attention to seven of those Grade 9 students who did participate in the Take Our Kids to Work Day. These are young Grade 9 students who have joined their parents to learn a little bit about what their parents do every day.

If I could ask the Grade 9 students if you would stand as you are introduced and then the House will give you a warm welcome: Sam Fahie, Taylor Hart, Kiera Lucas, A.J. Pardy, Kiara Simmons, Mia Couzens and Zynikwa Downey. I may have mispronounced that but you're welcome anyway.

I would like the members of the House to give these Grade 9 kids, the future of our province, a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

**WESTMOUNT ELEM. SCH. STUDENTS
- "LEST WE FORGET" STREET SIGNS**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the students at Westmount Elementary School in the riding of Halifax Chebucto and I thank the member for allowing me to do so. All the streets in the Westmount subdivision, the former Halifax Municipal Airport site, are named after local airmen and soldiers who fought and lost their lives in the Second World War. Thanks to the students and teachers at Westmount Elementary, the history of these men and their significance to this neighborhood have received a special honour on designated street signs.

It was with the students' leadership that the new cultural district signs with the words "Lest We Forget" and the universally recognized poppy were placed on white and red street signs directly above the current street signs. Some of the fallen servicemen recognized include: Lieutenant Edward Francis Arab, Lieutenant George Wharton Dauphinee, Corporal Ralph William Devlin, Gunner Lloyd Fox, Captain Peter Innes Lowe, and Flying Officer Douglas A. Smith.

Let us commemorate all of the participants in this project as well as the fallen soldiers, lest we forget.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**GUYSBOROUGH-EAST. SHORE-TRACADIE MLA:
UNSM CONF. - RECOGNITION**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I just rise in my place to follow up on my colleague, the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie's comments about the importance of our municipal partners, but I would also like draw to the attention of the members of the House and the members of the public that that member, the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie was actually recognized at today's UNSM meetings for a long and distinguished 25-year service to municipal politics. (Interruption) Not 50, 25, perhaps it will be 50 years of public service by the time he is done with the Legislature. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MAJALAHTI, LAURI: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of laryngitis today so I beg the members' indulgence. I wish to speak today about the passing of a good neighbor. If you met Lauri Majalahti, better known as Maj to his friends, if you met him in crowd, you probably wouldn't have noticed him. He was quiet, even shy, but at his funeral this past week, neighbors and friends flocked to remember this lovely man who served in the Royal Canadian Navy for 27 years.

Maj was the kind of neighbor who always pitched in when someone else needed help. If you'd had an operation and your husband was away and it snowed, he'd blow out your driveway. If you had a big project or you were running in an election, he'd be there to help out. In fact, Maj was a member of what we like to term the world's oldest sign crew, a group of very fit, stand-up guys, almost all with military backgrounds, the average age of which was about 80. Sadly age has withered their ranks.

Father Pat Cogsgrove described Maj as the wind beneath the wings of his wife, Joan. I know she and his friends and family will miss this lovely, quiet, stalwart man. Thank you.

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

TOWNSEND, BROCK/HARTLEN, T.J. - CUBAN BASEBALL TOUR

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about two young boys in Halifax Atlantic that have been chosen to play for Team Canada at the Cuba Goodwill Baseball Tour next February. Brock Townsend and J.T. Hartlen both played

baseball at the highest level possible for their age group and were scouted to represent Canada in Cuba this coming winter.

The Cuba Goodwill Tour was started two years ago by Coach Dennis Woodworth. The tour is about much more than baseball, it's also about exposing our children to a different culture and building goodwill between two countries. The Canadians collect baseball equipment throughout the years and donate it to the Cuban team. While in Cuba, the team also has a chance to visit local schools and tour Havana.

I wish J.T. and Brock the best of luck in Cuba and I'm so proud that they were chosen to represent Canada at this tournament. I'm sure they will be great ambassadors for not only my constituency, not only this province, but this country. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

INTL. CONF. ON OCEAN ENERGY - DIGBY REPRESENTATION

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the International Conference on Ocean Energy began here in Halifax. This is the first time the conference has been hosted in North America and it is significant that we are seeing it here in Nova Scotia. I am excited to note that there is a delegation at the conference from the Clare-Digby area including Fundy Tidal Inc., representatives from the Municipality of Digby, Town of Digby and Municipality of Clare.

I have stated many times in this House that renewable resources and in particular our tidal energy development potential is a major opportunity that we must seize. Keeping the research, development, and maintenance of this energy source within the Province of Nova Scotia is imperative. I feel strongly that the Digby area has shown leadership and vision and continues to place itself in a good position to capture this future opportunity.

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

EECD: 4-h PROG. - PERSONAL DEV. CREDIT

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, 4-H clubs provide youth with technical skills, social skills, sportsmanship, leadership, and life skills essential for their success in agriculture, business, government, and community careers. For generations, youth from Victoria-The Lakes have been having fun enjoying a wide variety of 4-H activities and events.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my thanks to the numerous volunteer leaders who give their time, talents, and enthusiasm as they provide young people with 4-H experience. I would also like to congratulate and encourage all the 4-H members to

continue to learn and have fun through the 4-H program. These 4-Hers are our aspiring businesspeople, entrepreneurs, tradespeople, and outstanding citizens.

In recognition of the dedication, leadership, and skill development that 4-H members achieve, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be granting eligible 4-Hers a personal development credit for Grade 10 again this year. I would encourage our government to continue to support 4-H programs across the province through initiatives such as this. Thank you.

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

FRIEND: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. IAN RANKIN: It's with sadness that I rise to recognize the passing of a good family friend. One of my best friends' fathers passed tragically with his second battle with cancer just recently. He was a good family man, a husband, a father, and a grandfather. He received a certificate from the RCMP for assistance at one time during a standoff in Yarmouth County. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to recognize the passing of a good man. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. DIAB: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With us in the east gallery are two young men who are Grade 9 students, accompanying their father and their uncle, Glenn Anderson, who is a senior director in legal services at Justice. We have with us - and I ask you to please stand - Christopher Anderson and Cameron Anderson. Can they please receive the warm welcome of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

ALFRED, SANDY - SWEET PEA GROCERY GETTERS

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak for a moment about Sandy Alfred from Belnan in my constituency of Hants East. When Sandy noticed that a senior friend of hers was having troubles shopping for her groceries due to mobility issues, an idea for a business came to mind. She liked to shop for groceries, she liked driving people around, and she likes people, so she started Sweet Pea Grocery Getters.

Customers call Sandy with a detailed list, and she shops at their store of choice, delivers the order to them, and then is reimbursed for the purchase plus a small fee that increases with the size of the order. This is a wonderful service that is mainly used by seniors, but anyone is welcome to use it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish Ms. Alfred every success in her new endeavour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

FEMALE VOL. FIREFIGHTERS

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to tell you that it is no secret that volunteer firefighters are in short supply and in high demand. Quite simply, it is not a growing demographic, but there is a demographic that is growing - female firefighters.

Early last week 34 female firefighters attended the training session in River Port. It was the second annual training session. Training was provided in part by professional firefighters out of Halifax. All told, there are about 100 female volunteer firefighters in Lunenburg and Queens Counties, and it is a number that is on the rise. While these women train regularly with their male counterparts, they admit to having a certain comfort level when they train together.

Firefighters, whether male or female, are a vital part of our communities. I would encourage anyone - and some of you up there, if you find out politics is not for you today - who is interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer firefighter to contact their local department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I had one of those delightful mornings where I got to chat with 17 Grade 9 students who came to the Department of Health and Wellness. In fact, it reminded me of my former Grade 9 classes that I used to have in front of me. I don't have all their names, but they're up here in the west gallery, so if they could stand. They're bright, bright minds, I can guarantee you that, but if they could stand and get the warm welcome of the House, they could have that happen.

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

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I also beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. JESSOME: I'll ask the members to direct their attention to the east gallery, and accompanied by Marla MacInnis from CNS, we have Anna McNeil who is actually a young girl from my riding. I'm going to ask that everybody say hello with their hands, and give her a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HFX. ARMDALE REMEMBRANCE DAY MARCH

HON. LENA DIAB: A member's statement, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I rise today to say a few words in commemoration of Remembrance Day. Every year on November 11th the veterans in our province gather to march in honour and solidarity with their predecessors who valiantly sacrificed their lives in the name of duty for country.

These marches culminate in ceremonies at cenotaphs and entail moments of silence, moments of prayer, and moments of respect, with the laying of wreaths. Veterans are not alone on this day, they have community support - Scouts, Cadets, widows, politicians, school bands, and many others.

This year I am proud to say that I will be marching in the parade for veterans closest to Halifax Armdale, commencing on Herring Cove Road and proceeding to the Spryfield Legion. All Canadians are invited to show their respect on this day. Anyone can lay a wreath at the local cenotaph in memory of a loved one, or out of respect for all veterans, and a good way to support your local Legion is to order a wreath through them.

We will never forget; we will forever honour. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MARTIN, RT. HON. PAUL: DAL. - HON. DEGREE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Right Honourable Paul Martin on his Honorary Doctorate of Laws which he received from Dalhousie University this Fall. As Canada's 21st Prime Minister, Paul Martin led the government to work with provinces, territories and Aboriginal leaders to sign the Kelowna Accord.

After retiring from politics he founded the Martin Aboriginal Initiative which focuses on education and business opportunities for Aboriginal people. His government also signed agreements to create a national child care program and introduced the Civil Marriage Act, which redefined marriage to include same gender couples.

As Finance Minister, Mr. Martin improved Canada's financial stability and eliminated the deficit. Today Paul Martin sits on the Advisory Council of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa, chairs the British-Norwegian-Canadian poverty alleviation and

sustainable development fund, is a commissioner for the Global Ocean Commission, and sits on the Advisory Board for the Incentives for Global Health - a worthy recipient, Mr. Speaker, of an honorary degree. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll beg leave to do an introduction while we have a second.

While we're introducing students, we have a young lady, a Grade 9 student in the Speaker's Gallery, Annabelle Bourzeix who is job shadowing the Clerks today. Annabelle, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

If there are no more members' statements or introductions, we'll recess until 2:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

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

[1:48 p.m. The House recessed.]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: FLAVOURED TOBACCO - GOV'T. STANCE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I just want to say to the Deputy Premier, would she please pass on the condolences of those of us on this side of the House to the Premier and his family today. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, less than two weeks ago, the government issued a press release stating, "We've worked hard to shift from a smoking culture toward a smoke-free culture in Nova Scotia. We do not want to lose ground." Well, it turns out they didn't work that hard at all. The fact is half of our high school students who smoked in the last 30 days chose flavoured tobacco. For those who are wondering what flavoured tobacco is, I will just describe, "They look like Fruit Roll-ups, they smell like bubble gum, but they can kill like tobacco."

I thought we agreed this was bad for our province. I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier, what changed? Why is the government now going to allow flavoured tobacco?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I did want to just thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for his condolences to the McNeil family. In answer to the question, I would like to ask the Health and Wellness Minister to answer that question.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for the question. We had a bill that we brought in that was the most progressive in the country. We heard a lot at the Law Amendments Committee that asked us to take a look at some aspects of the bill, and over the next number of weeks and months, we'll do some further consulting. But do you know what the bill does? It puts us in the strongest position to eliminate e-cigarettes from public places and from selling e-cigarettes and e-juice to the youth of our province.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, I'm sorry, but that is not good enough, Mr. Speaker. The only winner today is Big Tobacco. This government is not listening to the parents and the students of Nova Scotia. You know who the presenters were that wanted them to allow flavoured tobacco who came to this House to make that point? Rothmans, Imperial Tobacco, JTI - the largest tobacco pushers in the country.

They had a choice. They could listen to them, or they could listen to the parents and students who do not want flavoured tobacco, which, by the way, is described as, "Watermelon-flavoured cigarillos, maple syrup cigars that smell like warm pancakes, skinny minty-flavoured cigarettes that look like lipstick." That's what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier, why did the government cave in to Big Tobacco instead of protecting the young people of Nova Scotia?

MR. GLAVINE: We have not, indeed, caved to Big Tobacco. During the consulting process, there's one thing you can be sure of, Mr. Speaker - it's that I won't be consulting with Big Tobacco. We know that this is a serious issue that is facing the youth of our province, and we are committed to making sure that the very cigarettes and cigarillos that the member has identified - even though we are going to consult - that's the area that we are targeting and we want to keep our youth free from having access to those.

MR. BAILLIE: If we have learned anything in the first year of the Liberal Government, or if they've learned anything, it's that actions speak louder than words. Those are warm, fuzzy words, Mr. Speaker, but by their actions today, the government's going to allow flavoured tobacco, and the only ones that benefit are the big tobacco companies that we just talked about. He doesn't need to consult with them; he already gave them their way. What does he have to say to the parents of young Nova Scotians who were counting on this bill and counting on them to protect their children?

MR. GLAVINE: There are, in fact, areas now that we will have an opportunity to take a look at. The Opposition brought forth making no exemption for menthol. The Cancer Society brought forward papers that are flavoured as well. We have one of those situations in our province that we are also going to take a look at, and that is, you can't buy a tobacco product until you're 19 years of age, but there's nothing which prohibits a 16-, 17-, or 18-year-old from actually smoking. We're going to take a look at that, Mr. Speaker.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: FLAVOURED TOBACCO - SALES LOOPHOLE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I too, on behalf of the NDP caucus, would like to extend condolences to our Premier on the loss of his brother.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier. In 2010, Canada became the first country in the world to take action on flavoured tobacco products, banning the use of additives that contributed to making cigarettes and cigars more appealing to young people. Unfortunately, and Canadians and Nova Scotians would soon learn, Big Tobacco are masters when it comes to finding loopholes that keep young people addicted to their products, the next generation of people in our health care system.

So my question to the Acting Premier is, this week the Liberal Government had a chance to close the loophole that allowed flavoured tobacco to be sold in Nova Scotia, why did it back down?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I thank the member for that, especially as a former Health and Wellness Minister she knows my views on smoking. One of the areas that we're going to see here very, very quickly is that, in fact, we all know that the federal government got snookered by Big Tobacco, because as they outlawed cigarillos and flavoured tobacco for less than 1.4 grams the tobacco industry simply made their product larger and went above the 1.4.

The federal government is about to close that loophole, we'll have consistency across the country, and in fact are going to six grams which means that only cigars will be allowed on the market.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, Nova Scotians just got snookered by their own provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to flavoured tobacco, the research is in. We know the product is targeted at youth, we know it leads to nicotine addiction, we know this product needs to be banned, and the minister himself in December 2013 told Global News, "... any way that we can keep our youth away from smoking flavoured cigarettes, we will certainly move in that direction."

So my question for the Acting Premier is, why is this Liberal Government no longer doing anything it can to keep youth from smoking flavoured tobacco?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we know that our youth cannot purchase any tobacco if they are under 19 years of age, we've now closed the loophole with the e-cigarette because they could go into a shop and purchase the e-cigarette and the e-juice. We have closed that loophole and, again, it's another way of cutting down that area in which our youth can start to be addicted to nicotine.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government in Ontario has banned flavoured tobacco, the Province of Alberta has banned flavoured tobacco, Doctors Nova Scotia wants a ban on flavoured tobacco, the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Cancer Society wants a ban on flavoured tobacco, community health boards from one end of this province to the other want a ban on flavoured tobacco, so my question to the minister is, why does this government think it needs more time to consult with Nova Scotians before doing the right thing and banning flavoured tobacco?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, you know I think the member opposite, the former Minister of Health and Wellness, had that opportunity and she let it slip from her fingers. (Applause)

What the (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite knows is that nothing was going to change in our province until May 31st. We know that we can make changes prior to that, and over the next weeks and months we'll consider what the Opposition brought forward, and that is not making any exemption for menthol. All of that will be considered and brought forward.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: FLAVOURED TOBACCO SALES - TAX REVENUE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier. Up until today the government was going to restrict flavoured tobacco products in the hope it would prevent new Nova Scotians, young Nova Scotians, from taking up smoking. We know half of them start with flavoured tobacco. Well, the Deputy Premier is also the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and now the sales will go on for at least six months.

