



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin the daily routine, the topic for late debate tonight, as submitted by the honourable member for Pictou West, is:

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Government make a meaningful contribution to Sexual Assault Awareness Month by putting in place a comprehensive, inclusive and compassionate system for the survivors of sexual violence.

That's the late debate tonight.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to rise in my place and update all members of the House on work to break down the silos in our health system, to make it more efficient and consistent for Nova Scotians.

Today marks an important chapter in the history of the province's health system. Over the past 15 months there has been a great effort to begin streamlining the system so that it can better serve the needs of patients and families across Nova Scotia. The work to bring nine district health authorities into one unified provincial health authority was not about changing for the sake of change. Our collective focus has always been about creating a system that supports a healthier Nova Scotia, healthier people and healthier communities.

We can't achieve that vision by continuing to do things as we had in the past. We need real change. We need a health system that is sustainable for all Nova Scotians. Currently health care spending makes up 40 per cent of the overall provincial budget, yet Nova Scotia has some of the worst health outcomes in the country. This isn't sustainable financially, and even more importantly, the results are not acceptable. Nova Scotians need a health care system that reflects the size of the province and is prepared to deal with an aging population.

The province considered broadly, then worked with those who understood our vision to design a governance and leadership structure that made sense, that would be accountable to the people it is there to serve. That was a significant piece of work, and more hard work lies ahead.

Today Janet Knox officially takes control of the Nova Scotia Health Authority as its president and CEO. She has the experience, knowledge and leadership skills to help build a more collaborative, innovative and efficient health care system. She has put together an executive team that brings talent and perspective from across the province. A strong volunteer board is in place. The Premier and I met with them last week and I can tell you they are focused on modernizing the health system to improve health outcomes for patients.

Today this government has delivered on its commitment to Nova Scotians who told us they wanted less bureaucracy, more efficiencies and better front-line health care. I want to thank the many women and men who ran the nine former district health authorities. They all did great work on behalf of the people they served. This consolidation was not a reflection of their work but rather a recognition they were doing the best they could in a fragmented system that was no longer working in the best interests of patients. We could not have done this without their professionalism and commitment to patient care on behalf of all Nova Scotians, and we thank you.

To the thousands of front-line health care workers, thank you for your patience during this process and for your dedication to your work. As I travelled throughout the

province I am constantly impressed by the work they do. Front-line health workers are the face of health care for Nova Scotians.

By bringing the nine district health authorities together as one, plus working closely with the IWK, we will build a more connected, affordable health system that puts the focus where it belongs: on front-line patient care. For the many Nova Scotians who have doctors' appointments or surgeries scheduled in the coming weeks, let me be clear - there will be no change to those appointments or services. Local and regional hospitals and health care facilities will continue to provide the services people rely on. Phone numbers to people's family doctor, local and regional hospitals, and health clinics all remain the same. Nova Scotians are reminded if they are sick to dial 811 and speak to a registered nurse or call 911 in the case of a health emergency anytime, day or night.

As the Nova Scotia Health Authority embarks on its earliest days, I extend my good wishes to the new team and my thanks to all the health care workers for the work they do every day. By working together as partners in health, we will create a healthier Nova Scotia that we can all be proud of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today to speak to this issue that the Health and Wellness Minister has brought forward, which of course is the first day of the new health authority, the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

The minister has a lot of things to say about it and quite truthfully, I just want to make sure that he can prove it. I want him to prove that this is a new way, a better way to offer health services in Nova Scotia. Let us hope that at the end of this, when everything is working well, that it wasn't just window dressing, something that we talked during an election and therefore had to complete, that all the work that has gone into this, that all the strife we have had to endure over the last number of months, that a lot of the uncertainty that health care workers have had to go through, that it was all for something better, not just window dressing.

Mr. Speaker, this is too important to get it wrong. Health care is probably the number-one issue that Nova Scotians are interested in. They want to make sure that the services are available to them when they show up at the emergency room, when they show up for surgery, when they do need those services, when they are at their most vulnerable.

I do want to say that proving it is one thing, and we'll be able to judge that during the budget process that is coming up pretty soon, to look at the possible savings or investments that the minister is going to be making in this new health authority, to see the FTE counts, to see if there are going to be savings there in administration. We know that taking nine and making them into one, there's still administration that needs to happen. Is

this the best use of those kinds of dollars or not? The budget that we will be watching closely, will tell us.

Mr. Speaker, wait-lists are still long, ERs are still closing, nurses are still working incredible amounts of overtime, and there are nurse shortages across this province. I did take him at issue yesterday when he talked about nothing will change, it will be a seamless transition. Well, I hope things change for those people who are waiting for long-term care placement who are sitting in our hospitals, who are waiting for service at the ER, who are waiting for so many things that people wait for in the health care system.

I, too, want to offer my best wishes, as well as the Progressive Conservative caucus, to Janet Knox and her executive team, and of course to the board led by Steve Parker, that they are going to do everything they can do to make sure this is a success. Again, as I said, this is too important to get it wrong. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting how history repeats itself. Of course it's April 1st, some call it April Fool's Day. It's interesting, some years ago April 1st was the first day of the forced amalgamation of municipalities around the province, which was brought on under a former Liberal Government.

The government has spent the last 15 months and their number-one priority in health care has been the amalgamation of the district health authorities. I don't think anybody would question that. A lot of time and energy has been put on getting us here, to today, and a lot more time and energy will be needed to implement this amalgamation of the district health authorities.

I want to make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that our caucus supports the reduction of health administration. That should be a goal for not only the Health and Wellness Department, but all departments: reduce administration to a level that we could continue to maintain the services, but more importantly, reinvesting those savings that we find into front-line health care, for example, or front-line services of the government.

The priority over the last 15 months, Mr. Speaker, has been in the wrong place. The minister mentioned in his statement that they delivered on their commitments. Well, I don't think they have. The Liberal Government's commitment was to do this amalgamation but to have a \$15 million savings in the first year, and we know that that commitment has been broken. The minister has acknowledged that that is not an achievable goal. There is no way the bill saved \$15 million, even though that's what they told Nova Scotians they would do, and that that money would be reinvested in health care - which is what we agree with, that any savings should be reinvested.

The priorities over the last 15 months have been on the wrong thing. What they've done is put all their time and energy into the amalgamation. They forgot about what's important to Nova Scotians, and that's front-line health. We know that there's a nursing shortage happening right now, because one of the first pieces of legislation they brought forward to implement this amalgamation was a direct attack on the rights of health care workers, men and women who provide health care and health services to patients here in Nova Scotia.

We know that piece of legislation failed. We just passed legislation that had to correct that mistake. We have ICU beds being closed in our province because there hasn't been attention from the government to address issues, especially nursing shortages. Home care wait-lists have increased over 80 per cent in just six months. Long-term care wait-lists are at a record high in our province. The DHA budgets - or the former DHA budgets - are \$26 million-plus over budget right now, so that is going to wipe out any savings down the road that the new amalgamated district health authority will have.

I hope Nova Scotians recognize that we do support reduction of administration costs in this province. We do support that those funds be diverted to front-line health care. What we don't agree with is that the government put all their eggs in one basket - excuse the pun, knowing it's Easter coming up - with this amalgamation. They've lost focus. They've lost what their priorities should have been, and that's front-line health care and front-line delivery of services here in Nova Scotia.

I hope as we move forward from this day that the minister, the government, will answer some of the questions that I've brought up and we've brought up as a caucus over the last year on the cost of this amalgamation. We still haven't heard what the severance cost will be, for example, because - "we couldn't tell you that, the year isn't up." So as the year ends, I look forward to the minister and the government being transparent with the true cost of this amalgamation and an admission from the government that the commitments they made were just not achievable.

Unfortunately, I don't support the enthusiastic view of the government's position on this right now, because all the evidence in front of me has shown that the health care system has suffered because of the priority of the government. It is my hope and our caucus' hope that that priority will shift now to patient care. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to recognize a new beginning in governance structure for the citizens of Springhill and Bridgetown. As of today, April 1st, Springhill is part of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland, and Bridgetown is joining with the Municipality of the County of Annapolis.

The formal process leading to today's governance change began about a year ago. At that time, both town councils were faced with making a difficult decision based on their financial situation as they prepared for the 2014-15 budget process. The decision of each council was to apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board seeking dissolution of town status.

I want to recognize the challenging time this has been for all involved. This decision wasn't made lightly. Each council made the decision with the understanding and confidence that the Utility and Review Board would seek further information, including a number of studies and reports to assist them in the evidence-based process. The provincial government's role was to support the municipalities throughout the process and to work with them to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of the citizens.

I want to thank John Leefe, who led the transition team in Springhill, and Allister Surette, who led the transition in Bridgetown. Their leadership was exceptional in guiding the discussions and work as part of the dissolution applications.

Mr. Speaker, as both municipalities move forward, I'm confident that everyone will work together to ensure a successful merger resulting in a strong and viable future. I am encouraged by the support that has been shown by the receiving municipalities as the process has unfolded. This process certainly shows the good-neighbour attitude of Nova Scotians as both Cumberland and Annapolis councils have willingly supported the process to achieve a positive future for the citizens of Springhill and Bridgetown.

In closing, I commend both Springhill and Bridgetown councils for their courageous leadership and determination to bring about a new model of good governance and a more viable community for their residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I think the headline in *The Chronicle Herald* this morning said it best, that headline on this issue was Springhill will "always be Springhill" and, indeed, on this day that is the feeling of the Town of Springhill and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, what we have come to know is that today marks a change in governance for both Bridgetown and Springhill, but it is not a change of community. It's unfortunate that the Act requires that we talk about the dissolution or the dissolving of a town when in fact what we are talking about is the end of an incorporated entity, but the community itself remains. That's why we know the governance may change, but Springhill will always be Springhill.

Mr. Speaker, concerns remain about how this process began. There are people who continue to have questions about how it all started. I will say for me, and I believe for

many, that one of the lessons we can take away from what has happened is that the people themselves must be included in discussions and decisions about their governance from the very beginning, they should not be taken by surprise.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly questions also remain about the role of the government and the Department of Municipal Affairs over the past year. The department says they were there to support decisions made by local councils, but many wonder whether the department had an agenda of its own and whether it was merely supporting or whether it was directing a certain preordained conclusion that it wished for Springhill and for Bridgetown.

Questions remain about how the amount of provincial assistance was determined in each case. At best, it certainly appears to be random - the amounts provided for roads, for studies, for a governance of transition, Mr. Speaker, are wildly different between communities. Surely from this point on we can look to the government to provide a consistent way of dealing with these difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to thank John Leefe and Allister Surette for their roles. I know in the case of Springhill that Mr. Leefe found himself on the firing line at numerous boisterous public meetings and he conducted himself as a true professional and made sure that all sides were heard.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude where I began for Springhill and Bridgetown, and for others that are going through the process or may in the future - today is not an end, it is a new start, and in the case of Springhill we can resolve that its best days as a community are yet to come. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement today on the dissolution of Springhill and Bridgetown. I know within those communities there has been a divide on how do those communities move forward when they find themselves in the position that both Springhill and Bridgetown found themselves in, because there's a lot of pride with the citizens and the residents who come from those communities. I think it's hard to accept changes at times as we move forward and as those communities emerge to what they look like today.

We know there's a challenge in front of government, no matter what political stripe it is, to support our rural communities. There is a huge out-migration of our young people and the population of our rural communities continues to decline, so there's going to be challenges in front of us.

I know there's new legislation that oversees our towns and villages that will maybe shed a light on, or maybe get some warnings, that there may be some difficult times ahead,

which I think will hopefully minimize, in the future, seeing our towns and villages going through this process.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, our communities, like Bridgetown and Springhill, have contributed so much to the economy of our province throughout the decades and there is a lot of pride from people I meet from these communities but more importantly their pride is from being from a rural community.

I hope the government recognizes that they need to continue to work with our rural communities so that we don't see the division that we see when a merger or dissolution has to happen to a town or village, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the government is willing to work with those rural communities to hopefully turn this around, that we will not see these types of mergers into the future. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 75 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Mark Furey)

Bill No. 76 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Mark Furey)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

LIANA'S RANSOM - RESCUE: U.S. COAST GUARD - THANK

MS. JOYCE TREEN: *Liana's Ransom* is a tall ship from the community of Eastern Passage. The ship with a crew of nine people ran into engine, sails, and generator problems and had to be rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard off the coast of Massachusetts on Monday, March 30th. The captain, Ryan Tilley, reached out for help and all of the crew were safely rescued and the boat was towed to the nearest harbour. Captain Tilley remained on the ship until all his crew were rescued first. Thank you to the U.S. Coast Guard for their prompt response and returning the crew safely to shore. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the members of the House join our community's gratitude that the captain and the crew are returned to safety.