I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier, how much more tax revenue is the government going to make while the current rules stay in place?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to answer the honourable member's question. The fact is that nothing would have changed until May 31st of this year at the best, and that doesn't affect this year's budget in any way.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if the government is going to flip-flop on an issue as important as this and say it's not about the budget, that's fine, but it still leaves the big question open. After all the work and all the agreement we thought we had, that flavoured tobacco gets young people addicted and it's wrong and should be banned - if not for that reason, I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier, does she personally agree with going on with selling flavoured tobacco products?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know that as of today's piece of legislation, we will have the most advanced legislation around the e-cigarette, which has become another introductory method of getting our youth addicted to nicotine. We know that through the consulting process this whole area of flavours will be addressed, and we'll see in a very short order that we'll have, again, the strongest legislation in the country.

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

ERDT - MAINE GOV.: FERRY DOCUMENTS - TABLE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, last night the Governor of Maine, Governor LePage, was re-elected. Hopefully that is good news for the Nova Scotians who want to see a successful run of the Yarmouth ferry. The government has a commitment from Governor LePage to make a contribution for Maine to do its part for the Yarmouth ferry.

So I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier, will she provide to this House before the end of this session all of the written details, the documents and correspondence from Maine to Nova Scotia that outline exactly what commitment we can expect the government to collect on with regard to the Yarmouth ferry?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to answer that question.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to extend our well wishes to Governor LePage on his successful re-election last night. We have had a number of discussions with Governor LePage. In fact, the last chance that I had to speak with him was over the telephone, so unfortunately, communications such as that, I'm not quite sure how the Leader would want us to table those. Instead of tabling documents, we've gone out and told Nova Scotians exactly what those discussions were and what those commitments were. They don't need a FOIPOP. We've already shared it with Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Governor LePage has won re-election, and now it is time for the Government of Nova Scotia to collect on whatever the arrangement is. People in Nova Scotia, the taxpayers have put so much into that ferry run, and they expect the Government of Nova Scotia to hold the Governor of Maine accountable for making sure that Maine does its part. The Premier has just confirmed that what he has is a phone call and nothing else. That's fine. I hope he can collect on it. It has only been a day but it's time for the Government of Nova Scotia to hold the Government of Maine accountable for doing their part.

My question is, when will the government be meeting with the Governor of Maine to make sure Maine comes through as promised?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that we have been doing everything to work with our partners to try to ensure a successful ferry service, from our discussions with Governor LePage to the meeting that is coming up with the owners of the vessel, along with our other partners.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Nova Scotia are well aware of the challenges that we face but they've also seen the economic benefits that have come to this province with the restoration of the ferry service.

Mr. Speaker, while we work through these challenges, it now becomes apparent that one of the biggest challenges we face in the success of the Yarmouth ferry for Nova Scotians is the constant criticism from the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and his caucus.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: FLAVOURED TOBACCO SALES - RISKS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. We've heard from the Minister of Health and Wellness directly about the risk that flavoured tobacco poses to Nova Scotia youth. He said, "Preventing young Nova Scotians from getting addicted to cigarettes is a priority." I'll table that for the House.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is simple, why is the minister allowing big tobacco interests to take priority over the health of young Nova Scotians?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We are taking those steps around e-cigarettes and not having our youth in Nova Scotia having access by going in a shop and purchasing the e-cigarette. That has, in fact, become one of the biggest gateways to addiction to nicotine.

Over the coming weeks and months we will end up with a stronger piece of legislation than where we are now.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that we're talking about flavoured tobacco. There is no tobacco in the e-cigarettes. We didn't just hear from the Minister of Health and Wellness on this issue, we heard from Liberals, his colleagues, including the member for Clare-Digby who said, "We're here as legislators, more than anything, to protect youth and our young people." I'll table that.

I couldn't agree more with that member, Mr. Speaker, so I'd like to ask the minister why is he ignoring his own advice, the advice of his caucus members, the advice of the community health boards, the Canadian Cancer Society, young people themselves, even those who do use vapour cigarettes and e-cigarettes, by continuing to allow flavoured tobacco to be in reach of Nova Scotia youth?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know the direction that our government will work towards. We will, however, do consulting. This government and two former Ministers of Health and Wellness had four and a half years to make some changes and strengthen the legislation and you know what happened during those four and a half years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: VALLEY DIALYSIS REPT. - STATUS

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Minister of Health and Wellness. As the minister would know, about a year ago I asked a question with regard to dialysis in the Valley and a decision could possibly be reviewed. Once again it was where the regional unit or a dialysis unit may go.

I know that members of my community and other communities throughout the Valley have been surveyed over the last number of months and I wonder if the minister could tell me and all members of this House today where that report currently lies.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I first want to comment on the member for Hants West, on how strong an advocate he has been for getting dialysis in his community. There is a provincial renal program. We know that the next site to be developed is in the Kentville area, which in fact will overlap and serve many of his constituents for the future. I know what he wants and I could answer in his second part, but what I will promise the member is that he'll have that report in his hands next week.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer and the fact that we'll soon have that report. There are many who will be looking at it. There are about 40 or so - seems consistently between 35 and 40 people travelling for dialysis treatment from my area, the constituency of Hants West.

That brings me to my next piece here. Most of those folks who are calling, their biggest concern is, how am I going to get to my dialysis treatment? The transportation issue remains number one for most.

So I would ask the minister, if in fact, as he has alluded to - and it sounds like Kentville may be where the regional dialysis will go, and yes, that will serve folks from my area - will there be some consideration for other travel arrangements perhaps looked at?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know the member is speaking to the fact that he has a number of constituents who have fixed incomes and even the very travel to dialysis is a problem and a huge challenge. What I can offer the member opposite is that he can come to the department and have an opportunity to meet with those in the Department of Health and Wellness who oversee this program in terms of any kind of support and have a discussion as to how that can possibly have a more positive outcome.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - CENT. N.S. CORR. FACILITY: INJURIES - REASONS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Recently, concerns about the safety of guards and inmates have been raised at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. Most recently, an inmate required surgery after being assaulted by two other inmates. In 2013-14, 119 assaults occurred at the jail. There are many causes for violence, I realize, to occur in any prison, but can the minister provide some insight on why so many people are getting hurt in these assaults at this jail, or is it impossible to stop this kind of activity?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question. Safety continues to be of utmost importance to us. It's the safety of offenders, safety of personnel and safety of all Nova Scotians. It's a fact that these are prisons, these are jails, and unfortunately we will continue to have incidents no matter how many protections we put in place. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the most recent incident happened after one of the longest lockdowns ever at the facility, one intended to put an end to what the Director of Correctional Services called an accumulation of situations at the jail. It sounds like things are escalating; things are getting worse all the time. I'm actually going to remove something from my question, because I don't think it's appropriate for everyone's ears in this Legislature today.

When we think of some of the weapons that are used to attack guards and other inmates, and I'm not talking about what you might traditionally think of in terms of a weapon. My question, what measures are being taken by the government to help guards

and other staff who are dealing with danger, humiliation, and long-term medical and psychological impacts of assaults?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, again, I can understand why the honourable member is asking the question. Specifically, he's asking about Burnside. Burnside does house the most dangerous offenders in this province and sometimes there are troubles that go on there. We have a zero-tolerance policy at these facilities, so anything and everything that - any kind of action that is taken into account, we hold it very seriously. In terms of staff, we're continuously working with our staff and working with our unions to address any and all of these issues. Thank you.

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

**TIR - CAR-PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS:
ROAD SAFETY ACTION COMM. - ADDRESS**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. HRM has declared today, November 5th, as Crosswalk Awareness Day. The most recent statistics show that car-pedestrian collisions have increased by almost 70 per cent in the last six months, compared to the same period last year. And I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of TIR is, given the dramatic increases in car-pedestrian collisions in the first half of 2014, what work is his Road Safety Action Committee doing with HRM to address this issue?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Obviously crosswalk safety is a very important issue. The stats we're seeing recently and in recent years are alarming. I know that the HRM has significant issues, obviously traffic congestion and the number of pedestrians really amplifies that issue.

I can tell you that the Road Safety Advisory Committee that we have access to is laced with the most professional people in terms of peace officers, road safety engineers, advocates for the community, including Norm Collins who, quite often, gives us advice and advocacy work on the crosswalk safety issue.

We work very closely with the regional municipalities, not just the HRM but all across this province. We do whatever we can, Mr. Speaker. There are national standards in place, we make sure they are enforced, and any support we can give we certainly are there to do so. Thank you very much.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, car-pedestrian collisions can be deadly. The latest numbers show that the current enforcement practices and educational programs are not - I repeat, are not working.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, what new initiatives is the department undertaking to address this issue, not just in HRM but in the communities across Nova Scotia?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a challenge. There are a number of issues that are identified by the National Transportation Association on how we bolster crosswalk safety. Obviously there are issues with respect to signage that drivers understand that the crosswalks are coming, so painting on the roadways, the zebra striping which certainly increases awareness, the lighting above the crosswalks, certainly anything that can be done from a driver's side.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is a message to be sent to pedestrians as well; this is a shared responsibility. We're seeing issues more prevalent that actually take place at areas where there are traffic lights.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of work to be done. Again, the Road Safety Committee is working on innovative ways to do that. Certainly, like everything else, resources are at the forefront but we do our best and we do work closely with those municipal units to make sure we're keeping our pedestrians and our drivers safe. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: PROV. HOLIDAY - GOV'T. COSTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. The minister has pushed for a new provincial holiday since 2004. New holidays are not free and, in fact, impose significant additional costs on both businesses and government. I don't know whether the government consulted with business or asked them how much it would cost them, but does the minister have an estimate of how much the new holiday will cost the government in holiday pay?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, as the members of the House know, this is something that I have individually championed for many years, and we have introduced it in the House. We have the fewest number of statutory holidays of any province in the country and the people who are in the business community understand that as well. In fact, several years ago the CFIB did their annual survey - they actually do it more than that, four times a year or more often they survey - they included that question and at that time 40 per cent of businesses thought it was a pretty good idea, so I think it has only grown since then.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear how much it was going to cost, so I'm going to say it's probably very expensive; in fact the CBC News report dated July 28th, which I will table, says the February holiday will cost the Capital District Health Authority \$1.1 million; the Cape Breton District Health Authority \$700,000, and the IWK \$300,000. All totalled, the new holiday will cost our provincial health authorities \$3 million.

My question for the minister today is, what services will be cut in what departments to cover this additional cost?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, just to speak directly to the question of the cost of that, those figures were not well worked out. When we went back, those numbers came down; in fact the individual district health authorities will be absorbing the cost of that holiday. Thank you.

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

**ENVIRON. - WASTE WATER DISPOSAL:
AMHERST TOWN/ATL. INDUSTRIAL SERV. - TALKS**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Environment. Yesterday I asked the minister about a plan in the works to dispose of treated fracking waste water in Amherst, and the minister said, "At this point we haven't received a formal application for this process. . ." I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

Just because there's no application doesn't mean the department isn't still involved, so could the minister please confirm his department has been talking about this project with the Town of Amherst and Atlantic Industrial Services?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the member opposite that the representatives from the municipality have been in contact with local staff members in Amherst and Truro offices. My understanding is that those discussions were primarily based upon trying to come to an understanding with respect to the data and the information that we have, pertaining to the contents of the water, so previous test results and so on. They're trying to understand the status of the water, and that was the nature of those conversations, as I understand it.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his response. I do want to acknowledge the meetings that were held in Colchester County and the Truro area before the disposal of fracking waste water was approved at the LaFarge cement plant in Brookfield, although there are still a lot of questions and concerns that residents in that area have about that project. However, in this case, this project seems to have been sprung on the people of Cumberland County, and it sounds like they still have many unanswered questions.

My question for the Minister of Environment is, could he please explain what consultation the province has done so far with the residents of Cumberland County, and what further consultation they plan to do with the residents, before approving this project?

MR. DELOREY: It seems that we're running into a common theme with questions coming from that particular Party over there. Where municipalities are considering various projects and initiatives before they make a decision themselves, it's an appropriate time, I suppose, with UNSM here, to reiterate this government's commitment to allow municipalities the autonomy and the authority that they have in their roles to represent their constituents as well.

In terms of us intervening and making decisions, or anything pre-emptively on behalf of that municipality, we'll wait and see where they come up with their decision and we will act accordingly, as the regulator, to provide the information necessary and make informed decisions with respect to any disposal of waste water from this process.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER LEVY - ACHIEVE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Last weekend in the House the Taste of Nova Scotia held an event showcasing the incredible products which we are famous for, and I believe you, Mr. Speaker, indicated your pride in coming from an area where lobster industry is the biggest employer. In fact, Nova Scotia leads the world in lobster, and our province should be leading the charge on marketing, hand in hand with industry.

The industry needs a levy, and the minister promised a levy, but last week the minister told a reporter that the levy would not be put in place. Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is this - will he admit he has fumbled the process, and without delay put in a plan to achieve a lobster levy so our lobster industry remains competitive?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, this Fall we are going to consult with the industry around a mechanism to fund marketing and improvements in the lobster industry. We will conduct those hearings or consultations before we decide how we are going to approach this. There is an opposition to a levy in some areas, and in some areas there isn't. We want to have this all sorted out so we can bring the adequate and proper legislation into the House.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, last year the Government of Maine passed a five-year funding bill and Maine lobster producers are stepping up their marketing efforts, due to that committed funding. The Lobster Council of Canada supported a one-cent per pound levy and this minister unveiled a five-cent per pound, with 3 cents going to quality. He was apparently unable to explain how this money would be used.

The minister's credibility has been seriously undermined in our industry. My question is, will this minister go back to the industry with a more realistic plan, work with them and stop putting our valuable lobster industry at a competitive disadvantage?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, we indeed do have a very concise plan of how we're going to move forward on this. We cannot move forward unless it's industry-driven. At this point, it's not industry-driven. There is not a proper process in place for doing this and not a proper facility in place to how the money is going to be spent and what's going to be done with it at the end. Until we get those final conclusions and we consult with industry, and it is industry-driven, we are not going to move forward.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ER CLOSURES - VALLEY CONCENTRATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in a FOIPOP released to our caucus last week, the total number of ER closures was reported to have decreased 29.8 per cent from April 1 to August 31, 2014. (Applause)

I figured I'd get the good stuff out of the way first. But one hospital was closed 100 per cent of the time. Soldiers' Memorial Hospital saw a 720 per cent increase in the number of hours that ER was closed.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, why have the greatest increases in ER closures across Nova Scotia taken place in the Annapolis Valley region?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what set of calculations he's actually used on these hours. Maybe he'll enlighten me more. I just know that in the past four months, there have just been a couple of closures. I know that the district has actually made a very, very significant move, and perhaps this is why. During the last months, new doctors who are coming in get the extra training for trauma care and it will be a requirement that they cover so many hours of ER time, so a tremendous improvement has actually been made.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Maybe the minister can open his briefing book, briefing note 3.3 - Soldiers' Memorial Hospital has gone from 15 hours of closure to 123 hours of closure, which is a 720 per cent increase, which really doesn't hold a candle to how many hours Northside General has been closed, which is a total of 535 hours in that same period.

While attending the Village of Kingston's annual general meeting this past May, the minister suggested that a collaborative care centre may answer the needs of the community. My question to the minister, when will the people of the Annapolis Valley have confidence that there will be emergency health care available for them outside of normal business hours?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we see what we can do with statistics when actually in total hours, there are not that many total hours of closure at Soldiers' Memorial. In fact, as I said, the situation has improved quite dramatically over the last number of months. We

happened to hit a period where, in fact, one doctor who was scheduled for a significant number of hours had to leave for family reasons, and again we didn't have that ability to tap into a provincial list and cover the ER. What I'm pleased with is that we've actually found, I think, what will be a long-term solution to what was a perennial problem.

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

ERDT - IT INFRASTRUCTURE: GREENFIELD ELEM. - DEVELOPMENT

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: My question is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Mr. Speaker, in 2006, the people of Nova Scotia were promised 100 per cent coverage of rural broadband by Rodney MacDonald. Since then, the Liberal Party has been critical that this has not been reached by successive governments.

In 2012, the Liberal Party passed a resolution at their policy convention that stated a Liberal Government would, "... commit to the exponential development of information technology infrastructure in the Province ..." and fully commit "... to the Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia program ..." I will table that later.

Mr. Speaker, students at Greenfield Elementary School in Queens-Shelburne have written to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development with their concerns, and I will table that. My question is, when will the minister commit to exponentially developing IT infrastructure for the communities surrounding Greenfield Elementary?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. It was in 2006 under a Progressive Conservative Government that the commitment was made to provide 100 per cent coverage for rural broadband throughout Nova Scotia. As I've said before, I have no doubt that that was made with the most honest of intentions.

Unfortunately, with the geography of Nova Scotia and where certain communities are situated, it's become a challenge for providers to be able to provide the level of service that should be provided. The member seems to have forgotten a certain period of time - I believe it might have been from 2009 to 2013, where he was a minister in a government that failed to address this issue, just in case he may have forgotten.

As I've already said, we are working closely with our providers in Nova Scotia. We are as well waiting to get more specific details on the recently-announced federal money to increase the speed to 5 megabytes per second throughout the country, and look forward to seeing what opportunities that might bring to Nova Scotians.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I said successive governments. It wasn't at our policy convention.

The students at Greenfield Elementary say: we are hoping that the government can look into our situation and come up with an action plan. This contract for rural broadband service is being renegotiated as we speak. My question is, why won't the minister fulfill the Liberal commitment to expand IT infrastructure and work with the area surrounding Greenfield to work on a solution?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the member has made a statement about renegotiating a contract. I'm not quite sure which contract he is referring to when he says that. I believe all members of the House know that the current contract that was signed in 2006 is scheduled to expire at the end of this year, which is why we continue to talk to the providers to ensure that those who are without service or with service that is deemed inadequate are able to obtain the high-speed service that we want to see all Nova Scotians have.

There have been some challenges along the way. I think we do have to have a discussion as to whether it was realistic to expect there would be 100 per cent coverage. We want to see as many Nova Scotians as possible, which is why we do look forward to some of the new technology that's coming out, the announcement by the federal government, which we await to see exactly how much funding that will provide to Nova Scotians, so we can try to benefit from this increased high speed for all the residents of our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME - VARIANCES EXPLAIN

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Data on student assessments in Nova Scotia has shown that there is a considerable variation in results across the province. In both math and reading assessment results, there are significant differences across our school boards.

For example, in 2012-13, the percentage of students who met expectations in Grade 8 reading range from 74 per cent in one board to 62 per cent in another. In 2012-13 the percentage of Grade 8 students who met expectations in math range from 72 per cent in one board to 40 per cent in another, and I'll table that.

My question to the minister is, could the minister explain these varied assessment outcomes for students in different school boards throughout this province?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member. As the member would know, there are a number of assessments that we do in our schools. We do our in-class assessments that are teacher-made, we do provincial assessments, and we do standardized tests both nationally and internationally. I think the important thing is what we do with the results of those tests.

The situation that the member has raised causes us to look at what are the best practices. Are there things we can do that can help influence those? We do know there are a number of things that come together in order to determine a student's level of success on assessment, so we would use best practices to make sure we can improve.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, academic success in skills in math and reading are critical for our young people, as well as for the future of this province. It is imperative that students across the province have access to the same high-quality education. Today's young students will be our leaders and will make up the labour force of tomorrow in this province.

My question to the minister is, will the minister's education action plan that will be presented in January provide concrete steps to improve student performance across all of Nova Scotia's school boards?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, in the report that was received when 19,000 Nova Scotians spoke and gave us their opinions and also gave us their advice, we recognized that standards across the province were important, we recognized there were some parents and teachers who were responding with concerns about that.

To answer the member's question - there certainly will be some actions in the plan that is presented in January that speaks to not only performance but improvement in that level of performance.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

NAT. RES. - DONKIN MINE: NEGOTIATIONS - UPDATE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

In the Ivany report it was said time and time again that we have to start thinking outside the box and use our natural resources to a better effect. I wonder, could the minister give us an update on where negotiations are with the Donkin Mine?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, there are ongoing conversations between the private entities that are involved in that sale of the mine. I will let the member know that our government has begun our due diligence process. As that process continues, we'll be informing the public at the appropriate moments.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your answer. I was wondering if the minister could give us a more definite timeline of what is taking place and when we can expect some news on the Donkin Mine situation?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, there are still ongoing conversations that are held in confidence between the private parties that are continuing their conversations. At the appropriate time, which I hope will be very soon, we'll be informing the public on the progress we've had on this particular file.

It's obviously my hope, as I know it's the hope of every member in here, that that news will be good news.

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

EECD - 3D PRINTERS: SCHOOLS - PLACEMENT

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Giving students the best start in life with the basics of math and reading skills was one of the themes coming out of the most recent education panel. Giving teachers and support staff the proper tools to educate our youngest citizens is therefore important.

The government released a tender on Monday that would purchase 40 high-tech 3D printers which retail for \$3,500 a machine. I will table that. My question to the minister, when will the minister tell us the criteria for which schools will be receiving these printers and how those schools will be chosen?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member opposite. The tender the member is referring to is what we would call "a standing offer," where we are able to go out and call for tenders that will give us the best price possible. That goes on a standing offer and as schools wish to purchase, they already have a standing offer that they can go to, which gives them a better price than if they would do that individually.

So we are not saying that there are 45 or 43 3D printers purchased, we're saying the standing offer is there to allow them to be purchased, if needed.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you very much for the answer. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to ask the minister, if the government is going ahead with this type of purchase, they should know that in 2013 Public Safety Canada launched a study to look into concerns about the types of objects these high-tech 3D printers can print and that includes 3D guns - and I will table the CBC article that talks about these types of concerns - can the minister commit to ensure policies and guidelines are developed to guarantee these printers are going to be used appropriately and safely?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, you know we have to recognize that the teachers who are delivering programs in our schools take the utmost care in what and where and how their students are performing.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the 3D printers are an integral part of delivering the tech ed programs in Grades 7 through to Grade 12. I can assure the member, and all members of this House, that those will only be used with the best interests of the student, to support curriculum and to ensure that students are not into an environment or a site or are using them for some other purpose.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to make an introduction. I would direct the members' attention to the east gallery where we are joined today by Councillor Tim Outhit who is the HRM councillor for Bedford-Wentworth. I spoke about Councillor Outhit yesterday and his Remembrance Day program. If he would please rise and he is joined today by his daughter Emily Outhit and family friend Patrick Liebmann and they are here for Take Our Kids to Work Day. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you, and I appreciate just having a moment to make an introduction as well, if I could. There are two people I would like to introduce in the gallery today who have come. One is a student from Millwood High School in Middle Sackville, a Grade 9 student who is also here with the many other Grade 9 students that are taking the opportunity to learn more about government today, his name is Michael Nolan and perhaps Michael will stand while I introduce Taf as well.

We also are joined today by an international student, his name is Taf Chipango, he's from Zimbabwe and he is a graduate of our proud Saint Mary's University in the City of Halifax, and Taf is very interested in finance and he has come today to meet some of the people in the Finance and Treasury Department and I would like us to give him a warm welcome, thank you. (Applause)

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It may be Bring Your Councillor to Work Day today because with your permission I would just like to draw the attention of the House to the Speaker's Gallery. We have the newly elected Warden of Richmond County, Mr. Victor David and several of the Richmond County councillors with him and would like to invite all members to welcome them here to the House, I know they are here for the conference and they came in to see our proceedings. (Applause)

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

MS. JOYCE TREEN: May I make an introduction please. I would like to draw everybody's attention to the east gallery. I would like to introduce Max Wong, he is a student that is shadowing me today on bring a student to work day. He's from the riding of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and I've known Max since he was seven years old. I would like everybody to give Max a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: I would also like to do one quick introduction, while we're on it, the more the merrier. Up in the Speaker's Gallery, if you would please give a warm welcome to Scott Nagel who is a staff member in our own Legislative Library here who has his son Kees with him today, job shadowing his dad in the library. I ask the House to give a warm welcome. (Applause)

The honourable member for Fairview Clayton Park.

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: I would like to draw the members' attention to the east gallery and welcome Charlene Baker from our caucus office and she's here with her daughter as well on Take Our Kids to Work Day. If they could receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you, very much Mr. Speaker and it is with great pleasure I would like to introduce one of the very special guests to me who has been visiting the caucus office today, my grandson Jacob Horton. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, with your permission if we missed anybody else in the gallery, perhaps they would like to stand up for a warm round of applause from the House. (Applause)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the NDP Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, let's do something silly, let's do some bills. I would like to introduce myself to the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the NDP Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 42.

Bill No. 42 – Employment Support and Income Assistance Act.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 42, an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000, the Employment Support and Income Assistant Act is a very important bill to us as the NDP because it was absolutely shocking that the first time in many, many years, income assistance has not received a monthly increase, under the Liberal Government. Bill No. 42 will ensure that governments in the future will have to increase the level of income assistance at least by the consumer price index, so that will give a safety net. Hopefully it would be more than that, but at least those who are on Income Assistance would be aware of the fact that they would get some increase.

The NDP Government came into government in 2009, so the 2009-10 budget was a budget from the Progressive Conservatives. At that time, they had increased income assistance by \$4 per month. The reason I mention that is because I recall in the House the Minister of Community Services saying that we did not raise the income assistance the first year of our government. That is because it was not our budget, the same as the Liberal Government was under the restrictions of the government previous to them, as was the NDP.

After that, we increased income assistance between the 2010 and 2014 budgets by \$47 a month. That was the increase that was seen by those who tried to live day-to-day and struggle on income assistance. We realized the significance and the importance of the investment to help those who do struggle day-to-day on income assistance in our province and how important that increase is to them.

We also took another approach, in the sense that we felt that if we were going to help people to get out of the poverty situation that they are in, we needed to take a holistic approach in terms of what other programs could be available to low-income Nova Scotians and seniors in order to help them and bring more money into their homes and into the income that they receive. That's why we did a number of things while in government - everything from increasing the Child Tax Benefit several times, creating the Affordable Living Tax Credit, creating the Poverty Reduction Credit, increasing the senior rebate for land - there were many things.

What we also did is we took an approach that we would involve other departments, not just under the auspices of Community Services. That approach worked really well, because in fact, the poverty rate in our province over the four years of the mandate of the NDP decreased for the first time in decades. I encourage this government to do the same and take that holistic approach.

Now, we did not go the route of increasing shelter rates, because I know that is another issue that was brought to our attention here by the Minister of Community Services. I think that she probably knows and has had discussions around that, that increasing shelter rates has not worked in other jurisdictions. That's due to the fact that when you focus on giving that one increase for the shelter rates - and although I know it is very difficult with the amounts that are allocated - what happens in turn is that the landlords just increase the rental rates by the amount that the shelter rate has been increased. That is a Catch-22. It's something that does not work, at the end of the day, for those people who are on income assistance. That's why we did not take that approach.

I think that the approach we took was the right approach because of the fact that the poverty level did decrease in the Province of Nova Scotia, and that was to do it smartly, by finding out and creating programs that could increase a family's income in a variety of ways.

Another point of reference that I'd like to clarify too is that I've heard the Minister of Community Services talk about the fact that income assistance was not increased because there is an ESIA review and redesign taking place. Well, the fact is, that's not new. We started that review before 2012, and I will table a document here that lists 27 initiatives that were being undertaken in the Department of Community Services alone that was focusing on the holistic approach and changing the way business was being done internally and externally within the department.

So it's not an excuse to say well we couldn't raise the income assistance level this time because we're actually under a review. You will see in the document that I tabled that in fact I think it was October 2, 2012, it was part of the discussion and the strategy going forward that a redesign was implemented. That redesign is not a Liberal Government redesign. That was a project that was initiated under the NDP Government.

I think that it's important to look at the fact that we do have issues of poverty in this province and there are people who struggle each and every day and it's extremely concerning. It's concerning about the families that struggle, we have great concern about seniors, the poverty level of some of our seniors is getting to a crisis point in our province, and that is why it's so important to be investing in programs for seniors, to also look at the income thresholds for programs, that's something else that we had initiated, looking at those threshold because some of those incomes levels have been looked at and have been there for many years and it just does not fit within the world that we live in to date.

So I think what's very important is to take a holistic approach, but to not forget the importance of increasing income assistance on a monthly level and that's what Bill No. 42 will do. It will certainly help those that are in need, and it would guarantee - at least they would know as things increase in their lives that also the income assistance will increase and they can count on that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GORDON WILSON: Poverty reduction - I guess it's something that we could all easily stand up and talk on, and I really appreciate having the opportunity today to speak on it. I have to give some credit for private members across the floor for at least bringing this legislation to us today. Anything that we do that allows us to stand in the House and talk about poverty is probably a good thing.

The bill has been introduced as an opportunity to provide an annual increase to maximum assistance payable under the Employment Support and Income Assistant Act equal to the amount of increase in the consumer price index and, although that is a commendable suggestion, it is just, I believe, one thing that maybe can be done to eradicate poverty.

So just for a minute if you don't mind I'd like to talk about poverty. Poverty goes beyond just income assistance. Poverty is something that is affected by a lot of different things that everyday people in my riding and, I think, right across Nova Scotia have to struggle with. To just simply piecemeal and throw in a suggestion of this by a government that sat for four years and, really, from my perspective did very little to help with poverty reduction, I don't think fits what the bill should be.

Nova Scotians want to be independent for their families, and self-reliant. They want a stronger, economically healthy province just like the rest of us, and they want something that benefits all of us, they want to be proud in what they're getting. I think for us to fight poverty, first we also have to address the root causes of poverty.

Although yes, I do agree the review that we currently have is one that was brought in under the previous government, I'd like to address the fact of what we've done with our government since coming in. We've been actively working on a number of fronts - we've invested \$500,000 so more low-income families will get access to help their children since coming to power. We've invested \$2.85 million to strengthen our family resource centres, our transition houses, our women's centres and our second stage housing programs.

Mr. Speaker, we've improved access to our seniors' repair program. We've reviewed a number of Income Assistance and ways to improve access to training and education. We've increased the income ceiling to \$26,000, which resulted in 1,300 more low-income children receiving that benefit. And I'd like to point out that last week, we invested \$52 million in affordable housing programs, including \$9.4 million to rent supplements which will move people forward - money that was sat on by the previous government, I'd like to point out.

The government recently approved the benefits review and reform project. The intent of this project is to create a benefit system that will offer access to benefits, services and payments that move people to an improved quality of life, health, resilience, increased

social community inclusion, increased skills for enhancing self-sufficiency and increased labour market attachment.

We certainly know that from 2009 to 2013, the personal allowance did grow from \$208 to \$255. That was an overall increase of 23 per cent, or \$47 per person. These increases required a total investment of approximately \$18 million by the government. Also, we acknowledged that the ESIA program has not seen significant changes since the implementation in 2001. The piecemeal approach that we're seeing has not proven to be an effective strategy to address these financial problems within poverty.

Again, that same work piecemeal - I want to go back just to say that that is not the approach that I think this government sees as one that we feel would benefit. It needs to be more under an overall strategy, one that encompasses more than just income support, one that encompasses values and opportunities for people in poverty to grow out of poverty.

We all want to live in a province where we can all invest, as people, in our province and see them succeed. Community Services is reviewing the current benefit structure for employment assistance programs and I might add also that the department is planning on tracking that review in 2014-2015.

The other elephant in the room that I think I must mention is I find it very hard to stand here today and talk against a bill without pointing out the previous government's attempts to balance the budget on the backs of poverty in the past. Again, to shift those payments of 11 payments a year into another fiscal year does not reflect, as far as I'm concerned, a support for poverty and a support for the people who would rely on having that money to make those payments that day. I think it's extremely important for us to really remember that when we're standing here today talking about poverty.

The other thing is I don't know how anybody in this House could ever forgive anybody for saying they're not going to raise the HST, which affects the poor more than anything, and then throwing a 2 per cent increase.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I again must commend them for at least trying to do something, but in all respect, I have a lot of respect for our Minister of Community Services and the work that she is doing and the work that this government is doing to help the poor and the impoverished in this province. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand and speak to this bill today, a bill introduced by the honourable member for Halifax Needham. It's a bill that works to change - An Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000, the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act.

This is a very important bill, important to a lot of people to change the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act. I know there are a lot of people in this Legislature who have a lot of constituents who rely on income assistance in order to survive. This bill will allow income assistance payments to increase by at least the price of CPI. From what I just heard from two sides is so far in this mandate, the income assistance Act hasn't been changed - there has been an increase. That's a shame because people who rely on income assistance really need the support they get from the government.