MR. SPEAKER: Just want to remind again all honourable members to keep their comments in the third person and not direct them toward any one individual or entity, comment about thank you to the coast guard, case in point.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

MONT, STEPHEN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Nova Scotia lost a dedicated public servant when Stephen Kingsley Mont passed away at the age of 62. Stephen was a lawyer by trade but his most cherished professional pursuits were in public service. Over the years he served many organizations, including chairing the Nova Scotia Psychiatric Facilities Review Board, the Cole Harbour Place Board, and the Halifax County Rehabilitation Centre Board. Stephen was appointed chairman of the Labour Standards Tribunal and was a member of the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation board. He was an active member in Party politics, and proudly and ably served as president of the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia from 1996 to 1999.

Most importantly, Stephen Mont was a man of great faith and a loving and devoted family man. Our thoughts are with his wife Nadine, his sons Christopher and Andrew, their families, and all those who loved Stephen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MCNEIL GOV'T.: PATIENT CARE - PRIORITIZE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe that when it comes to health care you need to put patients first. Over the past year it has become clear that the McNeil Government is failing in this regard.

RNs have called the SAFE line with grave concerns about low staffing levels resulting in “very unsafe conditions.” There have been an unusual number of nurse retirements, intensive care beds are closed, and private travel nurses are being flown in from other provinces for the first time in a decade because they are so short-staffed at the QEII. Nurses on one critical care unit alone estimated that thousands of hours of overtime have been worked since January 1st. For example, in one day, there were seven out of 18 people working overtime in one unit.

It's time the McNeil Government focused on what matters the most. Make patient care a priority.

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

**BARRETT, DAVE/BARRETT LUMBER:
FAMILY STEWARDSHIP PROJ. - CONGRATS.**

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Dave Barrett of Barrett Lumber in Beaver Bank. Mr. Barrett is a firm believer in giving back to his community. He also believes in individuals being responsible for their environment. Through his Family Stewardship Program, Mr. Barrett allows residents of Sackville and Beaver Bank the use of his land. For a fee of \$50, a family will receive a key, a set of maps, and Mr. Barrett's instruction on use of the land. \$20 goes to cover the cost of the keys (Interruptions)

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

MR. GOUGH: \$20 goes to cover the cost of the keys, and \$30 goes to a designated charity. All that is asked is that they respect their environment and ensure the land is there for the next generation. As a resident of Sackville and area, I want to thank Mr. Barrett for his contribution to the families of Sackville-Beaver Bank. Through his generosity, he has provided an opportunity for families to enjoy activities only found in a wilderness environment.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**MISNER, LOUISE/HUNTLEY, BYRON:
JOELLAN HUNTLEY CASE - EFFORTS SALUTE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, today we learned that the province has reached an agreement with the family of Joellan Huntley. I'm sure Joellan's family is relieved that this long and unnecessary fight is over. After dealing with the effects a tragic accident had on their daughter, Joellan's family had to fight for insurance money and then fight the government, all because they wanted the best care possible for their daughter. I'm hopeful that this settlement will allow Joellan's family to do what they set out to do from the beginning: to care for their daughter and make Joellan's life more comfortable. I commend the tenacity of Joellan's family. Let's hope no other family will have to fight the government in order to provide care for a loved one.

Today I salute Louise Misner and Byron Huntley. Their unwavering love for Joellan and their determination to improve her quality of life are remarkable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

EARLE, STEVE: HFX. INTL. AIRPORT CRASH - HEROISM

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, on Sunday morning many Nova Scotians woke up to discover that a plane had crash-landed at the Halifax International Airport. In the days that followed, we heard about one passenger who had helped 80-year-old Ruth Macumber off the airplane and then carried this injured woman away from the plane to safety. Passengers were worried there would be an explosion. The woman's niece wanted to find this man and thank him. Finally he came forward, somewhat reluctantly.

It turns out his name is Steve Earle, he lives in Bedford, and he owns WCL Bauld Insurance. Those of us who know Steve know he's a good, modest guy, and he downplayed what happened. To quote him, "It's not heroism, it's being a human being."

Many of us wonder what we would do if presented with an emergency. Would we stop and help someone else, even if we were in danger? Today Steve Earle knows what he would do and so do we. I'd like to thank Steve and thank the CBC for telling his story.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - MORATORIUM LIFT

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness has put a moratorium on new long-term care beds, and communities across the province are concerned. One of these communities is represented by the MLA for Victoria-The Lakes, the community of Eskasoni. Nova Scotia's largest Mi'kmaq community was hoping to work with the McNeil Government to create its own long-term care facility for its seniors where they would be close to home and surrounded by others who speak their language.

I am calling on the McNeil Government to lift their moratorium on new long-term care beds and hope the MLA for Victoria-The Lakes will please join me.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

SUTHERLAND, DALE: SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS - ADVOCACY

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, last week we celebrated the courage of historic survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They won a victory in what has been a very long fight, one that started for them decades ago.

The actions of Bob Martin, Dale Sutherland, and others set a new standard for courage and tenacity. What they accomplished sends a serious message to child predators and the people who help them in Nova Scotia. That fight will continue.

I know that all Nova Scotians will be proud to learn that Dale Sutherland will testify today in Ottawa in front of a Senate committee discussion of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. It speaks to the courage, determination, and compassion of Mr. Sutherland that he is continuing to advocate for those who often don't have a voice.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating Mr. Sutherland for his extraordinary work, and wish him well in Ottawa later today as he stands up for victims and survivors.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

LINDH, JIM - TEACHING: DEDICATION - RECOGNIZE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Mr. Jim Lindh who, for 35 years, directed the music program at Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge. Mr. Lindh's great talents and dedication as an educator have made a lasting and positive impression on hundreds of Nova Scotians from the Annapolis Valley who have had the privilege to have had him as their teacher.

Mr. Lindh educated and supported his students with wisdom, humour, and dedication. Countless former students and colleagues have praised Mr. Lindh's passion and creativity in his work.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, I am pleased to recognize Mr. Lindh as one of Nova Scotia's great teachers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness on an introduction.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where a friend of mine is here to watch proceedings today, Mr. Don Hyslop. A long-time teacher, coach and community activist in the Kingston-Greenwood area, he is here to watch proceedings. He did an incredible job last year in lifting the Kingston community in the Valley Credit Union Centre to second place in Kraft Hockeyville.

I know he put those talents behind Middleton's efforts this year, so a wonderful contributor to our community. If Don would rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

CDN. CANCER SOC.: DAFFODIL MO. - VOLS. THANK

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, Daffodil Month is the national fundraising campaign for the Canadian Cancer Society. During the month of April Canadian Cancer Society volunteers raise money for the fight against cancer. Money raised during Daffodil Month helps local patients living with cancer, and their families. The money funds research, support services and, ultimately, means fewer Canadians will get the disease.

Mr. Speaker, in 2014 it is estimated that 2,600 people died of cancer in Nova Scotia and 6,100 new cases will be diagnosed. Today I want to thank the hundreds of Canadian Cancer Society volunteers who will be selling daffodils and canvassing door-to-door during April to help Nova Scotians living with cancer. These volunteers make a real difference in the lives of their fellow Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, could I do an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. BERNARD: In the east gallery I'd like to introduce Lesley Dunn and Louise Pothier. Lesley is the executive director of the Dartmouth Learning Network and Louise is the chair of their board, and I would like the House to please welcome them to our proceedings here today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DART. LEARNING NETWORK - ANNIV. (30TH)

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Please note, Mr. Speaker, I'm also doing this member statement on behalf of the member for Dartmouth South as well, of which this topic and organization was near and dear to his heart.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once said, "The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read." Literacy skills transform lives, generate prosperity, and promote social inclusion. Without the right skills people are kept at the margins of society.

A pillar in our Dartmouth North community who works tirelessly towards the aim of literacy for all celebrates their 30th Anniversary this year. The Dartmouth Learning Network provides opportunities for adults and their family members to improve their reading, writing, math, and communication skills. Most importantly, the Dartmouth Learning Network gives participants a love of lifelong learning and hope.

Most recently I was happy to attend the announcement of the Dartmouth Learning Network to announce provincial funding for their employment readiness program, allowing them to expand their program from eight students to 29. Executive Director Lesley Dunn and her amazing team include over 40 volunteers and seem to have an inexhaustible supply of energy and enthusiasm of the clients they serve. I will ask that all members of the House join with me in congratulating the Dartmouth Learning Network on their 30th year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

KING, BARB: MERIGOMISH VOL. FD LADIES AUX. - SERV. (40 YRS.)

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, today I salute Barb King for 40 years of service to the Ladies Auxiliary to the Merigomish Volunteer Fire Department. Without volunteers, life in our towns and villages would be very different. The countless hours donated cannot be tallied nor can the impact on others be measured.

Pictou East is blessed with countless volunteers like Barb King who give so much of themselves without the expectation of pay or recognition. To those who give so generously of their time and talent, we are forever grateful and I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize Barb in this House of Assembly. Thank you, Barb, for your service to your community.

MR. SPEAKER: Once again, I'd like to remind everybody to keep their comments indirect with regard to the topic of your member statement. We'll get there, this is an ongoing process.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

**AUTHENTIC SEACOAST DISTILLING CO.:
SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS COMP. - BRONZE MEDAL**

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Authentic Seacoast Distilling Company located in Guysborough for their success last week at the 15th annual San Francisco World Spirits Competition. The company's craft-blended Fortress Rum, aged in oak at Historic Fortress Louisbourg won the bronze medal in the over-proof rum category. This in a year where the competition saw a record number of over 1,500 submissions from 65 countries.

The San Francisco World Spirits Competition is seen as the industry benchmark and the rite of passage for quality spirits, as 39 of the top industry palates serve as the judges. This is a tremendous accolade for the Authentic Seacoast Distilling Company to receive, especially considering how recently the Fortress Rum brand was launched. Mr.

Speaker, I wish to congratulate Glynn Williams and all of his hard-working staff for winning this prestigious award and wish them the best of success in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HUSSHER, CHIEF DONALD: PUBLIC SERV. - RECORD RECOGNIZE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Town Councillor Donald Hussher is the Chief of Police for the Towns of Westville and Stellarton. Following 15 years of military service he retired with the commission rank of captain. Donald is the founder and director of the Westville and New Glasgow Police Venturers/Rovers Group, he served 10 years with the Royal Canadian Army Cadets, over 22 years with crime prevention, and 21 years working with seniors. He was the founder of the Seniors Watch program and is a long-time volunteer with the Boy Scouts.

Chief Hussher has received the Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Award, the Canadian Forces Decoration, and the Police Exemplary Service Medal. Chief Hussher was appointed to the Merit of Police Forces in 2002 and I'm proud to recognize Chief Hussher's distinguished record of public service in this Legislature. Thank you.

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

EECD: CHIGNECTO-CENT. REG. SCH. BD. - HUB MODEL

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, parents and small school advocates are concerned about losing three schools in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board: Maitland, Wentworth and River John. The government's guidelines for hub schools state that the proposals must not cost the board more than the board's future plans. The Chignecto-Central Regional School Board has taken these government guidelines to mean that the hub school proposals must cover things like repairs to the school, teachers' salaries, basically the whole cost of running a school the board proposed to close.

It seems to me that the hub school model is being set up to fail. I call on the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to intervene in the process and ensure that small schools have a fighting chance to survive under the hub school model.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

BUY LOCAL: MOVEMENT - SUPPORT

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Select Nova Scotia and I Love Local Halifax are important players in the Buy Local movement here in Nova Scotia. We know that our economy has grown locally. Local farmers spend their own money along with local

merchants and consumers so that money stays in the community where it benefits everyone and helps build a stronger local community.

I strongly believe that Select Nova Scotia and I Love Local Halifax are making a positive impact on the way Nova Scotians think about where they buy their products. So as Spring hopefully begins to get underway, I encourage members of the House to think about our farmers who are preparing their fields to ensure that Nova Scotians get fresh, local foods; think about the local restaurants that are getting their menus ready with local Nova Scotia beef, fish and fresh vegetables and lastly, local retail stores who are beginning to get their Spring products in.

I encourage members of the House and Nova Scotians in general to give consideration to where they shop and to support the Buy Local movement in our province. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier on an introduction.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery. For two weeks in February 225 Nova Scotia athletes came together and represented our province at the 2015 Canada Winter Games in Prince George, British Columbia. Today in our gallery I would like to introduce and recognize five of those athletes for their outstanding commitment to their sport that earned medals as a result of their hard work. I would ask them to stand as we recognize them here in the House.

From the Nova Scotia silver medal female curling team I would like to welcome Karlee Burgess, Mary Fay, Janique LeBlanc. Unfortunately, their team mate Jenn Smith was unable to be with us here in the House today but I am sure they will pass on our congratulations to Jenn. Silver medalist in the female snowboard parallel giant slalom is Maddie Radvanyi and bronze medalist male artistic gymnastic horizontal bar is Steven Cloutier. I would ask our House to give these athletes, their parents and coaches who are with us today a very warm welcome and congratulations from all of us. (Standing Ovation).