Mr. Speaker, I sat here in Opposition while the last government was here and heard about the increases of about \$47 a month over the time they were here. Now, that doesn't sound like a lot of money to you and I, and maybe not a lot of money to a lot of people in this Chamber, but for people who require that money, that's huge.

In a large part I agree with the content of this bill, only I would like to really make a few points. As a society we must do everything we can do to assist those in our society who are most vulnerable. People who could use our help rely on us as legislators to make sure they can survive. I'm sure most of these people aren't there by choice; they're there because they need this assistance to survive. I'm sure if everybody had the choice no one would want to rely on income assistance. We must do all in our power to give people who are going through these hard times an opportunity to get a leg up.

Having said that, I think it's also important that we recognize the best thing we could do to assist people in need is create these conditions proactively. Conditions such as reducing red tape for businesses in this province, that would allow all employers to hire more workers. Conditions such as lowering taxes - we are currently one of the highest taxed provinces in the country and we need to address that.

Imagine if we could lower taxes to businesses and consumers in this province, how much more money could they spend or invest in their business, allowing these businesses to hire people and take them out of the conditions that require them to need this income assistance to survive. We pay the highest taxes in the country, and with people paying lower taxes they would be able to make their family budgets stretch further and last longer. We wouldn't have to worry about people deciding if they're going to heat their homes, pay for their groceries, buy their medications, or make sure their children have school supplies and recreational money to survive.

People in this situation who need income assistance then may be able to buy and maintain their own home. I know we heard last week of an investment in affordable housing, I think the number that was tossed around was \$52 million. I'm told \$42 million of that is money that was left from the federal government. So my question is, what happens when that \$42 million is used? Do we get more money from the provincial government to maintain this affordable housing strategy that we were going to do? If that's the case, I'll commend the government on that. We have to make sure if we set these conditions now, we're able to afford to maintain those conditions.

Most people don't want to rely on handouts. I know everybody would prefer to be given the opportunity to earn a good living with good wages. As we are well aware now, the province has lost 9,000 jobs this year alone. The lack of secure employment means many of our young people and families are moving away in search of work. We talked quite extensively in the last couple of days about a bill in this Legislature to ban hydraulic fracturing. I think this would be a good place to start, and it would go a long way to creating the ideal conditions that we need for business in the province.

Allow companies to come here and invest in our natural resources; allow them to put our Nova Scotians to work; and allow them to buy the goods and services that Nova Scotians produce because they can afford to because they have a job. It should be incumbent on the government to actively look at new opportunities and create good paying jobs.

We're told that something like 1,500 new jobs could be created if we were to allow hydraulic fracturing to occur in our province. We're not saying to do this irresponsibly. We're saying to do it in a safe manner so we can put our people back to work, bring our young people back home, have our children raise their families here so that we, as parents and grandparents, don't have to leave the province to visit our children or our grandchildren.

We also need to do everything we can to attract and retain skilled workers in the province. We've had a couple of bills introduced in this Legislature that are going to increase apprenticeships, but that increase to the apprenticeships is not going to do us any good if all our Red Seal tradespeople are away out West, working. We have to make sure that this apprenticeship training allows children, allows parents, allows adults to get the training they need here in our province, but we also have to make sure there are jobs available for them once they are finished their training. I'd hate to see us train all our young people to move out West and never return to our province.

If more young people could get this training here at home, they might be more likely to obtain a job here and put down roots here, build a future here, and contribute to our province in ways that will make our province more sustainable and more reliable. Too many bright, talented, and hard-working people are moving away. They are leaving our province to find work, and with that, their families are following. That doesn't include the amount of people who have just given up looking for a job. Those people are the people who come to rely on income assistance in order to survive.

Again, I admire the member for introducing this legislation, but with no job strategy and no concrete action on the Ivany commission recommendations, creating jobs and retaining our best and brightest does not appear to be a priority here. Each and every individual who leaves our province to go to work leaves a hole in our province, leaves a hole in a family.

Reducing power rates and high taxes and cutting job-killing red tape would go a long way to helping business grow and provide the necessary conditions for people to provide well for their families, and hopefully allow them to get off the income assistance. But for those who need it, it's necessary. We haven't seen any of those things as priorities so far for this government.

As I said before, a particular concern is when people give up looking for a job because they've become discouraged by a long period of a fruitless job search. We know these people do not meet the definition of unemployed, because they are not looking for a job but they would take a job if there was one available. It means there are fewer people contributing to the overall economy, and it means more people will leave to contribute somewhere else.

Less revenue decreases our ability to maintain our roads, provide health care and education, and even provide income assistance to the people who need it. Imagine if we had more people working and we could increase all the money to all these departments. It would go a long way in our province. That requires a plan and it needs action, and it needs action and leadership now, but we're not seeing that.

While we're on the topic, I'd like to also bring up that we need to change the definition of a child. I know the Community Services Minister is working on this, and I commend her for that, but each day that passes by when this definition doesn't change, some adolescent in that age slips through the cracks. The more they slip through the cracks, the more of a burden they can become on the system - the justice system, the health care system. We need to address this problem as soon as we possibly can.

Again, I commend the member for bringing this bill forward. I know people who are in need of income assistance rely on that to survive. I'd prefer to see people working in our province to make sure that the reliance on income assistance is not there. You know, Madam Speaker, if that were to happen, if we were to lift the ban on hydraulic fracturing, put more people to work in our province, it would cause business people and young entrepreneurs to set up shop here. If we can make those conditions ideal for everyone, there would be more people contributing to society, fewer people relying on income assistance but more money available for those who need it. With that, I'll take my place.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand and speak to Bill No. 42, which is an amendment to the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act. It is a bill that I introduced but I want to make it really clear, the process in our caucus is probably the same in all of the Parties here. Bills that are brought forward are sponsored by a member but with the support of other members in their caucus and are the position of that Party caucus.

This Party's caucus has supported and introduced this bill that would see income assistance rates increase annually, tied to at least a minimum of the consumer price index. I want to speak to a number of the points that were made by previous speakers, particularly the member for Clare-Digby on behalf of the government.

You know this piece of legislation in no way, shape, or form is intended to solve the problem of poverty and nobody in this caucus would say that tying income assistance annual increases would solve the problem of poverty for people who are getting income assistance. No one is that naive. The problem this bill seeks to solve is a different problem than the problem of poverty.

This bill seeks to solve the problem of passivity. This bill seeks to solve the problem of indifference. If we have a government Party that is passive and indifferent to the situation of people who are receiving income assistance and their need to have income assistance rates increase annually, at least equivalent to the rate of inflation, which is often measured by the consumer price index, then surely we can increase rates, annually, by that amount.

If you have a passive and indifferent government, then you will see freezes and no rate increases, which is currently the case, and it's simply not acceptable. We did not introduce this legislation because there was no need to introduce that legislation. This was a problem that didn't exist because rates were increased annually on a regular basis and so they should be, and did that solve poverty? No, it didn't. What it did was put a few extra dollars in the pockets of people who live profoundly below the low-income cut-offs so that they wouldn't fall further and further behind.

It also meant that government, subsequent governments wouldn't find themselves in the position that we found ourselves in where the neglect of adequate raises to income assistance rates on an annual basis got so profoundly out of sync with the reality that the cost of catching up was very, very difficult. But in spite of the difficulty, I want to point out to the members of this Chamber that if you look at the budget that was tabled by the government's Finance and Treasury Board Minister, it indicates that \$178 million was put back in the pockets of low-income families and households in Nova Scotia through the Affordable Living Tax Credit between the year it was introduced and the year for which the budget covers. Just in case people didn't hear what I just said - \$178 million was put back into the pockets not only of people receiving income assistance, but also senior citizens getting the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Incidentally, those seniors, the poorest seniors in the province, who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, no longer pay provincial income tax due to changes. Now that is a poverty reduction strategy. Does it mean that those seniors no longer live below the low-income cut-offs? Actually, what it meant was poverty among seniors decreased by 10 per cent in the previous four years, which is, I think, a pretty important measurement.

Poverty and the reduction of poverty should not belong to any one Party in this Legislature. It's something we all need to be committed to, something that we all need to be working on, and I in fact believe that we do all have our own commitments to reducing poverty, including the current government, who are reviewing the social assistance program, the income assistance program. They are picking up on the work that was already underway in the department. The former minister has indicated what the elements of that work was and the member for Clare-Digby talked about a number of investments that his government has made to improve the child tax benefit and funding to the women's resource centres and shelters. These things are all very important.

Housing has to be a significant component of any poverty reduction strategy. We have a very good road map which I'm very pleased to see the current government adopting now as its own and moving that forward. There many other initiatives that need to be continued if we truly are to deal with the problem of poverty.

Many people in our province go to work every day, and some people even work two jobs and maybe even three jobs, and they still live below the low-income cut-offs. They live in poverty. This is not acceptable in a society as affluent as Canada and it's something that we all should be very concerned about. One of the things that I know my colleagues and I - and my colleague, the member for Cape Breton Centre was very much engaged and involved as the NDP Labour Critic - was working hard to put in place the minimum wage working group, which over a period of time in our province saw the minimum wage in Nova Scotia improve dramatically, improve on an annual basis, improve with predictability - I guess you would say.

That wasn't always the case. For many, many years, the minimum wage in this province would be frozen for the first three years of a government's mandate. Then miraculously on the eve of an election - maybe six months before an election, three months before an election - the government of the day might increase the minimum wage by 10 or 15 cents, in hopes that that would generate some feel-good factor in the electorate as they were ready to go to the polls.

Well, hopefully those days are gone. We have a minimum wage working group, and we have on that group representatives from Labour and Advanced Education and from the business community. We have officials in the Department of Labour and Advanced Education who are dedicated to doing the research to look at what's happening in other jurisdictions and what the impact in improving minimum wage will be for those very people who work every day, and sometimes work in more than one job - possibly even three jobs - and still aren't making a living wage.

It's very important that, yes, if we have a poverty reduction strategy, it needs to look at the diversity of poverty. The previous speaker talked about getting to the roots of poverty, and there are many causes that contribute to people who live in poverty. When I was a young social worker - which wasn't yesterday - we used to talk about the sources or

roots of poverty being illness, disability, old age. We know that gender is a very big contributor to whether or not people live in poverty, particularly if you're a single mother.

The highest rate of poverty among any group in our country are women who raise children alone, which is why we have the child tax benefit, to try to address poverty among children, particularly in single-parent households - although there can be and there are households with two parents who also struggle with income inequality and problems around poverty.

I would assume that many members of this Chamber are very concerned about the federal government's recent announcement to move ahead with income splitting, which will see the wealthiest families in the country be able to get significant tax breaks, and the poorest families in the country, ironically, lose tax benefits and tax credits and rebates. As a province, we need to speak out firmly and strongly against this policy and the impact that it will have. There are very few Nova Scotian families that will see any benefit from that but even those that are, they are in the very top income bracket in our province.

I would urge the members of the government to adopt a bit more humility when they look at the initiatives of poverty reduction in the province. We all have a role to play, and denigrating the previous work that has been done to seriously reduce poverty is a great disservice - not only to one political Party, but it does a great disservice to what is going to be required to significantly reduce poverty in this province. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, that concludes our debate on Bill No. 42. Just before I call Bill No. 31, we discussed, offline if you will, that the times allotted for the speakers will stay the same, but the clock time will change. All right?

MADAM SPEAKER: Absolutely, yes.

MR. CORBETT: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 31.

Bill No. 31 - Workers' Compensation Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I'd like to say a few words today on this bill. I will give out just an intent to the bill and then try to frame it up with more succinct points and so on. The bill basically puts into effect that people, when they reach

the age of 65, will continue to receive WCB benefits if they are on an EERB or an Earnings Replacement Benefit.

Now, why do this bill? A little bit of history, if you will. Back in the 1990s, there was a decision in the court - it was appealed and it was upheld - and it's widely referred to as *Hayden*. What we've had over those years - as it ended up, there were two classes of individuals in the Workers' Compensation system: there were the pre-*Hayden* and the post-*Hayden*. What drew the line, and was part of the reform - if you want to call it that - of Workers' Compensation in the 1990s by the then Liberal Government was to go from the clinical rating system, commonly referred to as the meat chart, to wage loss.

The meat chart or clinical rating system was - if you had injured or lost an appendage or had a certain amount of injury, they would look at a chart and say this is what it's worth and that's how you would get compensated for it. That was commonly referred to by, I would say, one and all as the meat chart, although the technical term was the clinical rating system.

It was changed in the 1990s to wage loss. I'll let other people decide whether it's better or worse. I think in many ways, it's better. It's more reflective of the injuries, but one would argue that the permanent impairment's too low, but that's a whole other debate.

What happened back in the mid-1990s, when wage loss was introduced, one of the features of wage loss was that at age 65, you lost your benefits. Those on the clinical rating system or the meat chart would still continue, to this day, to receive benefits past age 65. So this group is here.

Why would we want to bring this bill forward today? Well, it goes to a time when this bill was brought in. In many workplaces, there was mandatory retirement; 65 was the magic number if you will. Well, that's not the case anymore. There are many areas where there is no retirement age and you move forward from there.

It's our contention that by bringing this bill in, it would help move WCB forward into looking at, and not having to put up with, a court challenge. I think right-thinking people would know that it's just a matter of time before someone challenges the age 65 provision, because it's a provision of - I would say to you - a bygone era. We would tell you that there are many people working well past the age of 65 and maybe into their early 70s and to however far, and I think that will continue to grow into the future.

Let's take a worker who is in his late 60s, he's past 65 - let's just for the sake of grabbing a number say that the worker is 68 years old and he or she is injured on the job. Now that person can get a TERB, which is a Temporary Earnings Replacement Benefit. They could get that, I would assume, because their employer should cover them for Workers' Compensation and they will get that. But I'm not sure if you look at this bill, if you looked at the Act as it sits today, if that person was injured to the point that they had a

permanent impairment, that person could collect an ERB - an Earnings Replacement Benefit, Madam Speaker - or probably better put, a pension from a Workers' Compensation claim.

Madam Speaker, we would like to see this bill move forward to allow the Workers' Compensation Board to really look at this and not to be reactive, but to be proactive. It will obviously have an impact on some aspects financially, but these people are paying into benefits anyway - or into the premiums, excuse me, so it's negated somewhat there.

But, you know, I harken back to another time when the board steadfastly refused to acknowledge chronic pain. They were told oh don't worry, our policy will hold water. Well, Madam Speaker, that bucket soon formed quite a few leaks and they had to turn over and now they were caught reacting to chronic pain. It was kind of done the best they could, they used the American Medical Society's standard. Some would say that it's not relevant in many occasions, but nonetheless what they were given was a time frame in which to come up with a definition of chronic pain.

Many people across this province will tell you that their definition of chronic pain is like no other definition of chronic pain. Usually the simplest way to put their argument around chronic pain, Madam Speaker, would be pain that has lasted longer than the usual recovery time. I've got to say that's a hard thing for any medical practitioner to really say with any assurance, that this is the amount of time to recover.

Now some others would say that chronic pain was pain that exists for no pathological reason - another good one but, again, a very subjective view. The reason I bring chronic pain into this argument, Madam Speaker, is clearly because the Workers' Compensation Board sat back and was reactive to that plight and kept saying oh no, this is not going to happen.

Well it happened and to this day I would think if you asked injured workers' groups from one end of this province to the other what issues they have around chronic pain, it is just that, the interpretation of what really it is. I am in constant pain, they will tell you. To me, if something is constant and there all the time, it is chronic. But because the board defines such a narrow concept of what chronic pain is, there have been many people left out of the chronic pain syndrome aspect of the WCB.

I think they do the best they can to develop policies around this, but here we are. So let's talk about this and let's look at these people who have been injured who are reaching 65 now.

May I ask you how much time is left, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Just under five minutes.

MR. CORBETT: Just under five, thank you. Now Madam Speaker, in the previous bill my Leader talked about - it was a bill primarily around poverty and this is another bill that talks about poverty. Let's take a worker who has been injured at age 50, hasn't been able to return to work and has been on benefits since age 50, and so that's 15 years we'll say, from 50 to 65. They decide then at 65, they take their Canada Pension.

Now they haven't paid into Canada Pension for 15 years so there is obviously - there is a correlation to what you pay in as premiums to what you receive as benefits. So this worker has not be able to work within the workplace for 15 years so, Madam Speaker, we can pretty well imagine the loss of income there.

So all of a sudden they go from a monthly benefit from WCB to a very low rate, quite possibly, on Canada Pension because in those intervening years there has been no payment to Canada Pension, OAS I mean. But there is another catch. Coming down the pike at us is a group of workers who are - and I'm trying to remember the birthdate it may be 65 it may be 66 - due to the federal government regulations things are going to change to 67. What happens to those people if we don't do something positive? If we keep it at 65, the only income these people will have is OAS and obviously with that they will get Guaranteed Income Supplement, which is really a bizarre way of doing business.

So we think this is enabling legislation that would allow the Workers' Compensation Board to look at this and say this is not right - that a worker is harmed, and don't forget now, Madam Speaker, that this is all a line in the sand too. If you're a pre-*Hayden* you get to keep your pension until you pass. So you have two classes of injured workers, one who was injured, quite literally - and I don't know the exact day of the *Hayden* decision, it escapes me now, Madam Speaker, but just think of this, you're injured one day, you get a pension for life. You're injured the day after, you get a pension till age 65. I'm no jurist, but I think that smells of discrimination.

I would hope that the government will look at this bill and say this is positive, this is fighting poverty; this is fighting an injustice that exists that we could move forward. This is not one of those "gotcha" bills. This is not brought forward today to embarrass the government. What it is here, it is to recognize the reality. I think that if this law isn't changed that it will be challenged, it will be struck down, and we will have to make laws on the fly as opposed to respecting the real needs and besides that, Madam Speaker, it will make a level playing field and it will do the right thing. It will help lift some people out of some issues of poverty. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I'm not the wordsmith the very experienced member across from me is but I'll give it a try here.

Madam Speaker, maybe I'm little naive or maybe it's just being a rookie to this Legislature . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Maybe it's both.

MR. MAGUIRE: Maybe it's both, yes. I appreciate the member opposite me, his passion for this topic. But correct me if I'm wrong, the member opposite from me was a very influential member of the majority government, I think he was Deputy Premier and, if I'm not mistaken, the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Act.

For me, I have to ask myself, why now? Four and a half years - if you're so passionate about something, why now? So if you feel so passionate about this bill I'll reiterate, why not try to pass it from 2009 to 2013 when you had a majority government and one of the most influential members of that government?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member to please direct your comments towards the chairman, in the third person. Thank you.

MR. MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I would just like to say we as a government do value our workers and we're committed to protecting their health and safety. There is a process for when a worker becomes injured. They apply to the Workers' Compensation Board, but also I know that this minister is very committed to all aspects of her department and I know she has actually said in the past that she would meet with different members of not only her Party but of other Parties in response to a whole host of issues in her department. She's been very open with her department, and she's been very open with all Parties involved.

This is also a bill that is in front of the Workers' Compensation Board; it's one that's being reviewed. I know that I would say it's irresponsible to rush out and make a hasty decision on bills without doing the proper research, and I know that this department and I know the member opposite from me can appreciate that as he was the minister responsible. This is something that's being looked at, and it's like all bills that come before this House that will be properly researched so we understand the implications of any bill that we put into law.

Having said that, I will give up the floor to the members opposite. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I rise here to say a few words on this bill today. I won't take up a lot of time, but being from the health care field in my life before I got into politics, I have seen a lot of people who, because of our industrial workforce in Cape Breton - the mines, the steel plant, the fishing industry, forest industry - I have seen a

lot of injuries that have occurred in the workplace. Not just on the industrial side of it, but in all other aspects of work I've seen a lot of injuries that have taken place.

I've treated a lot of those people who, because of the nature of the industry, received compensation benefits. As the member for Cape Breton Centre has indicated, someone who might have been about 55 years old went on Workers' Compensation benefits, didn't pay into the Canada Pension Plan, didn't pay into his disability plan, to hit the age of 65 and have to lose those benefits left a real hole in his or her income.

I think this bill here requires the benefits that are being paid to the individual to continue after the age of 65. Madam Speaker, the cost of that would be great, I don't know if it would be as great as what the person would be if they had to go on Canada Pension and kept paying into it or whatever, but I would hope that there would be some kind of agreement we could make with the federal government to require both governments work together so that person who was injured on the job would continue to receive relatively the same type of income in order to continue to living some kind of a lifestyle, and not have to get into, as we spoke about earlier, the income assistance program or other types of funding to be taken back.

As we heard earlier, the clinical rating system, when a person was injured on the job, they ended up getting a small pension because of that injury. If they were able to go back to work, that was fine; they got that the rest of their days. That was one way we might be able to maintain that. We heard it also changed in the 1990s.

We would hope that benefits that were to cease at the age of 65 if the person was even to obtain benefits that would be similar, even though they weren't able to pay into the Canada Pension disability program, but to make sure they could maintain some kind of decent pay schedule, lifestyle.

But there is also another part of this bill, and it's to require the survivor pensions to be paid for life notwithstanding the date the worker dies as a result of the workplace injury. I know if you carry personal disability programs, disability plans, there is some kind of clause in those programs to allow a person to at least receive some of those benefits, so that person who is left, the survivor - could be they remain in their home, or not have to rely on food banks or income assistance or social assistance or whatever to maintain living on their own lifestyle, independent living - call it what you may.

The other part of this bill would require an employer to re-employ an injured worker until the date the worker retires from the workforce instead of the age of 65. We have a lot more people continuing to work past 65, especially now that we're talking about the federal government introducing a bill where you can't draw your Canada Pension or your old age pension until you're 67. So people who were planning on retiring at 65 now continue to work, and I would hope that this bill would allow those workers to continue

paying into Workers' Compensation benefits so that if they were injured on the job after the age of 65, they would be able to receive a Workers' Compensation benefit.

As we heard earlier, we're not sure if that will be the case. If they had an injury where they were permanently disabled, we don't know if that person would be covered. By bringing this bill forward, I think the NDP have good intentions, and it will be interesting to hear the details of the bill a little more in detail, what it would cost, how long it would take to go through the system. Hopefully if this bill does continue to go through, we will hear that from the Opposition people and we would make sure that our workers get protected.

I know the government, the past government and the previous government are working hard with workers and employers. I know you see a lot of the advertisements on TV about bringing your parent or your son, your daughter, your wife or husband home. I think the commercial is great because it really hits home to see a young child there playing road hockey in the yard waiting for his father to come home from work. If we're going to spend the time doing that to make sure they come home from work, let's see what we can do to make sure we protect them, to make sure that if something was to happen, they would be able to continue to live a lifestyle and not live a life of poverty when they're finished.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, I'll take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: It's a privilege to stand on this. I want to thank my colleague, the member for Northside-Westmount, for his comments on Bill No. 31. It's an important bill to bring forward, to try to ensure that we improve living conditions for our residents here in this province.

I'm a bit taken aback by comments from the government - we're on three, four, maybe five Opposition days now. It's an opportunity for Opposition Parties to bring forward bills, to have a good debate, a good discussion about changes that we feel are important for Nova Scotians, often changes that we hear from our constituents, and I'm sure that the government members hear the same thing. But the one recurring theme that I see is that government members speak for a minute, a minute and a half, two minutes on these bills. I would think they would put a little more effort into maybe explaining why they're not passing this bill.

I have to say, from the comments of the member for Halifax Atlantic and his response to my colleague from Cape Breton Centre on this, it sounds like what the Liberal Government wants from an Opposition Party is that we just stay home and collect our pay, don't bring any changes forward, don't bring legislation forward, because many of us here have been in government before.

We have been in the House for a long time and it is a challenge to get re-elected, something that these new members over there will have to face. Often when you are in government you can't do everything you want. You try to do as much as you can and you are often restricted, just like the current government is restricted on what they can do and what they cannot do, Madam Speaker.

To think that that is how their thoughts are of an Opposition Party is that you shouldn't bother with anything because you could have done it maybe 10 years ago, 20 years ago, maybe four years ago. I'm very proud, Madam Speaker, of the member for Cape Breton Centre who has worked tirelessly for the 17 years that he has been here, to bring forward changes to the WCB. He brought positive changes not only as an Opposition member but when he was minister.

One of the travesties I've seen since I've been here is what happens to widows who remarry, who lost a husband who was receiving benefits, Madam Speaker. Under consecutive Liberals, over and over, and Progressive Conservative Governments, they denied those widows the right to collect WCB payments and it was the member for Cape Breton Centre, when he was in government, when he was minister, who changed that rule to respect those widows and I'm proud of the member for doing that.

We couldn't do all the changes, Madam Speaker. We respect the electorate here in Nova Scotia; we respect the results of elections. So now it's in the government's hands to make sure they bring forward positive changes, especially to the WCB. These are injured workers; these are people who have been injured in the workplace who are struggling now. Many of them are struggling just to stay out of poverty.

This piece of legislation will ensure that those individuals who reach the age of 65 years continue to get those benefits. We know the federal government has recently changed the age requirement, soon, in the upcoming years, to 67. So like my colleagues said, what is going to happen to those individuals? Are they going to be denied any funds until they turn 67? So now is the time for the current government, the Liberal Government, to stand up and show those injured workers that they respect the position they are in, they understand that there are challenges there and that here is a perfect piece of legislation that they could support and move forward, Madam Speaker.

I don't understand why we hear the comments from the members across the way on why they don't want to pass pieces of legislation like this. We really don't hear much. We hear - why didn't you do it? It's a fair question I guess but the question back at them is, that's fine, you are in a position right now to make positive changes, Madam Speaker.

I brought forward a WCB bill that I would hope the government looks at. Up to this time right now, they are not and it is on PTSD. But this piece of legislation affects people's lives. I recently met with a constituent of mine, Madam Speaker, who was exactly in this position less than two months ago. Unfortunately he was injured a number of years ago and

managed to stay in his own home and continue on, but got a letter from government saying your WCB will run out by the end of the month. Apply for CPP and get a Guaranteed Income Supplement after that.

It is an issue that is affecting Nova Scotians. It is going to affect them to potentially put them below the poverty line where they are going to struggle to stay in their own homes. Here is a chance for the government to show injured workers across the province that they recognize that this policy is not a policy that should be on the books and that's what we're asking for. We're asking for the government to remove the stipulation of losing your award at 65.

We hear from injured workers a lot and I know the government will continue to hear from injured workers throughout their mandate. We hope that if they don't want to pass this exact bill from the member for Cape Breton Centre, they bring in their own. They're more than capable of doing that, to bring forward changes to WCB that are positive for injured workers. Especially now, I believe there is more awareness around workplace injuries, around illnesses that people find themselves in because of the work that they do.

I know we have to speak on this bill, but as I said, there's another bill on the table, on the order paper, that would support workers too. My plea, maybe if you don't want to pass this - no disrespect to my colleague - but maybe you'll pass the other one dealing with PTSD.

Let's see something. We haven't seen anything this session that would support injured workers from the government. Is it off the radar? Is it not important to them? I'm starting to believe that maybe that's what it is. It's not important to them. They have other issues. They have to amalgamate the district health authorities before they can help injured workers in the province. Everything we're hearing from over the last year is that everything has been put on hold. They're trying to figure out how we amalgamate the district health authorities because that takes the largest portion of the budget.

Here's an opportunity, before the House wraps up this week, next week, two weeks from now, a month from now, for the government to show their support to injured workers, that they understand that it's not an easy thing to be an injured worker on WCB. I've never met, in almost 12 years that I've been an MLA, someone who said, I'm some glad I'm on WCB, I want to be there for the rest of my life. I haven't met that person. Most, if not all, want to get back into good health. They want to get back to the workplace. They want to contribute to their family and the growth of their family.

Many of the individuals who find themselves injured who will get support through a WCB claim can't put away those additional funds that we know we all require when we retire. There's no way that WCB recipients are putting additional money away, putting the nest egg away so that when they turn 65 - or 67 in a couple of years - that they have enough

to live comfortably into their golden years. We know that that can't happen. It's impossible. I don't believe there are too many - there may be a couple - but I don't believe that that's their first priority. Their first priority is trying to get healthy again, trying to get back to the workforce.

But if there's something the government can do, if there's something that Opposition Parties can do to try to support them, then I think that's what we should be looking at. No Opposition Party should be frowned upon for bringing things forward. I'm going to put the government on notice now - I'm going to bring changes, legislation over the next three years that are going to deal with a lot of things. Stuff in health, stuff in other areas of services, and if the only response I get is, why didn't you do it when you were the Health and Wellness Minister - I mean, that's a copout. That's a copout from the Liberal Government. It's a copout.

I'm going to do that. I'm giving notice now. I'm going to bring legislation forward that is going to have a positive effect on Nova Scotians and I'm going to - you know, I have a good relationship with many of members in the Liberal Party, in the Liberal Government. I'm going to talk to them. I'm going to encourage them. But to say that I shouldn't do that because we didn't do it when we were in government is just not what I would want to see in a government. I don't think it's what Nova Scotians would see.

I'm proud of the fact that I've been able to get re-elected four times. I've been in Official Opposition, government and now in Opposition again. I'm very . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Happy birthday.

MR. DAVID WILSON: You can't butter me up when I get mad. (Laughter)

But I have respect for each of the positions we hold here. I respect what government has to do, I really do. I have a new appreciation of what the job entails now from when I was first elected in 2003 as an Opposition member, then sitting over in the government benches and having the honour and privilege to sit as a Cabinet Minister and being one of the Ministers of Health and Wellness. We have three former Ministers of Health and Wellness and a current Minister of Health and Wellness here in this House and I respect each and every one of them.

I would think with the knowledge that you have, with the experience you get as you go through your political career, that you should be able to bring forward positive ideas like the member for Cape Breton Centre, bringing Bill No. 31 forward, to see what I think is a positive change to the WCB Act, Madam Speaker. He shouldn't have to apologize for that. He shouldn't have to explain to the government of the day why he didn't do it when he was in government.

Maybe it was 20 years ago that he was in government - I know it was only a year and a half ago - but we have some members in this House who have been in government a long time. If you want to bring up examples of what past governments have done, we don't have to look too much farther than the benches of the past Liberal Governments. We've had forced amalgamation of the municipalities around the province; that was under a Liberal Government. We don't stand every day and bring that forward to the Minister of Municipal Affairs saying I can't believe the former government, they forced amalgamation, even though now it seems like they might be forcing villages to amalgamate - but that's another thing.

P3 schools, a wonderful idea. We're going to be on the hook for that really soon, within the next year or so. What about the kickbacks from the liquor sales? We want to forget about that? Oh, but I don't stand on my feet every day and bring that up, Madam Speaker. What about toll highways, who brought that in? It was the Liberal Government of the day. So if the current (Interruptions)

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

MR. DAVID WILSON: So if the current members, the member for Halifax Atlantic and any other ones who want to play the game they want to play, there's a lot of ammunition from all Parties that we can bring up, but that's not the game I want to play.

I want to support a piece of legislation, if it's a Progressive Conservative piece, if it's our piece, if it's a government piece, we bring it forward and we debate it in a respectful way and hopefully the government will consider passing it, and I hope they do that with Bill No. 31. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Imagine, people talking about me like that. Well, we didn't do this one four years ago either - would you please call Bill No. 33.

Bill No. 33 - Wills Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, it certainly is a pleasure to stand tonight and speak on Bill No. 33, the Wills Act, which is a private member's bill and I want to recognize that at the very beginning because I know that private members' bills unfortunately are not that successful through our legislative process.

At this time I think I just want to point out that my understanding is that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board introduced a private member's bill many years ago regarding a winter holiday, so if persistence pays off, maybe I can take a lesson from the present minister. I want to recognize that for face value because if you really believe in something, Madam Speaker, it stands the test of time to bring that forward.

I really want to point out that when I first took over this position as of last October, a year and a half ago, I was approached by a local minister in the community of Liverpool. He reflected on the bill that we have in front of us now and to me it struck a chord to my personal social DNA. To me, this is what I stand for, not only from our Party about the importance of Medicare but this is about helping individuals who may be not as fortunate. They may be struggling with poverty issues and to me it struck at the heart of why we are here to help introduce legislation that can benefit people on a future day.

Madam Speaker, a number of times in speeches I've made reference to the Bible and I think this is a perfect opportunity, Hebrews 9:17 it quotes, "For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive."