On behalf of all of us I would ask these five athletes to take back our congratulations to the other 220 young Nova Scotians who travelled to British Columbia representing our province. Far too often in this province we talk about the negative impacts of a very small percentage of young people. You are an outstanding example of the great young people in this province and why all of us who have the privilege of sitting in this House have so much hope for our future. Congratulations. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JONES, DOLORES ET AL: THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES - SEWING PROJ.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dolores Jones, Chris Wood, Dagmar Carter, Cathy Moore and Margaret Stephen for using their craft skills to help children in need in Africa and other Third World countries. The women met once a month to sew dresses for young girls out of pillowcases. They are one of many groups across Canada who have taken on this project. The completed dresses are sent to Ottawa where they are shipped worldwide twice a year. Young girls in over 70 countries benefit from this initiative. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to recognize these five ladies, and I thank them for their good work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**UNITED WAY ACTION FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE IN FAIRVIEW:
TEAM - THANK**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, the United Way Action for Neighbourhood Change team in Fairview, under the enthusiastic direction of Kendall O'Connor, is working tirelessly to connect the residents of Fairview with each other and the programs and services available through the area. Applications for community-led projects are now being accepted through the Seed grant program. These grants are designed to encourage smaller, community-led projects to take place throughout the community and are a wonderful addition to the Fairview area.

The United Way Action for Neighbourhood Change in Fairview recently hired two new coordinators, Abadi Khan and Nuriya Shamsuddin. Mr. Khan and Ms. Shamsuddin are active members in the community and are welcome additions to the United Way Fairview team.

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

MACDONALD, DANIELLE: UPEI PANTHERS - RECOGNIZE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Danielle MacDonald, the fifth-year UPEI Panthers guard from Sydney Mines. This will be her final season on the basketball court but her coach, Mark English, says Danielle is the catalyst to the team's success this season. She shows up to play with a smile on her face and keeps the team together.

It's a true honour to have this opportunity to recognize such a dynamic young athlete. Thank you.

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

**BOUDREAU, COACH JULIEN/PAR-EN-BAS SHARKS:
HOCKEY SEASON - CONGRATS.**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Par-en-Bas Sharks just finished a memorable hockey season. The Sharks were a last-minute expansion into the Valley High School Hockey League in October.

They finished first in the Valley League with a 19 to 5 regular season record and won the Valley High School Hockey League championship with a thrilling 8 to 7 overtime win over the Avon View Avalanche from Windsor, and a 7 to 1 championship game win over Forest Heights from Chester. They completed their championship season with a 5 to 2 win over Inverness at the Division 3 High School Provincials in Chester this weekend.

Congratulations to head coach Julien Boudreau and his players and management on an outstanding season.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - FOOD TRUCK OWNERS: QUESTIONS - ANSWER

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, food trucks are facing a fivefold licence fee hike. Natalie Chavarie, co-owner of the Food Wolf, has been operating out of the Mayflower Curling Club's canteen in Halifax Needham. Since the food truck fee hike, Ms. Chavarie says she's wondering if she should merge her business with another truck or get out of the business and try something else altogether.

There are many questions that food truck owners deserve answers to: How can significant changes to permitting structure and cost have been introduced without any consultation? How will service delivery standards improve for food trucks with these fee hikes? Why did the current government introduce changes with less than seven days notification?

I hope the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board will provide the owners of the Food Wolf and others with these answers at her earliest convenience.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

KING, ALFRED CARL - GOV.-GEN.'S CARING CDN. AWARD

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on April 14th, Alfred Carl King of Oxford will receive the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award from His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who volunteer their time to help others and to build a smart and

caring nation. It highlights the fine example set by these volunteers and allows us to thank them for their contributions and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of others.

Mr. King has selflessly devoted himself to many community activities for many years. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Mr. King on his well-deserved recognition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

SPRINGHILL (FMR.) - RCMP SWEARING-IN

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the honour of attending the first official function to take place in the former Town of Springhill. At 10:00 a.m. this morning Constables Peter Wallace and Kenny Jackson were sworn in as the newest members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Cynthia White took her oath as a new member of the Canadian Public Service.

I was pleased to be part of this ceremony where I was able to not only congratulate these deserving new public servants, but to also thank the members of the former Springhill Police Service for their many years of dedicated service to their community.

The municipal leaders of Springhill showed great courage in envisioning a new structure of municipal government for their area, arising out of considerable adversity that they were facing. I commend them and send best wishes to all the citizens and municipal leaders of the newly constituted Municipality of Cumberland.

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

ABBASS, FR. PAUL: TALBOT HOUSE WORK - GRATITUDE EXPRESS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, Father Paul Abbass has been the heart and soul of Talbot House in Frenchvale for 17 years. In June he will step down as executive director of that facility. Talbot House is Cape Breton's only residential treatment centre for men living with addictions. Under Father Abbass' leadership the programs at Talbot House have changed and saved countless lives. Over the years Father Abbass expanded programming and created a caring, safe, home-like environment where residents could heal and plan for their futures with hope.

I am pleased that Father Abbass will continue to serve the community as priest to seven parishes, but want to extend thanks to him for his unfailing commitment to the residents and the programs at Talbot House. We are grateful for his work at Talbot House and wish him well as he takes on his new challenges.

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

**A.F. THERIAULT & SONS LTD.:
BRIER ISLAND FERRY CONTRACT - CONGRATS.**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate A.F. Theriault and Son Limited in Meteghan River on being awarded the contract to build the new ferry for Tiverton and East Ferry Service. This is a significant opportunity for our boatyard in our area and an accomplishment I am proud of. I congratulate and commend the team of A.F. Theriault and Son for their hard work over the course of several months to secure this contract and I wish them continued success.

A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd. is one of the largest, private boatyards in Atlantic Canada and has provided approximately 140 jobs for employees of the area. Southwest Nova Scotia is fortunate to have world-class and well-equipped facilities that deliver services that must benefit our communities and our province. We must continue to celebrate our area and all it has to offer.

The new ferry will replace the 20-year-old Joe Casey, providing service to Brier Island, which sees over 30,000 vehicles and 75,000 passengers per year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**KENTVILLE VOL. FD/CHIEF RYAN MACEACHERN:
GRATITUDE - EXPRESS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my gratitude to the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department and Chief Ryan MacEachern for the service they provided to the community this past year. Their commitment to our community has expressed itself in countless hours of training and practice to prepare for any emergency. They have offered their assistance to those in need at all hours of the day and night and in all sorts of weather.

In 2014, they responded to 333 calls and to date this year they have had 103 calls. The Kentville Volunteer Fire Department provides fire and technical rescue services between the New Minas and Waterville borders, up to Centreville and down to the Lunenburg County line. Our communities are better places to live because of their willingness to give of themselves this great act of service of being a volunteer fire department member.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

LAPIERRE, JOSEPH: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a sad loss in my community of Herring Cove. In February we lost long-time resident, Joseph LaPierre. Joe was 93 and known throughout the area for his wonderful garden of dahlias.

He was an award-winning dahlia grower and some of his flowers are still in the Public Gardens.

Joe spent countless hours in his garden tending to his flowers and developed many new strains of dahlias. He was always willing to share his beautiful flowers and offer them for weddings, funerals and church services. He supplied many a gardener with bulbs and always let visitors cut fresh blooms from his garden.

Joe will be sorely missed by his family, friends and everyone in the community. When the first dahlia blooms this summer, I'm sure everyone will look on it with a smile and think of Joe, perhaps he will be missed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ALVVAYS: CBC MUSIC AWARDS - NOMINATIONS CONGRATS.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the band Alvveys for being nominated for two CBC music awards, Artist of the Year and Song of the Year. Lead singer and guitarist Molly Rankin, of Judique, has obviously inherited some of her father John Morris Rankin's talent. Another Judique native, Kerri MacLellan, plays keyboard for the band.

The Toronto-based band has just released their debut recording which hit number one on U.S. college radio charts and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Members' Statements has expired, sadly. We'll now move on to Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: EFFICIENCY N.S. - PREDATORY PRACTICES

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nichent Energy is a small Nova Scotia company that is accusing Efficiency Nova Scotia of using predatory practices against them, essentially stealing their customers. This is a company that has seen their own efficiency fee, which is on the bill of all Nova Scotia ratepayers, used against them to destroy their business. The reason is that Efficiency Nova Scotia is directing all of the customers of their same products to three companies alone, to the exclusion of all other Nova Scotia companies.

I ask the Premier, why is Efficiency Nova Scotia picking winners and losers under his watch?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I met with one of those business owners about a week ago in my constituency office. I've directed the Department of Energy to investigate to find out whether or not what is being described is actually happening, because quite frankly, if it's actually happening as it's being described, I believe it's unfair.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, we have a moment of agreement here today, which is good news, of course. The efficiency fee on our power bills under the Liberal plan amounts to \$35 million plus 8 per cent interest this year. It is being used against small Nova Scotia companies to destroy their own customer base, because they cannot possibly compete with this organization when they provide pricing that is up to 90 per cent less than what the free market provides. The government has a duty to protect companies like Nichent Energy and many others like them.

I appreciate the Premier's answer. I would like to ask him, when will there be a resolution to this gross unfairness that's outstanding?

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to tell all members of this House that I've directed the Department of Energy to investigate to determine whether or not how it's being described in this House is how it's happening. I believe it's unfair, but I also want to remind all members of this House that we removed the efficiency tax off the power bills. We've driven down and frozen power rates. We're now beginning to see some stability in the energy market across this province, and now we're starting to see some regional co-operation to ensure that we can capitalize on all renewable energy in this sector so that we can continue to drive the economy of this region.

MR. BAILLIE: Now we have a point of disagreement again. Another unfairness is that all Nova Scotians know every month when they pay their power bill that the efficiency fee is still there; it's just somewhere else. It totals \$35 million. We have to pay 8 per cent interest over eight years under the Premier's plan. No one is getting relief on their power rates, and now we learn that Nova Scotia companies are having this rate used against them.

I'm glad they're looking into it, but I'll ask the Premier, when he gets his report back from Energy, will he bring back to this House a solution to this problem if they decide it is as it has been described in the press?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Leader of the Opposition, if I know there is an issue I won't come back looking for his assistance. We'll just fix it.

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

PREM. - HUNTLEY CASE.: POLICY CHANGE - TIMELINE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Earlier today the Minister of Community Services announced a settlement in the Huntley case, where the government was suing her family for the insurance settlement from an accident that left her disabled and with high care needs. We're all very glad to see the government end its pursuit of this family, who have gone through enough. However, the policy that led to this litigation remains in place to be used again.

My question to the Premier is quite simple: when will the policy that resulted in this litigation be changed or eliminated so that no other family has to go through what the Huntleys have gone through?

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me say to the Huntley family that we very much appreciate the leadership they've shown to ensure that any unfairness in public policy that has affected not only their family but potentially affected other families into the future, that they've shown the courage they did to come forward to help government deal with this issue that is affecting their family today, but quite frankly, could affect any one of our families into the future. We will be introducing in this House, whether it's this session or not - I'm not 100 per cent sure, but I'm hoping it's this session - amendments and changes to that policy so that we can take out what we believe is the unfairness of that policy.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for his answer. At the Public Accounts Committee this morning, the Deputy Minister of Community Services was asked by myself whether or not public money was involved in the settlement of this case. At the time, the deputy would not say whether public money formed part of the settlement or all of the settlement. My question to the Premier is, did public money form part or all of the settlement and to what extent?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question she's providing to this House. As she knows, there's a confidentiality clause associated with this agreement with the Huntley family. I want to assure her and all Nova Scotians that every decision we make is rooted in fairness. We respected the fact that this family has come forward, we respected the fact they wanted to do this in a confidential way, they do not want all of the information disclosed. We respect that and the fact I have heard from Nova Scotians that they wanted their government to act in a compassionate way and settle this issue and we have settled this issue.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, nobody disagrees with the settlement. I'm seeking this information about public money and the use of public money.

The McNeil Government has described themselves as the most open, the most transparent, the most accountable government the Province of Nova Scotia has ever had

yet they will not disclose the details of the settlement in a case that they pursued and that they then dropped. If public money was involved in the settlement with Ms. Huntley, does the Premier believe that Nova Scotians have no right to know whether or not public money was involved and why would he not want the public to know?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I find it rather ironic that the interim Leader of the New Democratic Party, a member of the former government that was the most secretive government in our history, is standing up lecturing members of this House about openness and transparency. As bad as that is, she's now using the Huntley family on this floor for cheap political tricks. Respect that family and allow us to move forward, correct a piece of public policy that was left unchanged under that government.

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

**FIN. & TREASURY BD. - HFX. C OF C EVENT:
FILM TAX CREDIT - MIN. COMMENTS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, at the Halifax Chamber of Commerce lunch last week the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board levelled some pretty heavy criticism about the successful Film Industry Tax Credit program. Among other things, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said 99 per cent of the money paid out in the Film Industry Tax Credit goes to companies that don't pay tax in Nova Scotia.

That's not accurate. This has caused great concern to the many Nova Scotians who work in the film business here in our province. I'd like to ask the Premier, does he recognize the benefit that the Film Tax Credit brings to the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate the investment that businesses are making across this province and we need to continue with the government to ensure that public policy reflects the financial realities of this province and that the tax credits that are being provided for economic development in this province actually are having the results that Nova Scotians expect to have.

I hear time and time again from members across the hall as to how they want government to change, how they want things to change yet they stand up and look and they promote the status quo. The status quo is going to give us the economic results we've had which is the worst performing economy in Canada. Times are changing.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure there was an answer there but I can tell you this, if the Premier wants to know about the Film Industry Tax Credit. The facts are that \$24 million was paid out in tax credit last year but the government got a return of \$122 million in exchange. We want to see lots of changes but when a program works, it deserves to be defended. I will tell you something, at this time when all of the summer production work is being booked, the words of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and now

the Premier that question this actually make it harder for them to do their jobs and bring new investment into our province, one of the goals of the Ivany report. It is harder today than it was a week ago because of what the Premier and the Minister of Finance have said.

Mr. Speaker, let's try and actually answer the question. They've ruled out other tax credit changes. They have a chance today on the Film Industry Tax Credit and the \$122 million in business that goes with it. Will the Premier assure the film business that that tax credit, in some form, will remain in place by this time next week?

THE PREMIER: What I will encourage the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to do is to check his math because he is wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

COM. SERV.: HUNTLEY CASE - SETTLEMENT DETAILS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Today we learned that the government had reached an agreement with the family of Joellan Huntley and I am pleased about that. Last October, I urged the Minister of Community Services to settle with the family out of court. On that day, the minister defended the province's court action against the family, saying the cost of care is recouped when there is an ability to pay and that is why insurance is purchased in this province and that is why people are able to contribute to the cost of care. I'll table those comments.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, will the minister explain what changed between October 9th and today that led her to work collaboratively with Joellan's family rather than taking them to court?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today that a resolution has come for this family who really have suffered over the years. Three successive governments have dealt with this policy within the Department of Community Services and I think this case really highlighted the fact that it didn't meet the needs of everyone.

So, on December 6th, I directed senior policy advisors within the department to please review it. I am pleased to say that last week that review was complete. I will be getting recommendations within the next couple of weeks and I will be happy to announce those when those happen.

The settlement still involves the province. It also still involves the family through a negotiated settlement. At the end of the day, what is important is that Joellan is still getting the care that she deserves and the family can concentrate on her needs instead of litigation.

MR. LOHR: I would like to thank the minister for that answer. I agree with her that the most important thing is that the family can get on with their lives, and I am thankful for the settlement to have occurred.

My question for the minister is this, will the minister amend the necessary legislation and policies to make sure that no other family has to go through the same battle that Joellan's family did?

MS. BERNARD: Absolutely. As legislators, we have a responsibility to ensure when there are policies that are existing currently, if they don't make sense, if they are not in the best interests of families and create undue hardship, that we have the absolute ability and responsibility to make sure that those policy changes happen.

As I stated, the review was just completed as recently as last week. I will be introducing policy changes to that so no other family ever has to go through this again.

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

PREM.: CRITICAL CARE UNITS - PATIENT CARE STANDARDS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Hospital patients with life-threatening conditions require constant monitoring while in intensive care units, where the standards of care are to have one nurse look after one patient. However, increasingly, nurses with both the specialized training and experience are being asked to tend to more than one patient at a time in these units, putting patient care at risk and placing additional stress on the nurse.

My question for the Premier is this, why do the Premier and his government think it's okay to ignore the existing standards of safe patient care in critical care units?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think any member of this House would suggest that it's okay to ignore any policies that are in place for the safety and protection of patients. If the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party has concerns, she should take it to the employer.

MS. MACDONALD: Oh, Mr. Speaker, we know the government is ignoring the standards because nurses have been telling us this for nearly a year. Yesterday, a nurse, Tracey Livesay, a critical care nurse at the Halifax Infirmary, said that their working conditions had forced a record number of experienced nurses to retire early, leaving hospital units dangerously understaffed, and she says nurses regularly work short-staffed at a risk to patient safety.

My question to the Premier is, why won't the Premier look even at considering protecting patient safety by listening to the nurses' recommendations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we have continued, since being given the good privilege of being the government of this province, to listen to health care workers across this province. I've listened to the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party stand up in this House talking about nurse-patient ratios, talking about health care providers - the fact of the matter is, in the last full-time year of that NDP Government, we saw an exodus of nurses. It was the lowest number in our province since 2008.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in the last year (Interruptions) Those are not our numbers. They are from the College of Nurses. So are they accusing the nurses of not being truthful? I can't imagine that they would be doing so.

The fact of the matter of is, Mr. Speaker, there are more RNs working in this province today than ever in our history, and to add to that there are more licensed practical nurses working in our province today than ever in our history. Let me be clear. Under their watch, nurses were leaving this province; under our watch, we're seeing the numbers go up.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

AGRIC. - LAKE PISIQUID: WATER LEVEL/GATES - UPDATE

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you this afternoon will be to the Minister of Agriculture. Last Fall, the minister came to Windsor to meet with a group of stakeholders in relation to Lake Pisiquid and the water levels associated with that and the gates of which his department is responsible for the operation of. There were some action items discussed at that meeting, and I wonder if the minister could update me today on what those action items in progress would be.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member from across the floor for inviting me to the area to discuss this with the Canoe Club and with other stakeholders in the area. There were definitely some serious concerns that were raised at that meeting. Among those concerns, we've been working diligently to get those in place and we will have a full report on that very shortly. Our staff has been very concerned and I believe they have a very open dialogue now with all of the stakeholders in that area and we look forward to enhancing that as we move forward.

MR. PORTER: I thank the minister for that answer. I think I heard him say shortly we would have something. I wonder with the lake, hopefully soon to be open and users upon it, could he be a bit more specific on time frame if he's able, please?

MR. COLWELL: The dialogue is continuing with the organizations as we speak. We can't implement some of these new settings, such as the alarm systems and the signs and stuff, until we hear back from the Canoe Club in particular, to make sure that there are

no safety hazards in the future with their members if they're out paddling this summer. That should be completed before the summer season starts this year for the club.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

ERDT - NOVA STAR: FUNDING DETAILS - MIN. RESPONSE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Today, we learned that the government handed out another \$2 million to *Nova Star* in the 2015 season. Yesterday in Question Period, the minister said, ". . . all the details regarding the Yarmouth ferry have been posted online." However, there is only one line that says, "March 2015 - \$2 million disbursed".

My question for the minister is, does he believe that a one-line sentence is actually providing details and being accountable to Nova Scotians?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the company is going to be providing today the exact breakdown of that \$2 million.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the minister if he would provide an immediate update on how much has been spent on goods and services purchased in Nova Scotia. He failed to do so, saying that all details would be provided online. Liberals have now handed out \$4 million of the \$13 million promised for the season, and the boat hasn't even returned from South Carolina yet.

Nova Scotians deserve an opportunity to see for themselves if their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent competently and if those dollars are being spent here at home. My question for the minister is, will the minister today provide a detailed account of where and how much of the \$2 million was spent in the month of March?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity, along with my colleague, the member for Yarmouth, to announce earlier this year that the *Nova Star* would be sailing again with a \$13 million investment from the people of Nova Scotia. At that announcement we were joined by many municipal leaders, business owners, tourism representatives, who were there to celebrate the fact that we've once again maintained our commitment to restore the ferry service between Nova Scotia and the United States, which is such an important market for us to be able to grow our tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, during those remarks I pointed out that there are some in this province who want to see this ferry service fail. If there's anyone who has any doubts who I was referring to, I think the last question makes it abundantly clear.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NURSES - ADDTL. STAFFING (2014)

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, nurses in our province are overworked, overtired, and fed up with being understaffed. Just to put it in perspective, this past year the province paid over \$17.5 million in overtime to nurses, which works out to about 250 full-time nursing positions.

Mr. Speaker, we know that those are not the only costs associated with the current nursing shortage. Travel nurses have been hired from out of the province to staff critical care areas at the QEII. My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is, on top of the overtime, how much was spent last year by the province on additional nurse staffing?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the member opposite is that we, indeed, are at a point in time where we have the most nurses currently registered in the province, we have the most graduating. What I can tell the member opposite is that we won't be taking \$0.5 million out of the nursing strategy, as they did under their watch.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Interesting, Mr. Speaker, we have more nurses maybe today because we expanded the nursing program. That's cold comfort for the patients who are not being treated in the ICU beds that are closed. That's not the answer to the issue in front of us.

When asked about the current nursing shortage yesterday in Question Period, the minister said he didn't think that things were all that bad. Mr. Speaker, I disagree, when ICU beds at the QE II are closed because of a lack of qualified nurses, things are bad.

Mr. Speaker, to help the minister better appreciate the severity of the situation, can he please provide all contracts associated with the hiring of travel nurses to this House?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, you know during budget time I'm sure the member will drill down on some of those statistics, and I will be more than pleased to provide the member with as much information as he desires.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LEG./REGS. - TIME FRAME

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I will not be asking a question about the *Nova Star*.

Aquaculture has the potential to be a very significant industry in Nova Scotia, creating many good jobs, and Nova Scotia is well positioned to take advantage of that potential. We have enviable ocean real estate, an excellent school of aquaculture at the

Dalhousie University campus, with David Gray last night saying that nearly every grad gets a job in B.C.

In December the government accepted the Doelle-Lahey Independent Aquaculture Regulatory Review Panel for Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, months had been wasted by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture sitting on this report while the industry needs clear regulations and guidelines to move forward, to grow and to create jobs.

So my question to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is, when can we expect new aquaculture legislation and regulations here in Nova Scotia?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the questions, very important questions to Nova Scotia's economy. Indeed, we have not been sitting on this report since we received it, we've been diligently working on a new Act and a new set of regulations that will move the industry towards more accountability, aligned very closely with the report from Doelle-Lahey.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: See, Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem with this is that the review, the Doelle-Lahey review, said that no new aquaculture licences should be issued until the new regulations are in place. As a result, the industry that could be growing jobs in rural Nova Scotia is in limbo, frozen until the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture makes a decision or makes his move.

My question is, what's preventing the minister from giving a green light to an industry that has such a large potential to make an important contribution to sustainable prosperity in our province?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, again, this is very important to Nova Scotia's economy, as the honourable member has mentioned. We are very diligently looking at this. In the past, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has had a very poor record of not being accountable to the public, to the industry. We are going totally to change how we do business, and we will be following the Doelle-Lahey report. However, it has taken a substantial amount of time to draft those regulations and the new bill that will be coming forward. We're hoping to have it introduced in this session of the Legislature and, with the consent of the other Parties, have it passed this session.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - NURSING SHORTAGE: OUTSIDE HRM - DETAILS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday outside of this Chamber the Minister of Health and Wellness told reporters that there aren't issues facing nurses outside of Halifax, at least according to him. He said, "... I do not hear when I go into CB Regional

and Yarmouth Regional and around the province some of the same issues.” I can table that for the minister’s wishes.

If nurses across the province are telling us there are staffing shortages, enormous overtime hours being worked, and a lack of respect from the government, who is the minister talking to when he visits these hospitals?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, over the last year and a half I have probably met with a couple hundred nurses at different tables and different settings. What I stated yesterday is reflective of the majority of communities where there are regional hospitals or smaller community hospitals. We know from time to time that there are specific areas, how many ERs close because of a nursing shortage. As the member for Queens-Shelburne knows, that’s one of those rare areas across Nova Scotia. We hope that some of the 25 nurses who will be graduating from the satellite program in Yarmouth will find themselves going to Shelburne to work.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I had the honour to attend the meeting with the member and the member for Argyle-Barrington to hear the concerns from the residents down there. There is a nursing shortage outside of HRM.

In addition to the minister’s comments, he added, “I wouldn’t say we have a provincial problem in terms of nursing.” Yet yesterday in Question Period he stated, “We do have high numbers of retirements and that we can expect and anticipate for at least about a 10-year period.”

I’m a little concerned about the minister’s conflicting comments. Maybe the minister can enlighten us all and tell us, do we have a problem in terms of nursing or do we not have a problem in terms of nursing? Which is it?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the member opposite get an updated list of the number of nurses in the province, because we are at a record number for both nurses and LPNs in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER LEVY - STATUS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. I’m wondering about the lobster levy. We were hearing about a 2-cent levy and then we were hearing about a 5-cent levy and a mystery zone, and then we haven’t heard anything. Fishermen in northern Nova Scotia are getting ready to set their traps over the next couple of weeks and they’re wondering about the status of the levy.

My question today is, will we see a lobster levy in Nova Scotia?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are indeed working on a process in the lobster industry to collect a fee. We're going to call it a "fee" instead of a "levy" because we may come up with an alternate way to collect that fee. We hope to have legislation before the House this session.

MR. HOUSTON: It will be interesting to see how that plays out because to most of us this certainly looks like this is going nowhere. While we are going nowhere, Maine is getting on with it. Maine's shipments of cold water lobster to Asia are well ahead of ours. Maine is clawing away at new business while we're chasing our tails and it seems like we're falling into a trap here in Nova Scotia so my question for the minister (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you very much - I don't want to fall in the trap of all the chatter in the room here. My question for the minister is just that he confirm that he will take some action with his fee during this session of the House.