The famous writer William Shakespeare wrote, "All that lives must die, Passing through nature to eternity." Madam Speaker, this is something that we all must face someday. At times, especially in a public forum, I think that people may feel it's awkward to talk about this, but to me, this private member's bill is about granting the last wish of an individual who will pass away, and it's a simple procedure.

Some of the questions about, why have a registry of wills? A registry of wills will assist and advise the public in the preparation in preserving a permanent record. This is so important. The servers would provide safekeeping of wills for that living person, and that's important, safekeeping. The importance of a will - it points out the importance of a trusted representative, trustees, or guardians, and it may in fact give directions for disposing of an estate in accordance to the individual's wishes. An interesting point here - avoid possible family disputes.

One question is, where should we keep a will? Where we keep a will is a personal decision, and it is kept in a place where it is safe. To me, these are all important issues, and it's something that I really bought into when the local minister brought this issue to me, because the simplicity of it. I know that some other jurisdictions also have this, so I wonder why we are not doing this. We are not following simple step-by-step instructions written in very plain language.

I want to get to this point: to save hundreds of dollars in legal fees. I know that when I stand here in the next few minutes, I may ruffle a few feathers in the legal community. Madam Speaker, there is one thing I've learned through my life in politics: you must speak your conscience. This is not about creating a cash cow for the legal

community. This is doing something very simplistic and doing it for all Nova Scotians who want to have a register of deeds.

I asked the question to a number of backbenchers here when I had the opportunity to discuss this earlier. Here is a time to do the right thing and to raise questions to your government, to your front-row ministers, and why. To me, this particular Private Member's Bill passes all the smell tests. It is the right thing to do, because we all know in our heart that it's something that people in Nova Scotia want. Other jurisdictions have this, so why are we lagging behind?

I've heard this come back why the legal community may not be just comfortable with that. I'm not here to be elected by the legal community. I'm here to represent all Nova Scotians, and a lot of the Nova Scotians that I represent, especially that local minister in my community, know that this Wills Act, or the registration of a will, is the right approach.

To me, it is an opportunity to speak your mind. I know we've had many debates, many discussions in this House and in this session, but if you look at this private member's bill - and I made reference to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board earlier, of her introducing a Private Member's Bill and standing and fighting for that over a number of years. I'm glad she has seen that come through.

I also know that this Wills Act is something that I believe in, and I believe a lot of people, if you look deep within your own soul, that it passes all those check marks and you do the evaluation and it's the right thing to do for the ordinary Nova Scotian. If you look at the legal community they may have an opportunity to give you their opinion, it may go in the other direction.

I'm saying, as I sit down in a very few minutes, listen to your conscience, listen to the ordinary people in these communities, and the other point I want to quickly make is that the ordinary, most vulnerable people do not have a lobbyist other than their elected representative that they put, in each election, to this House. That is the job that we're here to do, to represent all the individuals, to bring their voices forward.

Tonight, there was an opportunity that a senior told me many years ago, he said, there are three approaches to a speech - you can go and listen, you can go and just be quiet, or you can speak out in a forceful manner. Now is the time to be forceful and say that we need a will registry. We need to speak up for the most vulnerable, the poor in our community whom this will benefit, and not be influenced by a very few people, a selective group who may be in the legal community.

Thank you for the opportunity and I hope to have your support on this particular private member's bill. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to this Bill No. 33, the Wills Act and I want to begin by thanking the member for Queens-Shelburne for bringing this forward. I know he does this with the best of intentions and I know he feels that this is an amendment that will help people in the community and will make things better for them.

I want to assure him that in speaking out against the bill he has brought forward, I don't do that on behalf of the community. I do that based on my experience as a member of the legal community, and as a person who has represented clients for over 20 years and who actually knows what their needs are and how they are served, in fact, by the legal community with respect to their wills and other matters.

The province has a legislative responsibility with respect to wills and they've provided a framework that allows for the devolution of property through wills upon death. I think some of my friend's comments in that regard are very accurate. The current Wills Act effectively sets out the form and substance that's required to ensure that this devolution of property happens in an orderly and comprehensive way.

The amendment proposed by the Third Party reaches far beyond what this mandate is and if it would pass it would create a new provincial responsibility complete with a whole new infrastructure which is far outside the current legislative mandate. Based on my experience, I'm certainly not aware of any clear need or public request or outcry for such a registry. As I say, based on my experience in the community I've never had a request for an inquiry from any clients or other people that it would have led me to believe that such a registry is required or necessary.

The matter has been studied in the past. In 1999 the Nova Scotia Law Reform Commission considered the issue of establishing and maintaining a public wills depository and they recommended against doing so. Since that time - I know that's a long time ago, 1999, but I'm certainly not aware that since that time anything has changed or any new developments have come forward that would require revisiting that advice.

One of the things that is not recognized by the bill that is brought forward by the member for Queens-Shelburne is that effective estate planning, which people generally do as a package when they visit their lawyer, involves more than just preparing a will. Estate planning involves preparing for a number of situations - the passage of your property on death is definitely a very important one, but planning for incapacity is another one, and everybody has to make preparations for how the property and their income situation or their financial situation will be dealt with upon incapacity, as well as their personal situation, their personal care, and their medical decision making.

That, Madam Speaker, involves a suite of documents, not just a will, and it's important that people take control of those documents once they're prepared and properly executed and keep them all in a safe place and generally keep them together so that the

people that they've given the responsibility to deal with those situations know where to find them and can access them when necessary.

A wills registry, in the sense that those things are all part of modern estate planning, is really an outdated idea that is, in my humble opinion, designed to deal with a problem that doesn't really exist.

The creation of a wills registry would involve an expense not only to the clients who would presumably have to pay the province to store their documents there but also an expense to maintain the registry and an assumption of responsibility in the province that truly we can ill afford at this time, it's unnecessary and certainly not something I think we would be looking around in government for money to try to fund.

Now a lawyer's obligation, which I know myself and all of my colleagues in the legal profession take very highly, is to give their clients good advice on the safe storage of their wills. One of the services that most law firms that I'm familiar with, including firms that I've worked with in the past, provide to their clients is the free storage of those documents, it's something that we assume, we retain the documents when they're signed, we put them in a safe place within our office so that people's families, or whoever might be responsible, can come back and get those at some future time.

In my experience this works very well, some people aren't comfortable with doing that, they're not comfortable with leaving them in the care of the lawyer, they want to take responsibility for them and control of them themselves, and that's fine as well. They have many options as to how they can do that, they're always advised on the way out the door that they have to be protected against fire and other harm that might result to the actual original documents.

Some store them in a safety deposit box, many people have those boxes themselves and it's no additional cost or expense to them to put them in there, they have their deed and maybe some jewelry and some old cash or something in that box. Or they retain them in their house somewhere in some kind of a safe box within their house. Those are very personal choices and those people, in my opinion, wouldn't utilize the service of a wills registry anyway, that's a responsibility that they would like to keep for themselves.

If a need exists for other storage options, which frankly in my experience I've never seen, I would suggest that we let the private sector handle it. It's something that I'm not aware of exists in our jurisdiction, I believe based on some research that I've had a chance to review that it does exist in other larger jurisdictions. The costs appear to be quite modest and comparable to the government registries that do exist and I think that it's a wonderful service that the private sector could provide to anyone who wishes to avail themselves of it. I think it's another indicator that a wills registry isn't really a necessary thing in our province because it doesn't exist and if it was necessary, I think it would have been a service that would exist and would have been provided by the private sector.

As someone with some experience in this, as I say, 20-some years of practising law and helping many, many clients with their estate planning, I want to take this opportunity to provide a little free legal advice to the members who are present in the House today and to anyone who may be watching on television. There aren't any ads, direct ads for any law firms coming on here but we have a good system here, it's not broken, I don't think we really need to do anything to fix it but it is important for everyone to know that you have to have up-to-date professional estate planning. It's an absolute necessity, get a will, get a power of attorney, get a personal directive, put them all in a safe place and tell your executor or your attorney or your personal representative where they are. That's how you make sure that your affairs will be handled in an effective and efficient manner, should you be unable to do it yourself.

So with those few remarks, I want to commend the member for the good intentions he has put forward in this legislation but unfortunately I don't see a need for the registry and I feel that we should not go ahead with this proposal. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed listening to both comments from both members. It is certainly good to see the concern that this Legislature has for people and for families who are dealing with the loss of loved ones and the need to be able to manage the affairs and the things that take place after that loved one passes on.

The reason I know this is the second time I've gotten up to speak on this matter - I spoke on it last Spring and I know the bill has been brought forward again because we've had a - the Legislature was prorogued and of course the member has brought the matter forward again so it's back on the order paper.

Madam Speaker, I know it's being brought forward because there is a concern for people, especially for people who perhaps don't have a lot of knowledge about what it would take to get a will put together, for people who may not pay a lot of attention to their finances at home. It always surprises me how common that is.

I think now in the education system we are seeing a little more - I'm not positive about this - but I think there is some effort now to improve financial literacy for young people. What a great thing that is, Madam Speaker, because there are a few things that people can latch on to if they understand the concepts. One of them is having a will; the other is the idea of saving money. We live in a world now where most people are not saving money because it's difficult but also because, perhaps, there is not the awareness that saving money is necessary for the future, for a better future, for most people at least and also because we're not living in an environment where there's a great reward for savers, with interest rates so low.

I know the member is bringing forward this bill with concern for people who may need some assistance in not only having a will put together but also to ensure that it's not tampered with and to ensure that it's in a safe place where people will not have difficulty finding it. I think those are important goals.

The question does come down to whether it is the responsibility of the government or - maybe it's not fair to say that but if it's something that the government could be offering to people who want the government's help. I can see that, Madam Speaker, I can see the premise behind that, but I'm not quite ready to support it.

One of the reasons is because I'm not sure of the costs. I do believe that I know financial planning has come a long way. Years ago it was pretty much all about finding clients who might have some savings and investing the money and moving on. But nowadays, even at the banks when people start investing, even when they are beginning to invest, they get a much better consultation nowadays. The industry has improved in terms of its professionalism and in terms of its help for people.

I know that one of the things that is stressed is the importance of having a will and having it in a location that is safe and accessible, primarily by the person who is made the executor for that person who is having the will made.

I know there have been improvements but I also recognize the reason why the member is bringing forward the bill, that there are people out there who are perhaps not getting this counselling and perhaps are not aware of the importance of having a will. I don't know how much more we can do about that, Madam Speaker. We could create a registry and we could go down this road, but again, as I said, I'm not quite ready to support that because I would need to see more - and it's difficult to show that, I know, in a speech in the Legislature, but I would need to see something more practical in terms of how it would actually work.

I would be inclined to encourage people to talk to someone who is a financial advisor. I know, in many cases, that assistance is provided without charge, at least the advice to go to a lawyer and why that's important to go to a lawyer to get a will made. I would encourage people to go that route because the help is there. There's certainly a cost to drafting a will but I think for most people, at least for people who would have some assets, it would be worth their while to do that.

Essentially what we are talking about here, when it really comes down to it - in the most unfortunate situation, instead of dividing assets, if there is no will in place, it can come down to dividing families. No one wants to see that. I know that when a will is clear and when the people who are involved in the loved one's life who does pass away are included in the will and it's identified what they are to receive, it just makes it a lot easier. It helps to prevent - it might not prevent it in all cases - but I believe it helps to prevent situations where there are fights over the assets of the person who is deceased.

So, step one is certainly to have a will. The cost of that varies. Step two is to ensure that the person who is going to be the executor, the person who is going to be in charge of managing things once the person is deceased, that that person, the executor, can find the will. If it's in a safe place at home, that's as good a place as any. It doesn't necessarily have to be in a safe. If it's somewhere at home and the executor knows where that is, that can help to solve a lot of problems. Lawyers often will offer the service of keeping a copy of the will in their files, so that is something that can be accessed if it's not in the home.

We also have the issue of tampering and you certainly hear stories. I've heard multiple stories over the years of wills being tampered with at least in the sense that you have, maybe, a family member or a group of family members really take advantage of a person who later becomes deceased. They may be sick at the time. They may be confused. They may be subject to pressures. They may feel like, for whatever reason, that they owe that group of people something because maybe that group of people is caring for them.

I've seen a situation where - I don't know if I would call it caring for them - it looked like it was pretty much pre-meditated, moving that person down the road to feeling guilty and changing the will, providing them with the assets. It certainly does happen and it's very unfortunate. I am sure that is one of the things that the member who had put forward this bill is trying to prevent. I guess this will always be a challenge and I don't know if the government had a registry, if it would fully protect against that happening.

The other thing I have mentioned is the cost of fees. That's not fully fleshed out in this. It is a service that could end up costing taxpayers if the fees used under this service were not enough to cover the cost of the program. That does cause me some concern because I would like to think that these are matters that can be handled without the need for a registry, without the need for a cost to taxpayers.

So, Madam Speaker, I know I've spoken on this matter already last Spring . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Your time has elapsed.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I too enjoyed listening to all the different perspectives from around the House on this bill, Bill No. 33 - an Act to Amend Chapter 505 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Wills Act. Or as I like to call it, the Will Bill.

I think that my colleague is on the right track here in wanting to basically have another way of people being able to register their wills, both for when they die, and also I would say, having living wills as well, which is something that we talk about more and more all the time. I know that my colleague introduced this bill - my colleague, the member for Queens-Shelburne - because he said that creating a will registry for Nova Scotians just

felt like the right thing to do because, as he says, right now in Nova Scotia if someone's will goes missing or is lost, it can cause a great deal of stress for family members and friends. A will registry would allow Nova Scotians to have peace of mind knowing that their will is being kept in a safe place.

I would have to say that's why our NDP is introducing this bill to create a will registry because for a very reasonable cost, Nova Scotians would then be able to register their wills with the provincial registrar who would hold the will for safekeeping. Similar systems do already exist, they exist in other provinces including British Columbia and Ontario. We've heard from Nova Scotians that the issue of storing their will and the carrying out of their final wishes is of great concern. We just think that this bill will help to address those concerns.

For instance, we've heard some of the members talk about leaving wills at home. What if there's a fire? What if there's a flood? What if that little cupboard where that will is being kept is somehow destroyed and the will is destroyed? Unless there's another method of getting a hold of that will and having somebody be able to see what it says, this could be a huge problem. There's also, as one of the members mentioned, the problem of will tampering. The other thing is, if it's left with a lawyer, lawyers die too. As much as many of them would wish that they don't, they actually do.

I think that having it registered online and keeping it up to date with the modern day and age is a very good idea. The other thing is, which we've talked about in this House at length today, poverty issues and people who are having trouble to pay for certain things that others of us may not have any trouble dealing with. This goes for marriage licences, this goes for divorce proceeding, this also goes for wills. The New Democratic Party has always believed that the social, the economic and political progress of Nova Scotia can be assured only by the application of social democratic and egalitarian principles for the governance and administration of public affairs.

Two of these Statutes in our framework discuss the dignity and freedom of the individual as a basic right that must be maintained and extended to all persons, and that the abolition of poverty and the elimination of exploitation are achievable goals and must be the priority of any thinking and compassionate government. I think as a compassionate and thinking government, we should be trying to make things easier for people to deal with, the issues that are important to every single person's life.

When I was living in Los Angeles at one point in time, I started going to some classes in Buddhism to talk about death and dying because I knew my grandmother, who was in her nineties by that time, was going to be passing on and I kind of wanted to get some help in dealing with it. I remember the teacher bringing in a skull one time and talking about how in Tibet and other countries like this people are taught from an early age to deal with death and look at death as part of living and part of life. It's something we all have to face; it's something we'll have to face with our loved ones and our friends. At one

point she held up the skull on her shoulder, and she said, “What is the difference between this” - pointing to the skull - “and this?” - pointing to her beautiful face. She waited and she paused, and then she looked at us and she said, “Time. Time. Time is the only difference.”

Mr. Speaker, I think that this is something that we all need to remember. “Death and taxes” is a phrase that is quite well known, because it is something none of us can avoid. For thousands of years we’ve been unable to avoid it. So the more that we are comfortable talking about death, talking about wills and how we’re going to make it easier for people to be able to make their wishes known for when they’re gone, I think is a commendable thing to do.

The other thing I would like to say is that, on the point of living wills, I think that this would be an opportunity for people who do have a feeling about what they would like to happen to them if indeed they get very, very ill and unable to look after themselves and unable to have the kind of quality of life that they feel they need to have in order to go on living.