MR. COLWELL: I want to correct the honourable member. Indeed we are doing very well in Europe. Actually in a marketing campaign we did recently, we sold 80,000 lobsters worth \$2.2 million in 24 hours in China.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LONG-TERM CARE LIST/HOME CARE LIST - AMALGAMATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In February the government made changes to policies around the provision of long-term care. They removed the deferral policy that encourages more seniors to be reassessed and receive care at home. The department says the purpose is to minimize the wait-list for nursing home care.

However, recent figures released by the *Chronicle Herald* - and I will table them - says the wait-list for home care services has grown to 883. This appears to be a sleight of hand, a situation where we're robbing Peter to Paul, to give the appearance of shorter wait lists. So my question to the minister is, how does the minister feel that pushing people off of one too-long long-term care list onto the mile-long home care list will result in improved care?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: One of the areas that the former minister knows that we have to address in the province is getting an accurate list of Nova Scotians who need to be in a nursing home. When the department called last year, 33 per cent of those were not ready to go into a nursing home and so now we will get that accurate list that will be

reflecting high needs and the risk of our seniors and so that's going to improve in that area. We also know that many of those that require home support, it's a distribution across the province and we're working to make sure that we respond to those who have the highest needs. Many people, knowing that there is a list, get themselves on a list early.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, a 2011 report commissioned by the government said that 36 per cent of people on wait lists for long term care were in communities where no public funded home care services are even available. The government failed to include that in its policy change announcement. What solutions will be provided to approximately 900 people who are waiting for placement in an area with no home care at all? How does the minister plan to address such a large gap in services and when can Nova Scotians expect the results?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the areas that will improve the delivery of home support is through the RFP that will be going out in early Fall. We have a huge gap in the price point per hour of home care. We will be able to afford more home care, more support workers, when we do get a system that gives us a better price point for every hour of service. We now have a gap of \$15-\$20 from one part of the province to another and this is going to give us more money to address this problem.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: SCREEN NOVA SCOTIA - FILM TAX CREDIT

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period I asked the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board about changes she has planned for the Film Tax Credit. The minister was unable to give any details; however, last night representatives of Nova Scotia's film industry told me that at a meeting with the minister last week they felt left cold, that the Film Tax Credit upon which their industry depends is under her budget axe. If this proves true it would be in complete disregard of the Ivany report recommendation by cutting short Nova Scotia's exciting, growing, creative economy.

My question for the minister is, what information has the Finance and Treasury Minister given to Screen Nova Scotia that she is unwilling to give to the House of Assembly?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. The members of Screen Nova Scotia had come to see me and we had a good meeting on Monday. There were members of my staff there as well and we discussed the concerns of the industry and had some good dialogue. I think they also met with other members of the Legislature and I'm sure that they would tell you that we had a frank and open discussion.

I am unable to give information about the budget until April 9th and that remains the case. We are certainly willing to talk and are in the process of setting up a meeting for post-budget, so that dialogue will continue.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, when the Film Tax Credit was first introduced in 1993, the industry was worth \$6 million. This past year it is estimated to be worth \$150 million and it provides over 2,000 jobs right around the province, including \$9 million that was spent recently on the internationally acclaimed mini-series, *The Book of Negroes*. My question for the minister is, what kind of province is her government hoping to create because it seems ready to set us on a path to becoming a creative wasteland and cultural backwater, if it does anything to affect this tax credit?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the jobs we have in government, and certainly as the Finance and Treasury Board Minister - my job is to look at the programs that we provide, and everybody in Nova Scotia knows that we were doing a program review, that it's our job to look for the best value for Nova Scotia tax dollars that we are entrusted with to buy the services that are essential in the province. I understand that many sectors are feeling some anxiety. It is pre-budget time and they don't know what's coming. We value the businesses that operate in this province and we are doing our utmost to help everybody.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC.: CABBAGE PRICES - MIN. INVESTIGATE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Previously in this House I raised the issue of extremely low prices of cabbage, as low as \$3 a bag. Farmers like Art Woolaver of Basinview Farms believe this situation is caused by enhanced farm subsidies in Quebec and Ontario. In fact, though I raise the issue in relationship to cabbage, it is a factor in the low price of many of our fruits and vegetables in our growing season. The minister promised that he would investigate the issue. Can the minister confirm that he is addressing the situation and that, in fact, the farmers are correct that Quebec and Ontario have enhanced farm subsidy programs?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, indeed we are investigating this. We are working with the horticulture in Nova Scotia and Perennia to see if we can resolve this problem. Unfortunately, Quebec and Ontario do subsidize these crops, which we don't have the ability to do, and it's not the way to grow our industry profitably. We are looking at ways to enhance the production of those crops and indeed make them profitable in Nova Scotia, even against competition that is unfairly put forward by Quebec and Ontario.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for that. I was aware that the minister was investigating the situation; I appreciate that. While we all realize that Quebec and Ontario may have deeper pockets, it's unlikely that we're going to get them to

change their policies. Will the minister tell this House how he plans to help Nova Scotia farmers deal with these inequalities caused by this situation?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, as I've already said earlier in the first reply to the question, we have to get more productive in our fields. We have to make sure our crops are doing just that. I will give you an example: we have a producer in the Valley that produces kale; the first time it has ever been grown in Nova Scotia, period. It was grown in North Carolina and in the Carolinas they have serious weather conditions and it's too hot to grow it now. Our production in kale in this province is four times greater than was ever achieved in the Carolinas. So Nova Scotia is moving forward with technology and the ability to do this. There's no reason we can't apply those principles to the cabbage and other products such as cabbage.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD - STORM DAYS: E-LEARNING/BLIZZARD BAGS - MIN. CONFIRM

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Over the past five years, students in rural Nova Scotia have missed 40 to 55 days of learning because of cancelled school days due to weather. Educational consultant Paul Bennett has said, "No school system anywhere can be competitive when students are only in school for 165 to 175 of the scheduled 180 to 182 instructional days."

Much of the same weather challenges exist in the United States and they have found great success in the area of e-learning or "blizzard bags" as a way to combat the lost days. My question to the minister, has the minister considered adding e-learning or blizzard bags as an option?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question. As we all know, there have been a number of days where students have lost instructional days in their school year due to something that none of us can control, and that is the weather. We have gone out to school boards and asked if they could look at ways within this current school year that they may be able to recover some of those lost instructional days.

The whole issue of e-learning presents a challenge. It's certainly something that we're looking at, but we need to make sure that every child in this province is able to take advantage of any solution that we put in, and we know that e-learning does have its limitations with some students.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, while children have missed a number of school days this year due to storms, they've also missed a number of days due to safety concerns with school infrastructure. This morning, it was reported that a child at Kingswood Elementary was

trapped between the school and a wall of snow and the paramedics had to be called. I'll table that.

When children are at school, parents need the assurance that their child is safe. My question to the minister is, what is the minister going to do to guarantee that schools are safe for children to attend?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that I do want to thank those people at the school who took quick action to make sure that that little child was safe, putting in the call to the fire department and the paramedics to come and ensure that child's safety. I do want to say that every worker in our school system has the safety of the students as their priority and that's an example of them putting that to work.

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

TIR - TANCOOK ISLANDS FERRY: INCREASES - INVESTIGATION

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. For the residents of Little and Big Tancook Islands, ferry travel is part of their daily lives. Whether commuting to work, school or medical appointments, the only mode of transportation to the mainland is the ferry. Now, thanks to the McNeil Government, this daily cost will be significantly more expensive, in particular for low-income residents who can't afford to buy an annual pass.

The minister has visited the island with me in the past, and I thank him for this. He is aware of how isolated the island and the communities are. My question to the minister is, why is the minister allowing this enormous increase which only serves to further isolate these rural communities?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the member opposite for the question. With respect to the Tancook Islands and the ferries in our fleet, there was a tough decision that we had to make with respect to the fees. The reality is that Nova Scotians - all Nova Scotians, including those who use the service - they subsidize the ferry services to the impact of \$9 million, collecting about \$1 million in revenue. We really had to close the gap on the expense versus the cost for those services.

Without question, the people of Tancook - we will maintain the fact that the annual rate for those residents will remain intact. There will be some slight adjustments to the other levels for the services and for those fees, but at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of that service. We're going to continue to maintain all of those services for the people of Nova Scotia and for the people of Tancook. We're going to keep those ferries. We're going to do what we can for those who are impacted with respect to their income and look at what the annual rates will be, and certainly work with the

community, work with the member and all members who are in affected communities, to see what we can do about controlling those rates on the annual basis.

It was a tough decision, Mr. Speaker, but it's the right decision and we're going to make sure that we have costs aligned with the expenses and with the revenue that we have.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: This might put it in perspective for the minister better, and I know he does care so I think that he will take this into account because today, Mr. Speaker, a book of 10 tickets to board the Tancook Island ferry will cost you 60 per cent more than it cost yesterday. If a resident takes the ferry five days a week to work and back, or if a child is going to school, that individual will be spending an extra \$636 a year. So a family of four now it will cost over \$2,400 just to get their groceries, participate in work and school. I'm sure the minister can understand what a huge increase that is.

So given the reduced capacity and the often unreliable service of the Tancook ferry, how can the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal possibly justify this type of increase?

MR. MACLELLAN: For the people of Tancook the reality is that it is an essential service; we all understand that. But when you look at the 10 passes, as the member is referring to, for one trip across it is \$5.50. You can get a 10 pass for \$13.50. So, Mr. Speaker, if you look at those numbers the people of Nova Scotia are subsidizing, including those who use the ferry, they are subsidizing eight of every 10 trips that people make across this ferry service. So those numbers don't align.

We were asked by Nova Scotians, by the Opposition, by everyone in this province to be fiscally responsible and to make good decisions. With this particular case we're keeping the annual pass where it is for the people of Tancook, so those who use annual passes will continue to do so and we'll make every effort to make a payment plan so that those people who use the annual pass will be supported by way of a monthly payment or something that we can do to make it more manageable.

We're making good decisions, all of these choices are tough, but this is the right one for the people of Nova Scotia.

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

SNS: TRUCKING COMPANIES - LICENSING FEES

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this morning Nova Scotians woke up hoping that the user fees raised by this government was a cruel joke. Well, they were half right.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is going to be for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia. Trucking companies are trying to make a living like every other hard-working Nova Scotian. Truckers are on the road seven days a week hauling freight from one end of North America to another and around our communities. Their licensing fees were jacked up 3 per cent effective today, so a trucker hauling more than 6,000 kilograms will now pay \$4,012.15 annually for a licensing fee.

My question to the minister is, is the minister aware how many increases in licensing truckers have faced in recent years?

HON. MARK FUREY: Obviously over time there have been increases to service fees and in this case the fees are no different this year than they have been in any other government where fees have been increased. In order to continue to provide the services that Nova Scotians have come to expect we have to close the margin on costs and revenues, and in these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the 3 per cent is a reasonable approach to take in addressing the needs that Nova Scotians have come to expect.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information and information of all members of the House, trucking licence fees have increased 15.8 per cent in slightly less than seven years. In recent years they have seen five increases ranging from 2 per cent to nearly 6 per cent.

It would be interesting to know how much the minister thinks is enough to provide this licensing service. Government talks about user fees to be imposed to cover costs, but surely it can't cost this amount of money to print off a trucking licence. The government needs to provide truckers some relief instead of surprising the small independent business people every year with increased costs.

So my question is how much does it really cost to provide this licence, and can the minister really justify yet another fee increase?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions by Members to Ministers has expired - but a good question.

Just before everybody takes off and we move on to our next item of business, I have a couple of housekeeping items here. The second question lobbed in Question Period today from the honourable member for Halifax Needham to the Premier saw the Premier provide a quote referencing a cheap political tactic. I want to draw attention that that is an unparliamentary term, as ruled by the Speaker in 1960 in this Legislature, so I would ask the Premier to retract that phrasing.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. I missed that ruling in 1960, so I will withdraw those remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: Kudos to our Chief Clerk for diving into the history books for that.

The second point before we go - we want to get some clarity on the House hours today. Yesterday, in the motion to adjourn, the stated hours were from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. when, in fact, our standard hours for Opposition Wednesdays are from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Just for clarity in the record, I would like to have unanimous agreement that this was the intent of the House for today's business.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed. Thank you very much.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: 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 New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 70.

Bill No. 70 - HPV Vaccine Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

HON. GORDON GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for opening by saying that he is open to the idea of supporting vaccinations for boys in the Province of Nova Scotia, during Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, the small province of Prince Edward Island was the leader in vaccinating boys in Canada, along with the Province of Alberta, the second province onboard to vaccinate young boys for the HPV vaccination. Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador are presently considering their options for vaccinations for the HPV virus.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007, then Premier, Honourable Rodney MacDonald, was in Whitney Pier at Memorial Junior High in my riding to announce this vaccination. I attended that announcement along with many parents in the riding of young women in the community, then the riding of Cape Breton Nova - a very nice riding.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important that even the doctors in the Province of Nova Scotia are recommending that we, as a province, vaccinate boys. The Centers for Disease Control in the U.S. also recommends that boys get vaccinated the same as girls get vaccinated. In our Province of Nova Scotia, 77 per cent of girls aged between nine and 26 years take advantage of this vaccination, free to our young women in this province. I applaud the government of the day for doing that.

I also would like to say that by doing this, the HPV vaccination, the main goal in this thing is to prevent young boys in the future from getting what they call neck cancer, Madam Speaker. The vaccination would prevent a lot of the cancers that we see today in the head and neck in men that are coming now. There was a doctor who I met here recently in May, after my surgery, from New Zealand. He was here doing a study on the same thing that we're debating today - on the cancers in men caused by HPV.

Madam Speaker, the Government of Australia in 2013 went and did what we are looking at doing now and allowed the vaccination of boys in their country, where in their whole country boys between the ages of nine and 26 will be allowed to have that vaccination.

Madam Speaker, I wish I could say I was the only one advocating for HPV but I must say the honourable member for Progressive - well Conservative, I don't mean Progressive Conservative like Nova Scotia - the Conservative in Ottawa, the honourable MP Peter Kent. He has neck cancer like myself, and has been advocating in all the provinces in Canada to give the boys a vaccination to prevent them from having neck cancer in the future.

Madam Speaker, all we would do here, by allowing the HPV vaccination, is to stop the transmission of the HPV virus in young boys, as we do for the girls. The HPV vaccination is the primary method of preventing HPV in girls and boys.

With those short few words I take my seat but I realize that Dr. Mark Taylor, and I think the Tumor Board of Nova Scotia and Dr. Taylor, who is one of the foremost surgeons in Nova Scotia for facial reconstruction, has been advocating - and Karen Woodland, actually today was her last day with the district health authority, she is now going to move on with the new authority, but she was also. In November we have what they call, I think it's Movember, mustache, but I think in December we have a beard growing for men with HPV.

Madam Speaker, with those few words I personally would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Health and Wellness, for saying that he is open to the HPV vaccination for boys in the Province of Nova Scotia. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: I would remind all members of the House that photograph-taking in the Chamber is inappropriate.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm pleased today to take a few minutes to speak to the bill brought forward by the honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier. Over the last couple of months he has become what I would call a living advocate for dealing with the HPV virus, which we know we can do something about. That's the good news. We know that there are a number of very troublesome cancers that we don't have as strong an ability to be able to prevent. This is one where the research is clearly demonstrating, clearly showing us that if we had a vaccination program such as we currently have for girls we would be able to offset some of that pain, that uncertainty with a cancer caused by the HPV virus.

So my first words are to thank the member for the number of occasions formally here in the House and also approaching the outside of the House. Certainly I also want to note his tremendous battle to regain health and to be an active participant here in the Assembly of the province.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization actually made a recommendation in 2012 that the HPV vaccine be used for boys aged nine to 26 years of age, much like, as the member pointed out, is currently the practice in a number of jurisdictions. We also see a number of countries such as Australia that have engaged in this. Generally it is a program that we currently have in place for girls at the Grade 7 level here in Nova Scotia. We've had a very, very high percentage of uptake. However, that's part of an issue that is a growing concern, and that is people not taking advantage of well-proven, well-researched vaccinations that can give us a better possibility of preventing something in the first place. We all know that the curative process is a very costly one that extracts a tremendous amount of suffering and uncertainty for those that are so afflicted.

Immunization, we now know, is one of the safest, most effective interventions to prevent disease, protect public health, and build a healthier population. Those elements that we have available to us through public health are ones that I believe we need to endorse and we need to have as part of our future. We all know - and I reference this voluntary nature that we currently use with the vaccination process, and I'm hoping that we will look at all of those vaccines available to Nova Scotians. One of the strong directions that we're going to see in our province with the new Nova Scotia Health Authority, along with the IWK, is an emphasis placed on strong health and wellness through the prevention of disease and the promotion of good health practices. One of those is vaccinations in the early years; also subscribing in the school years for getting vaccinations.

I'm very pleased that the member has brought this bill forward. I've had conversations with Dr. Strang, the Public Health Officer for the province, and he has made a recommendation that it should be included in our public health vaccination program.

I'm very pleased to say that we will support this piece of legislation, and I think the good member for Sydney-Whitney Pier will be pleased that we have made this statement here today. That's one of the realities in this House that I, as one who has a collaborative model of dealing with issues - I'm a believer that good legislation and progress in our province is not just for government alone. It is for all members of the House to bring forth good ideas, good legislation, and something timely like this for our health care system, we will embrace. So I'm pleased to say that we will support the bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just want to say that I'm absolutely thrilled to hear that the Minister of Health and Wellness is going in this direction with his department. I also just want to congratulate the member for Sydney-Whitney Pier for his courage and battle that he has been fighting.

I'm really pleased - I'm going to try to skim over some of my notes - I'm pleased to stand here and speak on Bill No. 70. This has been an issue that I have been very interested in long before I became involved in politics, having two teenagers. It is vitally important that we make medical treatment available to Nova Scotians when they need it, but equally as important is that we are able to proactively prevent diseases from developing and do what is necessary to prevent the possible spread of disease where possible.

April is daffodil month and soon we will all be wearing pins to raise awareness and show support for those living with various cancers. Part of that awareness is educating people on potential risk factors for developing cancer and about screening methods and prevention.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to protect more Nova Scotians from the potential cancers and other diseases that may develop as a result of contracting human papillomavirus. These are preventable diseases, but right now there is no reliable screening method to prevent cancers caused by HPV in males. Lives can be saved and people could be saved the pain and suffering if we allow this change. Statistics across Canada show that 75 per cent of our population will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. That means that the spread of infection is likely only to hasten unless we protect more people with a vaccination.

Providing both genders with a vaccination is the fastest, most effective way to protect all individuals. As of right now there is a 77 per cent uptake among young girls receiving the HPV vaccination; it can be assumed that those numbers would be very similar amongst boys. One of our biggest obstacles in helping to prevent the prevalence of certain

cancers in the screening process and the number of people diagnosed with cancer is on the rise. It is the second leading cause of death from cancer among men.

Experts believe this is due to the fact that people are uncomfortable with the screening process, people simply do not want to go through the requirements to properly screen. That needs to be changed. We do not have that problem here. This is a far easier preventive measure and it would benefit all individuals. It would be hard to argue against a preventive measure that will both save lives and be a very wise use of our health care dollars. Simply, I believe we are responsible to protect all Nova Scotians.

And on an ending note here, as parents we must do the responsible thing and protect our sons and daughters equally. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 70. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, just for the interest of the House, the times will be changed - we'll roll it back 10 minutes. We've allotted 15 minutes per speaker. I'm sure we'll get the same amount of agreement on this bill.

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 74.

Bill No. 74 - Protection of Patient Safety Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, I'm glad to have a chance to stand and talk about Bill No. 74 because I think it's important to put it into context, the situation and the environment that we find ourselves in right now in the province. I'm referring to health care delivery and the fact that we are challenged right now with what is a nursing shortage in areas of our province and in areas of service delivery that we shouldn't have those shortages. They have a huge impact on patient safety when there are shortages in the ICUs, for example.

It's not only patient safety that is put at risk; it's the safety of our health care providers themselves, the nurses themselves, whom we have been hearing from over the last number of months, who have tried to get the attention of the government to move forward in addressing their concerns. It's not just something that the NDP caucus has been

bringing forward. This is something that the concerns have been brought forward by those men and women who are actually providing that care. The nurses themselves have been trying to sound the alarm for the government to listen and understand the environment that our nurses are working in currently here in Nova Scotia.

For the first time in over a decade, we have ICU beds closed in Halifax at the QE II. I can't stress enough how serious that is. That has a huge ripple effect throughout our system. We recently heard from Dr. Sam Campbell of the QE II ER, who sounded another alarm by going to the media to say that there was an overcrowding issue at the QE II ER and that it stemmed from a capacity issue of being unable to move the patients out of the emergency room who are admitted - who are deemed by health care professionals that they cannot just be treated, released, and sent home. These are patients who are sicker than we've seen in the past who are in the ER, that we've seen an overcrowding issue.

Often, I would agree, there are times of the year when overcrowding at our emergency rooms is due to influenza, H1N1, things like that that have an effect on the system and that create this capacity issue. Dr. Campbell said it quite clearly. These are not patients who are just showing up because they have the flu, the sniffles, and a cold; these are sick patients who need admission to the hospital.

When we have closures of ICU beds, it has an effect right down to the emergency room and even further beyond that. We've heard in the same alarm that Dr. Campbell was trying to set off a number of weeks ago that at the time, there were 11, 12, 13 ambulances waiting to unload their patients at the ER, so that ripple effect goes right back to communities that are without those ambulances ready to respond to emergencies.

The health care system is very sensitive - especially the emergency health care system - to deficiencies like a shortage of nurses who are trained to work and take care of patients in the ICU. We're hearing the cardiovascular ICUs are short-staffed. These are nurses who take care of very ill, sick patients who, fortunately enough, have survived their incident of cardiac emergency, either if it's a full-blown cardiac arrest, where they may have been revived by the defibrillator by a paramedic, to maybe having severe angina, who have just gone through angioplasty to open up blocked arteries. These are the sickest of the sickest patients in our province who, if they don't have the proper care, can turn very quickly and can go the other way, Madam Speaker, and succumb to their illness. We're hearing this from physicians in our ER. We're hearing from nurses who work on cardiac ICUs and other floors at the QE II that there's a shortage of nurses that have an impact on the system.

Bill No. 74, I believe - and I would hope that the government would take a different stance on Bill No. 74, talking about the nurse-to-patient ratio, than they've taken, especially in the last day or so. It's unfortunate that we hear comments from the Premier that no, we're not doing that - they don't do that anywhere in North America. Madam Speaker, I was going to start my speech and my debate off by tabling a map of North America because

California, for example, has implemented legislation that revolved around nurse-to-patient ratio. From my recollection, California is part of North America.

I'm not going to table the map, but I want it to be very clear - and the Premier should understand - that there are jurisdictions that have implemented nurse-to-patient ratio legislation that has had a positive effect on nursing shortages, that has had a positive effect on the recruitment and retention of these important health care providers - the nurses, who really are the backbone of the health care system, especially in a hospital setting - and that's coming from a paramedic - but the nurses really are a key component to delivering health care here in Nova Scotia.

I'm a bit taken aback by the comments from the Premier saying, well, no one in North America does it. I just corrected the Premier, there are jurisdictions that look at this. Another country like Australia, which has a good record in improving health care outcomes and improving health care delivery, has similar legislation too, Madam Speaker. I hate to hear that approach and just to dismiss it because maybe there's no one in Canada doing it.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that Nova Scotia can be a leader when it comes to innovative ways to improve our health care delivery. I'll give you a few examples of that, because if past governments believed or took the approach that the current government is taking and that the Premier is taking - that well, nobody else is doing this close to us, we shouldn't do it - then I think we'd be much worse off. I think the government needs to refocus and look at how do we improve health care services by looking outside the box.

I give the example of Collaborative Emergency Centres, Madam Speaker. When Dr. Ross brought his report in to the government of the day indicating that we needed to change the model of care and that would have an impact on the health of a community, at first, it was, well, we don't have an example of that in Canada. We shouldn't do that. If we took the approach at that time that I think the government is taking now, then places like Springhill, Tatamagouche, and Parrsboro wouldn't have a model that I think and I believe - and I know the data is there to support this, that their communities are healthier because part of the CEC model was to provide better access to primary care. We know that better access to primary care, the end result is less of a burden on the emergency side of care.

We're seeing that. We're seeing numbers of visits in the ERs in those communities that have Collaborative Emergency Centres continue to drop. I'm hearing from the communities like Parrsboro, from those health care providers, public health nurses, other health care providers, that they see a difference in the health of the residents because they have better access to primary care. They're not waiting six and seven weeks to see a physician, but then maybe going to the ER because they have an ongoing illness that has just gotten out of hand.

If we took the approach that we shouldn't be leaders, that we shouldn't be innovative when it comes to addressing and trying to address the health care needs of our

province, we wouldn't see Collaborative Emergency Centres. We wouldn't have paramedics delivering clot-busting drugs in the bedrooms, in the living rooms, on the side of the road to patients in Nova Scotia who are having a heart attack, because that wasn't done in North America prior to Nova Scotia implementing that treatment.

If we took that approach, that it wasn't done in North America - there are Nova Scotians who are alive today, and paramedics can attest to this, and patients can attest to it - because they received that drug sooner in their homes, delivered by paramedics. First one in North America to do that, and now jurisdictions are looking at Nova Scotia's model.