This is becoming more and more of a talked-about issue in Canada. There was a young woman, a 29-year-old, who just recently chose to go to Oregon in order to end her life peacefully with her family around her. That was because it’s legal in the State of Oregon. I heard that young woman on the radio speaking before she died and talking about why she had made this decision. My heart just went out to her and her family, but I also have to give them my great respect for making that decision as a family and allowing her the dignity to make that decision and to follow along with her wishes.

Now, some of us might get to a point in our lives where we’re unable to speak to what those concerns are, so if we have a living will that approaches all of these concerns ahead of time, our families will be helped along in the process of deciding what to do with us if we cannot speak for ourselves or are in a vegetative state or a coma or something like that.

Mr. Speaker, I’d also like to talk about the fact that with poverty in Nova Scotia, the rates - while we were in government we did many, many different things that helped poverty in Nova Scotia. In 2013, Statistics Canada released some very interesting numbers on poverty across Canada, including the fact that the number of Nova Scotians living in poverty had reached its lowest level in decades between the years 2009 and 2013, when our NDP Government was in office.

We took a broad position and holistic approach to eradicating poverty, and we would have liked to do much more, but there are only so many things you can do in a short amount of time like four years. But we did do so much that, in fact, it said in the statistics that the number of people living in low-income dropped from 71,000 to 64,000 between 2010 and 2011 in Nova Scotia. That percentage was 7.7 per cent down to 7 per cent, and the number of children under 18 living in low-income families dropped from 15,000 to

13,000 between 2010 to 2011 in Nova Scotia. That's a percentage of from 8.9 per cent to 8 per cent of children living in poverty.

The percentage of seniors aged 65 and over living in low-income dropped from 3.1 to 1.9 per cent, and compared to the rest of the country, Nova Scotia had the fifth-lowest percentage of people living in low-income, after P.E.I., Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick. Alberta had the same rate as Nova Scotia.

We've been talking about poverty issues here today. Many of us have gotten up to our feet and spoken about poverty, and I think that that is very important when we're taking into consideration the kinds of smaller bills that many people might not think are as important as some of the bigger ones. But I think it's little bills like this, little bills like the one my colleague has introduced, that make a difference to the everyday life of everyday people, and the everyday death of everyday people, which as we've said is just a matter of time.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that for Nova Scotians, little things like, for instance, divorce proceedings can be very expensive. I know that at one point when I got a divorce from somebody, we had no property in common, it was amicable, and we actually went to the local lawyers and picked up a form that we filled out ourselves and we didn't have to pay anything more, other than just putting that in to the (Interruption) Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up.

MR. SPEAKER: We're past our time, so I'll give you 30 seconds.

MS. ZANN: Thank you. On that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and say I would hope that everybody would support my colleague's bill for helping everyday Nova Scotians with their everyday lives and death. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: That, Mr. Speaker, just about concludes our business for the day - just one small bit of business before we wrap up, the member for Sackville-Cobequid, if people have seen him around today and he looks older, it's because he is. It's his birthday, so we want to congratulate him.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's 35.

MR. CORBETT: Well yes, plus, plus.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the business of the New Democratic Party for today. I'll hand it over to the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, November 6th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. At that time we'll call Government Business, Committee of the Whole House, Bill Nos. 51, 60 and 64, Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 44, 45, 61, 6, 38, 50, 52, 58, 59, 62, 65, 66, and 64.

With that, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, November 6th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, November 6th, at 1:00 p.m.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The topic of late debate, submitted by the honourable member for Pictou East, is:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly encourage the Minister of Internal Services to provide substantive answers to the many questions that have been raised about the FOIPOP process in Nova Scotia.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East, take it away.

FOIPOP QUESTIONS: DIS MIN. - ANSWERS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I will try to not disappoint you as I take it away here. I know you were quite taken with my riveting words last night, so we'll see how we do today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about this important issue of freedom of information. In democracy, transparency is a key driver of accountability. It enables citizens to judge for themselves how their tax dollars are being spent and to assess whether the people they elect are following through on their commitments.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia was once a leader in this area. In 1977 our province became the first province to pass access to information legislation. Over the years that legislation has been adjusted, expanded and improved. It has changed with the times.

Mr. Speaker, everything should evolve with the times and modernize itself but that is supposed to be evolution for the better, but under this government we've seen that that modernization, those changes, have come to a screeching halt. In 2012, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer, Dulcie McCallum, raised issues in her annual report and in other places. She felt that legislators should modernize Nova Scotia's FOIPOP process and make it more accountable and make it more transparent. She suggested that Nova Scotia do what the vast majority of other provinces were doing, she suggested that Nova Scotia make the Review Officer an Officer of the Legislature, make the Review Officer truly independent and outside the reach of the government of the day. That is what she suggested.

Before the election the Premier sounded like he would comply with the review officer's request. In fact, he said he wanted to make Nova Scotia the most open and transparent province in Canada. Those are words we hear a lot in this Legislature about the openness and the transparency of this government. In fact, I think one of the government members at one point referred to it as the most open and transparent government for all time. But, sadly, that's not the case.

In the Speech from the Throne, the government said putting Nova Scotians first “. . . begins with an open and accountable government.” That's what we all want. Now that the new government is firmly in place, the Premier says he doesn't have time to worry about access to information. He said in a media interview, “I have enough challenges that I'm being faced with dealing on a daily basis of real problems, that's what I'm going to continue to focus on.” He's going to focus on real problems, not on making the government more open and more transparent.

Speaking of quotes around freedom of information, the minister himself called FOIPOP requests “a fishing expedition”. So we have a Premier who is dealing with real problems and a minister who doesn't want to deal with FOIPOP requests because they're fishing expeditions. The minister should tell us why a transparent FOIPOP process is not a priority for this government. Their actions are showing that it clearly is not a priority for this government.

We have seen concrete proof that the Premier and his minister are not focusing on making the government more transparent. Since forming government, the Liberals have used a host of delay tactics including extraordinary costs and unclear rules to keep information from the general public. For example, the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism wanted to charge the PC caucus almost \$15,000 for information on the *Nova Star*. The charge for a similar request from a media outlet was many times

lower. The quote for the media outlet, \$175. It was \$15,000 for the PC caucus, \$175 for the media for very similar requests.

One day the minister says there are no vacant FOIPOP administration positions. A week later we find out that a temporary consultant had been hired to deal with a FOIPOP request backlog. So, one day we hear in Question Period that there are no vacant positions, positions are just filled internally by reshuffling people around, and then we find out in fact a temporary consultant was hired to help with the FOIPOP backlog and he was paid \$7,000 for that work.

So, I'm hoping today that the minister will be able to tell us why providing timely, accurate information to Nova Scotians in a fair way is not a priority for this government. Remember that transparency is a key driver of accountability. Transparency is what enables citizens to judge for themselves how their tax dollars are being spent and it enables citizens to assess whether the people they elect are following through on their commitments.

Before the election it seemed like it might be a priority to be transparent; they certainly had a lot of pride in saying they were transparent. After the election, too busy to deal with transparency, too busy to be open with Nova Scotians and if anyone wants information, here's your invoice for \$15,000, depending on who you are, it might be \$175. No vacant positions, FOIPOP requests are getting filled, people are filling in, they're filling backlogs but a \$7,000 consultant needs to be hired.

Most recently we have seen the Liberal Government use their majority to block the FOIPOP officer from appearing before a standing committee of this House. The Party line was that the topic was a surprise to the Liberal Party: they didn't tell us in time that they wanted to bring the FOIPOP officer. In actual fact, they knew for 12 days before that meeting that that was a request of our Party to bring that officer forward. Even in the face of knowing that, they stuck to the excuse that they didn't have enough time.

So I am hopeful today that somebody from the government side will be able to tell members why this government doesn't want the FOIPOP officer to answer questions of MLAs. Nova Scotia used to be a leader in transparency and accountability, yet at every turn this government has acted to prevent transparency and avoid accountability.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, I long for the good old days when we were a leader in those things. But today I hope that we will hear substantive answers to the many questions that we have about the Liberal actions and what they have raised about the FOIPOP process in our province.

I'm anxious to hear from a government member on how it could be that one Party would request information and get a quote for \$15,000 and another Party would get a quote for \$175. I am interested to hear from a government member on how many consultants are

they actually having to hire throughout the system. They said they were doing this work with switching people around and people back-filling, that they had no vacant positions. But what we are hearing is, in actual fact, they are bringing in third parties, bringing in consultants at \$7,000 to do some work helping with backlogs.

Maybe they need to charge our caucus \$15,000 so they can afford to pay the \$7,000 consultants. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly doesn't seem fair and it doesn't seem open, and it doesn't seem transparent. We would like to exercise our right as MLAs to bring some of these officers before committees and talk to them. That's the purpose of committees, to be able to talk to people in the government and understand what's happening.

Why would the government use a majority to block people from coming and talking to us? Maybe they are afraid of what we might learn in there about how many consultants are through the system. So I'll take my seat and anxiously await to hear some explanations from a government member. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this evening to address this topic, the very important topic of freedom of information, protection of privacy, and transparency in government. We live in a province that values the public's right to access information from their government. Nova Scotia was, in fact, the first province in Canada to enact access to information legislation. The first law was passed in 1977 in this very Chamber. The original Freedom of Information Act was later replaced with the more comprehensive statute, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or as it's more commonly thrown around in this Chamber, FOIPOP.

Since that time, all other jurisdictions in the country have followed suit. Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is a leader in transparency and access to information, and it remains so to this day. The current Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is the formal process Nova Scotians use to get access to government records. At the same time, it protects the privacy of individuals from having their personal information made public. The goal of the Act is to balance an individual's right to know and an individual's right to privacy. The FOIPOP Act applies to all government departments and agencies, municipalities, district health authorities, university school boards and other public sector entities.

Under the Act, all public bodies must be accountable, open and transparent to the public. They must provide access to information to those who seek it, with limited exemptions, and they are also obliged to ensure the protection of individuals' personal privacy. The member who rose to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus this evening gave some specific examples of problems that he perceives with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy regime, Mr. Speaker, and I want to point out to

this House some of the inaccuracies and some of the facts that he is leaving out of that description.

All FOIPOP requests are not created equal. They have to be responded to by the information officers in the form that they are presented. So for example, if an organization such as the Progressive Conservative caucus makes a request to a FOIPOP officer for all information relating to the Nova Star ferry since 2012 that involves a vast amount of information that spans many departments within the government. There are contracts, there are communications, and there could conceivably be boxes and boxes of information. The legislation and the regime provide that the person who requests the information is responsible for the cost of that information. If you make a request for that amount of information, you are going to pay the cost.

On the other hand the *Chronicle Herald* is a business, Mr. Speaker. They are in the business of information and they understand the consequences of their FOIPOP requests and the expenses that are involved in the requests that they make. When they make a request, they specify the particular information that they are looking for. They do not engage in fishing expeditions that will result in boxes upon boxes of documents having to be compiled by freedom of information officers from numerous departments in the government, and as a result they are presented with a cost for that work that represents the nature of the request.

It is disingenuous for the member to stand up here and try to compare apples to apples and blame the government for this type of information request made by this caucus. It is conceivable that they could stand up and request all the records of all of the departments in government and then stand up in this House as they have been doing and complain about the cost of doing that.

Some more information about our system in Nova Scotia - as I say, one of the most transparent anywhere, Mr. Speaker - the Privacy Review Officer Act was proclaimed in 2008. This Act allowed the review officer to have independent oversight of privacy decisions for public sector entities. It also gave the review officer new enhanced powers in privacy oversight including self-initiated investigations, consultations with public bodies, and public education.

The rapidly changes in technology present a challenge and an opportunity to protection of privacy. The review officer's oversight role is critical and challenges us to continue to assess risks to ensure personal information is kept private.

In 2013 the Personal Health Information Act became law. It carves out hospital, doctor, and other health professional patient records to better protect our personal health information. In this Statute, the review officer is given a broad mandate with respect to oversight, including investigation regarding privacy, breach notifications, privacy and

access consultations, and public education. That is a brief overview of the role the review officer plays in government and society.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Nova Scotians have a right to access the information held by their government and our government, all of our government, believes that. They also have a right to expect fair and timely access to this information and there is a cost to that, and there are a certain number of personnel that are required to effect that task.

The other thing that I would like to bring to the attention of this house is the remarks by the member that indicate that it was somehow wrong or beyond the scope of government or somehow frivolous for the government to bring in a consultant or someone to help to meet with the freedom of information request and to provide the information requested by Nova Scotians. That Mr. Speaker is a necessary function of government, to implement the human resources required to meet with these requests.

All Nova Scotians have a right to expect fair and timely access to government information and this government strives to do just that. The FOIPOP Act and the review office are in place to hold us as government, accountable. The Premier definitely feels strongly about access to information, and since becoming elected it has been a priority of his to ensure that all departments do a better job with providing Nova Scotians with access to the information they seek.

While it is true that we believe our system is working well and provides a valuable service to Nova Scotians, we have made changes to ensure that our government can be as transparent as possible. We have been reviewing policies and procedures to ensure consistency between departments. We have also moved the Chief Information Access and Privacy Officer who oversees implementation of the Act to the new Department of Internal Services.

Finally, we hired a new FOIPOP Review Officer, Catherine Tully, in September. Ms. Tully has an extensive history working in the areas of access and privacy law in both provincial government institutions across the country and federal Crown corporations. The FOIPOP Review Office, led by Ms. Tully, is independent and non-partisan. It is important that we seek her views on any legislative reform that would impact her work. Making any type of piecemeal change to this arrangement will not make the system operate any better.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the dozens of professionals working in departments and agencies across government who administer the FOIPOP Act every day. They fill hundreds of requests a year from Nova Scotians wanting access to government information, always in a timely and professional manner. I imagine that this was the spirit behind the original Act of 1977 and I submit to you that it is still working today. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could do an introduction before we finish up here.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Joining us in the west gallery are some guests from the Municipality of the District of Barrington. I'll ask them to stand as I introduce them: Warden Eddie Nickerson; Brian Holland, the Clerk; and two friends of mine, Councillor George El-Jakl and his wife, so if you can give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I believe there's a bit of time left, Mr. Speaker, is there?

MR. SPEAKER: Yup, we've got 10 minutes.

MR. ORRELL: Ten minutes, I won't be that long, Mr. Speaker - I don't think I will.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't intend to speak on this resolution in this late debate this evening about the Minister of Internal Services to provide substantive answers to the many questions that have been raised about the FOIPOP process in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, during this session all we've heard is that this is the most open and transparent government. Everything we talk and ask, it's the most open and transparent government. Democracy - transparency is the key. We all want to strive to make sure everything we do in this Legislature, everything we do in our lives is transparent and open and that we make sure that when people look for answers, we get the answers that they may not necessarily want to hear but to the best of our ability. I believe that's the idea of the FOIPOP Officer, the FOIPOP Commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, we all have the right to access this information. During a committee last week we were asked - we were doing an agenda-setting procedure and it came down at our turn as the Official Opposition to put a representative up to come into the Human Resources Committee. We had three people on our list and at the top of our list was the FOIPOP Officer, the new FOIPOP Officer, Ms. Tully. We thought, what a great thing, we can bring the FOIPOP Officer in, we can ask questions of her, she can explain to us her job. We can actually get to put a face with the name. We can get a process going where we can have open and honest dialogue with each other.

Mr. Speaker, the people on that committee, representing the Liberal Government, denied us that access. Now I was amazed to hear that because we were told that this is the most open and transparent government. We wanted to start off on the good foot with our

FOIPOP Officer to allow that to happen and the government members on that committee shot it down. They never considered it.

Our response back to that question was that she hasn't been on the job long enough to allow her to come and present to us. Now we just heard five minutes ago that this lady has extensive experience all over the country in the freedom of information area. We hear from the people on the Human Resources Committee that represent the Liberal Government that they didn't want her to appear because she hasn't been on the job long enough.

The scary part about this whole situation is, during Question Period and speaking with some of the other people in the government, we asked the question of why they would not allow us to bring her before this committee, and we were told that they had nothing to do with it, it was the people on the committee themselves, which I have a hard time believing because I believe the people on that committee are good, honest people. I don't see why they would have any problem with us bringing forward an officer of this Legislature so that we could actually ask questions in an open and honest dialogue to get some of the answers to some of the question that we have; not necessarily questions on how much things are going to cost. What is the process? What is our best way to get the information we needed on an expedited time. The committee is there so we can figure out and ask the questions of the people who do the presentations to us.