Along the same lines, Madam Speaker, the EHS system itself as a whole - the changes that were made to provide the care that we do in people's residences, on the side of the road, and communities - has been recognized as one of the best in North America. We are leaders in North America when it comes to emergency care. So when an idea is floated and it's brought forward, like Bill No. 74, that talks and discusses nurse-to-patient ratio, I think the government should look at it. I mean, really, right now, units in hospitals across our province use a ratio to determine how many people they need to have on shift. It's a loose ratio. It's not defined properly, I believe, and I think if we took it to that step where we define the ratio that we need in order to not only protect the patients but protect the health care providers themselves, then I think we can be seen as leaders in North America, that we've addressed an issue.

It's not just myself saying this. It's not just unions saying this, Madam Speaker. There are people who are experts in the field, and one of those people is Dr. Linda Aiken, who is probably one of the most influential researchers in staffing, not only in the United States but globally. She has done a lot of work around nurse-to-patient ratio, and it has, in California, for example, contributed to stabilizing the shortage of nurses that they have seen for decades and has been shown to improve patient outcome - the most important thing we could do is improve patient outcome - and improve the safety of not only the patients but of the workers themselves.

The minister himself has been quoted since being Minister of Health and Wellness that no nurse should have to go to work knowing that they are short-handed. Well, Madam Speaker, they are, and we're hearing it day after day after day. That's why the government has to change the way they approach this. No Party in this Legislature has all the answers to address health care needs. They have to be open to looking outside that box, and here is an opportunity for them to seriously look at this and negotiate. Our legislation doesn't stipulate exactly what those ratio numbers should be, because I'm not an expert in that.

Our caucus isn't an expert. This is a framework to give to the government so that they can go out and seek that information and be leaders. That's my hope with this piece of legislation, Madam Speaker: that government will do that, change direction. Let's be leaders when it comes to health care, like we've shown over the last number of years that we can be. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Madam Speaker, I just have a few words to say on the bill. Staffing and utilization of staffing itself in health care is an ongoing challenge for this province, and in fact, all provinces in this country. We have an aging population, as do all provinces, and our system has to adapt to this challenge. What is absolutely clear is that staffing challenges at our hospitals are not a new problem here. We must make sure we are looking at alternative system deliveries and delivering health care in a more efficient, effective, and economic fashion. We do have a system that is largely designed to treat acute care while we require a system that is increasingly conducive to chronic care.

Another aspect that is absolutely clear is that throwing money or instituting arbitrary fixed ratios is not a solution. The fact is our health care system is not coordinated enough. How can we take advantage of technology and tie in our various components of this system with silo district health authorities in one of the smallest provinces in the country? This government has taken the steps to begin this coordination. Managers on the ground deserve the autonomy to decide on their own so-called ratio and the flexibility to mobilize human resources.

I hear there is one state that has this, which is news to me, so that's one state out of 48, and no province in the whole country that have these fixed ratios that are being proposed today. It is also news that Australia, which is a country that is not very close by, has the ratios as well.

Nurses are an integral part of our health care system and we value their work. For anyone who says that any member of this House does not value their work is disingenuous at best. Right now we have more nurses in the province than at any point in the last 20 years. Currently there are 9,585 RNs in our province. We retained 90 per cent of our nursing graduates in 2014; this is the highest retention rate in at least the last decade. Despite having more nurses than at any point in the last 20 years, we still believe that every government should always try to do better.

The efficacy of health care policy must be improved. That is why we've made important platform commitments to review and update the Nova Scotia Nursing Strategy. The Minister of Health and Wellness is hard at work updating that strategy and it will be very helpful in positioning us for the challenges ahead. I can tell you that no jurisdiction in Canada has mandatory staffing levels like this proposed in the bill. No jurisdiction has fully staffed OR rooms either, and if the NDP felt like this was a silver bullet they could have easily legislated this just a year and half ago or during the four and a half years they were in office. It's not just us, last year the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union thought it was a bad idea as well.

Health care workers know that this piece of legislation does not get at the structural problems inherent in this system. The president of the NSNU said that each facility unit

needs to have something tailored for them. According to *The Chronicle Herald's* story from March 2014, Janet Hazleton, President of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, said "... her union was concerned mandatory ratios for registered nurses could have adverse implications for licenced practical nurses."

I wish it were as simple as putting a ratio in place, but they know as well as we know it's not that simple. There are a lot of factors to consider, like how ill patients will be, how much experience nurses have, and the other supports available that might be more appropriate for that patient.

Government has consulted with hundreds of front-line nurses across this province. They've told us that complex problems don't have simple solutions. They've given us lots of great ideas and we will incorporate them in our nursing strategy. I think it's important to draw attention to a very successful model that is utilized by NSNU. This model was decided on by the entire membership of the NSNU and now forms an important part of their collective agreement. NSGEU also has a section of their collective agreement that provides a process through the Union/Management Quality Care Committee to work closely with the employer on staffing issues.

The committee however has not met in some time despite requests from their employer. We must also remember that the discussion on quality of care shouldn't just be about nurses, it should be really about the entire health system and delivering care in the most appropriate manner.

Our government recognized the health system was broken, that structural change was needed to address things with a unified approach. There are literally hundreds of efficiencies that will be achieved by the passing of Bill No. 1. We have done what no other government in our province's history could do - we have introduced essential services legislation and reduced the number of bargaining units from 50 to four.

We're pleased to see nurses now being bargained by nurses. April 1st marks a new beginning of a new approach with one unified health authority, a truly patient-focused health care system. Our changes will help us to better address challenges across the system. One of the major first steps being a provincial surgical plan, as was originally committed to in our platform. At the end of the day this new system will help reduce wait times for important surgeries and reduce ER closures. Previous governments have tried to treat the symptoms of the problems without taking a good look at the way health care is administered and delivered. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I would ask that the honourable member please table his quote. Thank you.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, Madame le Président. It's my pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill No. 74. Proper patient care is the most important aspect of any health care system. We talk a lot about processes and we talk a lot about administration but at the end of the day we have to be here for our constituents and of course be here for the patients who are accessing this health care system.

Nova Scotians expect the care they need, where they need it and when they need it. Having the appropriate number and kind of staff is an essential part of that patient care. There should be enough staff to meet patient needs; I can say we agree with that, but whether or not the calculus that determines the appropriate level of front line health staff should be enshrined in legislation, that's another question, Madam Speaker.

Now the Minister of Health and Wellness does have that power; he already has that power. I would argue that he has a responsibility - not just the power but the responsibility - to make sure that our hospitals have the appropriate number and kind of staff to meet those patient needs. If he fails in that responsibility, I can say, Madam Speaker, that all Nova Scotians will hold him accountable.

Until very recently many Nova Scotian nurses preferred a complaint-based model to ratios when it came to staffing levels. Now there was no real agreement amongst nurses; it depended on where you were in the province, which union you belonged to, what kind of service you were offering. There was an agreement that ratios would drive up costs. Even the former Minister of Health and Wellness, the member for Sackville-Cobequid, conceded that ratios would cost more. He was a pretty smart Health and Wellness Minister back then, a pretty smart guy now.

There are no other jurisdictions in Canada that operate on a ratio model. I'll say that again, there are no other jurisdictions in Canada that operate on the ratio model. They have other models and systems to ensure that the service is available. B.C., I was supposed to have a B.C. paper to talk about here a little bit but I forgot it on my desk at the office so maybe some other day I'll have the opportunity to discuss it as well.

We do not want to make decisions today which would make our health care system even less affordable, without ironclad evidence that patient care would improve. So let's look at the data, let's look at what other provinces are doing and maybe come up with a system that does work. Nova Scotians pay among the highest taxes in Canada and over 40 per cent of our provincial budget is dedicated to health care. We must ensure that those dollars are spent effectively and efficiently and any decision made by government must be made with this in mind first and foremost.

We have seen that government's many missteps have sometimes put patients' care in jeopardy. Madam Speaker, we know there are gaps in the system and we have heard stories and we know that those gaps have to be fixed. There have to be ways to fix the gaps without legislation. Enshrining ratios in law will take away any flexibility in the system.

Quite honestly, if the ratio is there in one unit, you have to meet that ratio. What services in that hospital or in that district or in that area might have to be shut down in order to maintain that ratio in one place?

Quite honestly, we talk quite often that sometimes it isn't enough, sometimes there are simply not enough people. I'm not sure that this bill will do this either. If there are not enough nurses in the system, the minister should address that shortfall. I mean how many FTEs are unfilled today? How many nurses are needed across Nova Scotia?

We have heard that health care workers have left Nova Scotia, in part because of the confusion and uncertainty which was unnecessarily dragged out by the Liberal Government's Bill No. 1. Achieving proper staffing levels is a critical component of enhancing patient care. It does seem, though, that the sideshow created by the Liberal Government has worsened the problem of the shortages. Almost every day we hear of ER closures in areas of this province due to shortages of health care professionals. This is the case right across Nova Scotia, from Roseway Hospital in Shelburne to Northside General in Cape Breton, to South Cumberland Community Care Centre in Parrsboro. We know that ambulances and their skilled crews are being stranded waiting for their patients in ERs rather than on the road being ready to serve our patients. There's definitely a huge domino effect that's felt throughout the system.

This province needs a Department of Health and Wellness that has more answers on how to improve patient care. While we agree that DHA amalgamation was an important first step, it must be followed through by other meaningful measures using evidence-based research and partnerships with health care professionals. We know that we need to determine the best way to ensure that Nova Scotia patients have adequate care through proper staffing levels. We hope that the government is committed to finding additional ways to put patients' needs first instead of creating sideshows and distractions like we've had in the last six months.

The government owes it to Nova Scotians; it must do better to protect patients. A competent government should be focused on making Nova Scotia an attractive destination not only for our homegrown health care professionals, but those from other provinces. We heard today, I think it was in Question Period - or was it yesterday in Question Period that we talked about nurses coming from away to work in Nova Scotia? That's a great thing, but we need more. We need to fill the positions that are empty today so that there is no more double shifting, so that there is no more overtime, or at least to try to minimize the amount of overtime that is being used up today.

Having the longest wait times for elective surgeries, which keeps many Nova Scotians from working and prolongs chronic pain, is not putting patients first. The growing wait-list for Nova Scotians who need long-term care is not putting patients first. We do not want to be having this conversation again three years from now. Improving patient care needs to be addressed now and it can't wait for this debate.

It should not take further horror stories from Nova Scotians to convince the government that it needs to act to improve patient care. Health care workers should be partners, like I said yesterday in my debate on Bill No. 1 - not considered adversaries of government, which is kind of what Bill No. 1 did. How long is it going to take before health care workers across this province want to help this government - help any government - make things better for patients when they've been treated that way?

At the end of the day, it is about patients. Heated rhetoric on both sides should never distract from that. I hope that the sideshow - I said it again - perpetuated by the Liberal Government is over and everybody will think first and foremost about the needs of the patients.

Our quickly aging demographics - we must get health care delivery right. There are many of us in this House who will probably be requiring health care services sooner than others and we need to make sure it's ready for some of us as well as our loved ones and our community members. (Interruption) Only some.

Nova Scotians work hard, they pay their taxes, and they deserve quality health care. In Nova Scotia, we need to get staffing levels right, there is no question. I don't know, not sure, whether legislation is the way to achieve the goal we want.

The question that I'm going to have for government is to provide us with the data. What kind of data is out there now to look at staffing levels across the province? What kind of overtime is being used up now? What kind of double shifting is happening? What kind of concerns are being voiced by nurses?

Let's just get on with hiring more nurses and more health care practitioners to make sure that the services that they deserve as Nova Scotians and as Canadians are there for them when they need them. Thank you.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place and speak on Bill No. 74, which is a bill that would provide for patient-staff ratios in our acute care facilities.

I want to start by saying that in the last number of weeks, I've actually spent a fair amount of time in our acute care facilities. We in this Chamber all have family members who, from time to time, are in our hospitals and it's always very educational to be there and to watch the staff as they go about their work. I've had two family members in very serious critical situations in the last month in hospitals here in the Capital District, the Dartmouth General and the Halifax Infirmary, on the very units that we're talking about here in this bill, on the critical care units, the intensive care units.

These are units where, if you have very serious health conditions, health problems - for example in the case of one of my family members, my nephew just underwent a kidney transplant and in the case of another family member, my brother-in-law, who unfortunately passed away, had a very serious infection and a number of other problems that contributed ultimately to his death. I have to first of all say that the care that my brother-in-law and my nephew received in our acute care facilities was exemplary but I've observed nurses working short-staffed in the critical care units, first-hand; things that I've heard the nurses come to the Law Amendments Committee and speak of, in terms of having more than one patient, not being able to take breaks, having real difficulty just finding time to do the shift change, which is so critical in these situations.

These nurses have to monitor the vital signs of patients who sometimes are at death's door in these units, not sometimes, I mean that's why they're in the critical care units. Let's be crystal clear here first off, it's nothing new to look at what is the desired ratio of patients to staff in our care facilities. This is a fairly standard kind of ongoing expectation that relates to whether or not you can get certified, whether or not you can maintain your licence, whether or not you're an accredited hospital facility, all of this kind of stuff, so for members of the government, for example, to act like there is something new when people talk about staff/patient ratio, let me reassure people, there is nothing new here.