In another question we had for the Premier, he said he has enough challenges that are being faced with on a daily basis, daily basis of real problems and that's what he's going to continue to focus on. He's too busy to deal with the transparency that we as Opposition members, both Progressive Conservative and NDP members, wanted to have in front of that committee. Nova Scotians and the people we represent in Nova Scotia, my constituents, the other members of that committee wanted to bring this lady forward so we could start off on the right foot.

Openness and transparency is it. If we're going to be transparent we're going to be transparent, how can we pick and choose what we want to be open and transparent with? My idea of transparency is being able to get the information you ask for, within reason. I mean I don't expect information to come out that is going to damage a contract that might be coming up within the government that would put thousands of people in Nova Scotia to work.

We know that the government doesn't rush out and take pictures, the Premier said that. He doesn't go the media every time - we wouldn't want to know that stuff if it's a trade secret, but we would like to know the questions that we ask that if we had the opportunity to get those answers that the FOIPOP Commissioner was going to give them to us. We just thought that that would be a great starting point, the committee members would get to hear what she does, what she plans on doing, how she plans to operate, what her expectations are of us, and then we can ask what our expectations are of her.

I think that's pretty simple. We were also told this week to bring the information back to the committee again and bring it back up and ask for her to come forward again. If the members of that committee who refused us to bring her the first time now have a change of heart, then there's someone telling these people what to do. Because if they're going to flip-flop and bring it in now and allow it to happen, why couldn't we have allowed it to happen at that time?

I'm not saying it's the members of the committee because I know the people on that committee are good, honest people and they want to do what's best for the citizens and the people that they represent, the same as we all do. In my opinion, and it's only my opinion, my strict opinion is they were told that that FOIPOP Commissioner should not attend that HR committee. To me that's a flip-flop.

We, as members of the Opposition, couldn't understand it, so we were asked to bring someone else to this committee. Why do we have a choice of who we would like to have come before this committee so we can hear their views and ask the questions, if every time - and that's not the first time it has happened - we want to bring someone or something forward that's important to the people of Nova Scotia, we are blocked by having them come in to speak to us.

The FOIPOP Commissioner, a very important job, and I'm sure it's not an easy job, I'm sure it's a job that takes a lot of patience, a lot of trying and I'm sure they're putting in a lot of work. But we'd like to be able to hear that from the FOIPOP officer herself. As I said, I'm sure the people on the committee represent their constituents very well and I'm sure if they were to ask the question and want to bring whoever they want to bring forward, they were allowed to.

I know the NDP and we supported bringing the FOIPOP Commissioner into that committee. We would love to be able to hear her side of the story, as I said. But if we're going to be open and transparent and we want to make sure that this government, who says they are open and transparent, why are we having things that we ask for and things we want to do blocked?

No one has been able to answer that question. No one has told us why, but we are told to bring the name back before the committee meeting and see if their opinion has changed. Why has it changed? Why would it change all of sudden if they felt that strongly about the person not coming to the committee - why would it change now? I'd like to get those answers, maybe I'll have to FOIPOP that information - I don't know if that's possible.

To listen to what we're hearing from the other side that they're the most open and transparent government - and it's not just the one committee that we've had that concern with, it's other committees, and we have . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to bring to the member's attention that according to O'Brien and Bosc, Page 1074, Chapter 20, it is not in order for members to allude to committee proceedings or evidence in the House until the committee has presented its report to the House. I have been listening intently, and we're treading a real fine line here between debating the resolution and the work of this committee.

I just want to bring you back on track, and we're out of time.

That concludes the late debate for today.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon.

[The House rose at 5:23 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 595**

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 Musical Friends is a free after-school music program for children in Chester, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Musical Friends, organized by Dawn Harwood Jones through St. Stephen's Anglican Church, is in its second year of providing children with a creative expression, including singing and theatre games; and

Whereas with the help of guest musicians, the participants of Musical Friends create fun projects like last year's music video *So This is Chester*;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Dawn Harwood Jones, St. Stephen's Anglican Church, the participants, and the volunteers of Musical Friends on the continued success of this important program.

RESOLUTION NO. 596

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 the grand opening of the new Hubbards Amphitheatre took place on July 26, 2014; and

Whereas the amphitheatre is on the Town of Hubbards' waterfront, built into the hillside of what is better known as Fish Plant Hill; and

Whereas the amphitheatre is a beautiful new feature to be used for community use and special events;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Town of Hubbards on the addition of this unique amphitheatre to its waterfront park.

RESOLUTION NO. 597

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 White Sails Bakery & Deli, Whynotts Cove, Nova Scotia, has become a well-known destination restaurant; and

Whereas this well-known establishment has been chosen as one of the best restaurants in the country by *Where to Eat in Canada* for the last three years; and

Whereas White Sails Bakery & Deli has quickly become an important employer and addition to the local economy of the Tantallon area;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Jacques Juteau and Carolyn Clarke, the owners of the White Sails Bakery & Deli, for their dedication and hard work to make their restaurant one of the best in Canada.

RESOLUTION NO. 598

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 St. Margaret's Bay Chiropractic is celebrating its 20th Anniversary; and

Whereas over the past 20 years, more than 7,000 people have been a part of the practice; and

Whereas St. Margaret's Bay Chiropractic is a vital part of the community, with a team of professionals committed to improving people's lives;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate St. Margaret's Bay Chiropractic on their 20th Anniversary.

RESOLUTION NO. 599

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 Quinn Everett is a football player from St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, who played with the Timberlea Titans, Sir John A. MacDonald Flames and the Mount Allison Mounties; and

Whereas Quinn was the only Nova Scotia football player to receive a call from the Canadian Football League to attend rookie training camp in the hope of being selected for the current CFL season; and

Whereas although Quinn was approached by almost every CFL team, he chose to go to training camp with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature commend Quinn Everett on his hard work and dedication in pursuing his dream of playing football at a national level.

RESOLUTION NO. 600

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 Bay Hammocks is a small business owned by Michelle Taggart located in Seabright, NS; and

Whereas since purchasing the business in 2013, Michelle has expanded to include a store where other artisans can show their work and displays the largest hammock in Canada; and

Whereas Bay Hammocks creates their products using traditional handcraft methods;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates founder Michelle Taggart, as well as master weaver Lynn Sallans and the rest of the Bay Hammocks family, for keeping the tradition of hammock-making alive in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 601

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas tae kwon do is a Korean martial art which is a sport that combines combat and self defense with exercise; and

Whereas Jim Hiltz, founder of Jim's Tae kwon do, has about 60 students from the age of 4 to adult taking classes in both of his clubs; and

Whereas Jim believes that tae kwon do teaches values such as respect and honour that can make the world a safer place and the name tae kwon do loosely translated means the way of the foot and the hand;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jim Hiltz and Jim's Tae kwon do for instilling discipline and values in students of all ages.

RESOLUTION NO. 602

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas long-time residents of West Hants Andrew and Rita Connolly, after 43 years in the optician industry, have decided to set their sights on a more casual lifestyle; and

Whereas beginning with Bruce A Wile Optician back in 1979 to 1998, then Andrew Connolly Dispensing Optician Limited 1998 to the present, this local business has come full circle as Dave and Pam White, the new owners, also own Bruce A Wile in Kentville; and

Whereas after working hard all these years, Andrew plans to do more things that he also loves doing such as woodworking, volunteering and also with his band, Swingology;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Andrew and Rita Connolly for their many years of service to Hants West and wish them all the best on their retirement.

RESOLUTION NO. 603

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas back in the early 1950s Doug Fredericks of Windsor, along with many of his peers, actively joined the military upon leaving school; and

Whereas in 1953 Doug was sent to Korea as a Special Forces member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry defending Hill 355, aka Little Gibraltar; and

Whereas after spending three years in the military, Doug went on to work at Nova Scotia Textiles, became a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 009 in Windsor, is also a veteran volunteer firefighter having recently received his commemorative medal from Windsor Fire Department, and he also recently received a Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Doug Fredericks for being one of the fortunate soldiers to return to lead an active civilian life and thank him for all his service to country and community.

RESOLUTION NO. 604

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

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 October 9, 2014, a very special occasion took place when Gladys and Arthur Crowell of East Kempt celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gladys and Arthur on this remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 605

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

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 October 2, 2014, a very special occasion took place when Adeline and Arnold d'Entremont of Pubnico celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adeline and Arnold on this remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 606

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 Jennifer Raven was a young single mother of three who found herself financially and emotionally reliant on the help and kindness of neighbours to help take care of her family after she was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2011; and

Whereas after she was well, Jennifer established The Mommy Fund, a charitable trust to financially help other young mothers with cancer, as well as with extra support for things like babysitting, errands, and appointments;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature join me in congratulating Jennifer Raven for starting The Mommy Fund to help young mothers struggling to raise their family while battling cancer.

RESOLUTION NO. 607

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 27, 2014, Mr. Melburne and Mrs. Marilyn Manuel of Seabright, Nova Scotia, will celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Manuel on this remarkable milestone in their life together and wish them many more happy years.

RESOLUTION NO. 608

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 birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on December 4, 2014, Mr. Victor Shea of St. Margarets Bay, Nova Scotia, will celebrate his 90th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 90 years of age and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Victor on reaching this milestone in his life and wish him many more birthdays and continued good health.

RESOLUTION NO. 609

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on September 17, 2014, Jennifer and Josh Cleveland welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jennifer and Josh on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 610

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on October 5, 2014, Tessa and Nick d'Entremont welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tessa and Nick on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 611

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on October 13, 2014, Shawna Nickerson and Julien Surette welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Shawna and Julien on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 612

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on September 27, 2014, Carla Thomas and Nick Goodwin welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Carla and Nick on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 613

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on October 5, 2014, Meaghan and Gilles LeBlanc welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Meaghan and Gilles on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 614

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on September 15, 2014, Chrissy and Cory Milbury welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chrissy and Cory on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 615

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont (Argyle/Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event that marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas "a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities," as quoted by author Eda J. LeShan; and

Whereas on October 11, 2014, Jocelyn and Georges d'Entremont welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jocelyn and Georges on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 616

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 Canadians remember the 100th Anniversary of World War I during the year of 2014, and the loss of so many brave Canadians, their families and the hardships endured by returning veterans of the Great War; and

Whereas the needs of returning veterans and their families was great but little help was offered until the Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926; and

Whereas the Royal Canadian Legion Western Shore Branch No. 144 is dedicated to serving local veterans and their families, as well as active members of the Armed Forces and RCMP, and also offers many programs and services throughout the community;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature join me in acknowledging the importance of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 144 and its members and volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 617

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 Canadians remember the 100th Anniversary of World War I during the year of 2014 and the loss of so many brave Canadians, their families and the hardships endured by returning veterans of the Great War; and

Whereas the needs of returning veterans and their families was great but little help was offered until the Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926; and

Whereas the Royal Canadian Legion New Ross Branch No. 79 is dedicated to serving local veterans and their families as well as active members of the Armed Forces and RCMP and also offers many programs and services throughout the community;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature join me in acknowledging the importance of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 79 and its members and volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 618

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 Canadians remember the 100th Anniversary of World War I during the year of 2014 and the loss of so many brave Canadians, their families and the hardships endured by returning veterans of the Great War; and

Whereas the needs of returning veterans and their families was great but little help was offered until the Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926; and

Whereas the Royal Canadian Legion Seabright Branch No. 116 is dedicated to serving local veterans and their families as well as active members of the Armed Forces and RCMP and also offers many programs and services throughout the community;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature join me in acknowledging the importance of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 116 and its members and volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 619

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 Canadians remember the 100th Anniversary of World War I during the year of 2014 and the loss of so many brave Canadians, their families and the hardships endured by returning veterans of the Great War; and

Whereas the needs of returning veterans and their families was great but little help was offered until the Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926; and

Whereas the Everett Branch No. 88 in Chester Basin is dedicated to serving local veterans and their families as well as active members of the Armed Forces and RCMP and also offers many programs and services throughout the community;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature join me in acknowledging the importance of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 88 and its members and volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 620

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 Canadians remember the 100th Anniversary of World War I during the year of 2014 and the loss of so many brave Canadians, their families and the hardships endured by returning veterans of the Great War; and

Whereas the needs of returning veterans and their families was great but little help was offered until the Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926; and

Whereas the F. E. Butler Legion Branch No. 44 in Chester is dedicated to serving local veterans and their families as well as active members of the Armed Forces and RCMP and also offers many programs and services throughout the community;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature join me in acknowledging the importance of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 44 and its members and volunteers.

RESOLUTION NO. 621

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 the Caring Canadian Award was created by the Governor General's Office in 1995 as a way to thank the thousands of caring people who make sustained, significant, and unpaid contributions to their fellow citizens; and

Whereas Mr. Hutt volunteers with the New Ross Regional Development Society, the New Ross Museum Society, the New Ross Farmers' Market Association, the New Ross Family Resource Centre, to name just a few of his contributions to his community; and

Whereas On May 14, 2014, Robert Hutt received the Caring Canadian Award for his dedication to the Community of New Ross;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Robert Hutt on his Caring Canadian Award.

RESOLUTION NO. 622

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 the Caring Canadian Award was created by the Governor General's Office in 1995 as a way to thank the thousands of caring people who make sustained, significant, and unpaid contributions to their fellow citizens; and

Whereas Sandra Zwicker, of Chester Basin, Nova Scotia, is an active volunteer with the Lions Club as well as the St. John's Anglican Church as a member of Helping Hands, church school leader, and parish council member; and

Whereas Ms. Zwicker, of Chester Basin, Nova Scotia, received the Caring Canadian Award on May 14, 2014, for her important and lasting contributions to the Chester Basin community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Sandra Zwicker on her Caring Canadian Award.

RESOLUTION NO. 623

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 in 1995 the Governor General of Canada created the Caring Canadian Award as a way to thank thousands of caring people who make sustained, significant, and unpaid contributions to their fellow citizens; and

Whereas Joseph Vidito of Big Tancook, Nova Scotia, was a founding member and is current president of the Fire Department Information Conference Atlantic; and

Whereas firefighters in Atlantic Canada now have access to education through the Fire Department Information Conference Atlantic that was once available only through expensive travel to the U.S. or central Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Joseph Vidito on receipt of the prestigious Caring Canadian Award from the Governor General of Canada, and thank him for his important contribution to firefighter education in the Maritimes.

RESOLUTION NO. 624

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 the Caring Canadian Award was created by the Governor General's Office in 1995 as a way to thank the thousands of caring people who make sustained, significant, and unpaid contributions to their fellow citizens; and

Whereas Joyce Hiltz has been a long-term dedicated volunteer at the Lighthouse Food Bank, St. Stephen's Anglican Church, and the Chester Heritage Society; and

Whereas Joyce Hiltz was awarded the Caring Canadian Award by the Governor General of Canada on May 14, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Joyce Hiltz on receiving the prestigious Caring Canadian Award for her amazing contributions to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 625

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 the Caring Canadian Award was created by the Governor General's Office in 1995 as a way to thank the thousands of caring people who make sustained, significant, and unpaid contributions to their fellow citizens; and

Whereas Jim Barkhouse of Chester, Nova Scotia, has volunteered his time for many years to a number of community organizations including the Lions Club, the ALS Society, and the South Shore Community Service Association; and

Whereas Mr. Barkhouse was awarded the Caring Canadian Award on May 14, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Jim Barkhouse for receiving the Caring Canadian Award and for setting an example of community involvement and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 626

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas Windsor Elms resident Bonnie Delaney grew up in Hampshire, England, where at the early age of 17 in the year of 1942, joined the 233 Royal Air Force, becoming a batwoman; and

Whereas in 1945 she married her Canadian husband, Bill, who was a sergeant in the army, a year later shipping his wife and an infant daughter to Nova Scotia aboard the Aquitania; and

Whereas in 1947 their house was built on Soldier Road in Falmouth by Veterans Affairs, where the Delaneys had five children in total, and Bonnie says she has no regrets about her life - helped the war effort, found a loving husband, moved to Canada, raised a family, volunteered, and worked;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bonnie Delaney for being one of the lucky thousands of women to cross through Pier 21 to start a new life in Canada.