The standards of care, the standard practices, the recognized practices for accreditation in many of these facilities, in all of our facilities, currently exist. The problem that this legislation seeks to remedy is the fact that we have standards of care and standards of practice that are not being upheld and are not being enforced, not occasionally but regularly. That's the problem. The problem is that we have now a situation in many of our facilities, but in particular in our tertiary care hospital, where it is a regular, everyday occurrence in critical care, intensive care units where the staff work short-staffed, not one person short but more than one person short, over and over and over again.

Now that has a number of impacts; that impacts the pressure that is on the staff that are doing the caring, so they are under a lot of stress in these situations and then they're being asked to work additional shifts, many overtime shifts.

I spoke with a nurse who, after putting in her regular full-time hours of working during the month of February, worked an additional five shifts - five 12-hour shifts, one full additional week - actually, more than one full week of additional work in terms of overtime in the month of February, on a critical care unit dealing with cardiac care, very specialized. This is nursing work where you can't come out of a nursing school and just walk into those jobs and do those jobs. You don't have the experience or the training. It requires additional training, and then it requires a heck of a lot of experience.

This government has, with their policies and their approach to health care, in a very short period of time, driven a number of those highly-specialized, highly-skilled, very

necessary nurses out of the system. They've compounded a labour market problem that was already problematic enough.

Now, I've heard members stand up here and say that there is no reason that we would have to regulate or mandate nurse-patient ratios. The reason is crystal clear. We need to set the minimum standards and then we need to have a mechanism to enforce them, to make sure we don't allow a government like this government to ignore them.

The Premier today in Question Period, when I asked him about why he's not paying attention and why he won't address this problem, told me to go talk to the employer of the nurses. Now imagine that, Mr. Speaker. Imagine that. That right there tells you everything you need to know about why we do need this legislation and we do need to put in place some mandatory requirements.

Let me say this: mandatory requirements have been used in other jurisdictions. They have been used in other jurisdictions that have had nursing shortages, and they've been used to great effect. I'll table this after I read from this. I want to table and draw members' attention to a piece of research that has been done based on the mandatory requirements of nurse-patient ratios in the State of California.

A very learned researcher, Dr. Linda Aiken, according to this article - which is from the Fall 2013 edition of *Nursing Economics* - is identified as probably the most influential researcher in staffing, not only in the United States but globally. She has looked at this particular question, and she has looked at the impact of the California legislation on patient care in that particular state, and this is what she has concluded:

“The legislation improved nurse staffing in hospitals across the state and improved care outcomes of millions of patients and job satisfaction of tens of thousands of nurses. Beyond the very positive effect of the legislation on improving staffing in California, it was also influential in ending a nurse shortage in California.”

The article is really interesting because she talks about the opposition that existed to legislating mandatory nurse-patient ratios. A lot of what I heard from the two other caucuses around this particular bill are the very things that people in California said when they were bringing forward legislation.

It's true, Mr. Speaker, the members in the NDP caucus wish we didn't have to have this legislation here. It would be great if we had staffing levels that were adequate. It would be great if we adhered to the existing standards of what patient-staff ratio should be. But the very fact that we don't adhere to what already exists is the reason why we're saying this needs to be mandatory. This needs to be mandated and it is a minimum. That means that you set those minimum standards; you staff for those minimum standards; you develop your system around those minimum standards; you train your workforce so you can meet

those minimum standards but you don't allow those minimum standards to dictate everything that goes on.

You build in flexibility but you make it absolutely crystal clear that, for example, in a cardiac intensive care unit, in surgeries, in emergency departments, in neurology departments you have to have the kind of ratio of nursing staff to patients that is adequate to be able to give you that constant monitoring that is required on those units. You don't allow yourself to get into this situation that we currently have where nurses are so overworked, so overburdened, so stressed that they are reducing their workload by working half-time, refusing any additional shifts and what have you and we get into a situation where we see large numbers of nurses who are eligible to retire leaving the workforce because they just can't take the workload, the stress, the pressure.

They're eligible, we know this; we know that we have a lot of nurses currently working who are eligible for retirement. We need to create work environments that are satisfying for them, where they can use that experience that they have and their desire to continue on in their profession. We have to prevent making the workplace so miserable that they won't stay.

There are a growing number of opportunities for nurses to work in other settings besides the acute care setting. There are lots of opportunities for nurses to work casually, to take early retirement and go work as casuals or go work in home care or long-term care. They don't have to stay in this highly-pressurized, acute care environment. The nurses who do that, they do it because they love the work, they're dedicated to the work but there's a line that you can't push them beyond or they won't stay if they have other options.

I very much think this is a problem. If we had a bill that recognized what the current best practices tell us and we commit that we will implement those minimum requirements that will ensure that we always put the patient first, we allow the nursing staff to put the patient first, then I think we will have a much better health care system. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Opposition Business for today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That concludes the business for the day, I understand. I would indicate that tomorrow the House hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and at that time we will call Government Business, Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 74 and 75, and if time permits Address in Reply. I move the

House do now rise. (Interruption) I stand corrected on that Mr. Speaker. It will be Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 75 and 76.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 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 now stands adjourned until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow but before you go we have now reached the moment of interruption and the topic for late debate today was submitted by the honourable member for Pictou West:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Government make a meaningful contribution to Sexual Assault Awareness Month by putting in place a comprehensive, inclusive and compassionate system for the survivors of sexual violence.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

STATUS OF WOMEN: SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS – SYSTEM PROVIDE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House all Parties agreed with the principles and important goals behind Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We all agreed that by talking, learning, and standing up against sexual assault, we can help end the violence. Raising awareness is important. Working towards prevention is also important, there is no question about that, but taking concrete action is also very important and unfortunately, we live in a time and a place where sexual assault is an all-too-common reality.

In 2010, 682 assaults were reported to police in Nova Scotia, 84 per cent of the victim survivors were women. In 2007 the rate of reported of sexual assaults in Nova Scotia was 75 per 100,000 people, compared to the national rate of 65 per 100,000 people. Victims of sexual assault are less likely to report to police than for other crimes so the actual frequency of assault is much higher. According to the General Social Survey, Statistics

Canada 2009, 88 per cent of sexual assaults were not reported to the police. That is staggering, Mr. Speaker, and all of our collective resources should be at lowering all these numbers. They are not just statistics, they are people.

So while we direct our resources toward ending violence, we must also make sure we treat those who have been assaulted with compassion and dignity. We must treat each person with respect and acknowledge the courage and strength they show by coming forward. This must begin at the first contact, whether with the health care system or the police, and carried through as far as the victim chooses to take it.

Professionals who work with people who have been sexually assaulted tell us that how we respond to a person who has been assaulted has a direct impact on how the person deals with the assault in the long-term. Experts tell us that many victims who tell others about their assault must endure a second assault in the form of a negative reaction such as victims blaming and in disbelief. One-third to two-thirds of victims may experience such reactions, which have negative mental and physical health effects on the victims. So we have to get it right immediately; we have to get it right now. There is no second chance.

Mr. Speaker, we all recently heard about a woman who was failed by our system. She did not get the health services she needed, after an assault, for three days, and I suspect it took a lot of courage for her to tell that story and it should impact what we do today. I hope that what that woman experienced was an exception but professionals say it, sadly, was not. The choice to get examined after an assault can be difficult for too many and that is 100 per cent each person's choice. But for those who do choose to be examined, they must be treated properly for compassionate and possibly for forensic reasons.

Many people who have been assaulted go to the emergency room. That is logical. However, for some, that trip to the ER results in a long wait. Sometimes they are told the ER is too busy and the victim of an assault is transported to a hospital that has a SANE nurse by ambulance, by police, or on their own. Imagine experiencing a life-changing trauma and being told that people who can help you are too busy, but please don't shower. Mr. Speaker, we can and must do better than that.

As we head into a month of estimates and budget talks, we cannot lose basic compassion. We must protect the vulnerable first and always. The Minister of Health and Wellness has acknowledged this as a problem, but fixing the problem in two years is just too long. Victims of crime should not have to wait that long. Victims of crime are entitled to certain rights - rights to information, protection, participation, and restitution.

Civil suits are important. The series of amendments to the Limitation of Actions Act will help a lot. Bill No. 68, for example, was a great step forward in empowering Nova Scotians with some of those rights. So are criminal cases. I know all Nova Scotians will be proud when they learn that Dale Sutherland, a man who fought and won his right and the right of other survivors of an historical sexual assault, testified today in front of a Senate

Committee discussing the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. His courage, determination, and compassion will be a beacon for many.

I know his moving story will have an impact on Senators as they consider the Bill of Rights. We believe that at least as much consideration should be given to the victims of crime as the perpetrators and justice should not be postponed or delayed, but success and justice for victims really can begin at the very first contact with the system. How well we are reputed to handle that will directly affect how many victims of sexual violence take a chance and come forward.

Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia, we are fortunate to have many professionals who have made it their life's work to support and assist people who have been sexually assaulted. It is incumbent on us as lawmakers to make sure they have adequate resources, to make sure those who experience sexual violence are treated with respect in a timely and effective manner.

One year ago, this government announced that work was beginning on a sexual violence strategy. It is scheduled to be completed this Spring. I urge the minister to bring it forward during this session of the House so that it can be thoroughly and properly examined. During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we should resolve to do better, working to end violence and helping those who experience it to heal. Thank you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Pictou West, for bringing this up for us to discuss this evening. I know that this is very important to her as it is to all of us here, men and women, because we realize how far-stretching sexual assault can be, especially if it has happened within our family or to a friend or to a colleague.

This is one of those issues that we have to come together as political Parties and put away any type of partisanship and look at what this is about. This affects a person and it affects their life and who they are and who they are for the rest of their life after that sexual assault takes place. It is one of those situations where we need to all come together as a society and work out and be honest about the fact that we don't have everything in place that we need to have in place.

We need to have a collaborative and restorative approach to ensure that when an assault takes place, whether it's on a female or whether it's on a male, that that person knows that we're the first place that they can go and get immediate assistance, and that the medical system can wrap their arms around that person and help them through that most terrible, terrible experience in their life. If we don't do that right away, the ramifications are certainly not good. It goes on for years, and it affects that individual, it affects their family, it affects their friends and our entire society.

I do know, having had the privilege of being a minister for the Province of Nova Scotia in Community Services, that we did take it upon ourselves when we were in government, that we knew the seriousness of sexual assault, cyberbullying - which is a whole new aspect of sexual assault in a different way that needs to be addressed - and we worked across departments to bring a committee together to go forward with some strategies and to talk to the public and to talk to the professionals on how we can make a difference and what we needed to do. I certainly encourage our government to continue that particular project, and I also encourage the minister to continue with what she has announced in this House, that there will be a strategy put in place.

As we know, what makes these strategies strong and what makes it work is the implementation of the strategy and the monitoring of the strategy to ensure that it is working and that the systems work together. It's not an easy job. It's the gathering of many that have to come together, from the police force to the community to the hospital system - they have to be working in sync. They have to be working in parallel together so that when that terrible, terrible crime takes place, that person and the family members know what steps they need to take. They are very aware of that.

We're not there yet in our province, and certainly the recent situation that happened in the province has shown us that we are not there, but we need to come together as a society and also as leaders in our communities and work together on this to make sure that we have a restorative approach. That means talking to those individuals who wish to talk about their terrible experience, and listening to what they have to say and what they recommend.

It means planning - not just for today, but planning for the future financially. We know that with many of these strategies there's a financial obligation to that, and there's nothing anyone can say that wouldn't be worth the money invested in helping those people who have the terrible experience of a sexual assault, and also the need in our society to address those who would do something as terrible as that.

I would like to say in closing that I do encourage the minister - I believe that this is one of those issues that is very dear to her heart. That's what I've seen to date with her actions, and so I believe she will take a lead of bringing all parties together and bringing our communities and our professionals together to make sure that we have a better system and a stronger support system in our province. I look forward to being able to help, if that is something that she would be interested in from any one of us, and I believe my colleague here, the member for Pictou West, and all of us would do to be able to help her along with her success in her road to help others that have been exposed and have been treated with such a horrendous type of crime. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank both members across the aisle for their support. I truly believe that this is a non-partisan issue, that we are all on the same page here, and I also believe that we truly, truly want to get this right. So as we talk about the development of this strategy, it was part of the election campaign for the Liberal Party, with \$6 million dedicated to this strategy. I always knew the first year would be about going to community and talking to victims, talking to service providers, and that's what we've done.

In the last year, we've talked to over 1,000 people, including 40 service providers from one end of the province to the other. We did an online survey - 800 people responded to tell us what their experiences were when accessing services. We did youth engagement, because we think that's really important in terms of setting definitions around consent and around healthy relationships. Over 100 youth participated in 14 conversations which happened all over the province.

While the development of the work was ongoing, we also continued our support with grassroots community organizations. There were program grants and bridge funding to existing sexual assault centres including Avalon and Colchester and Antigonish. We also built capacity with six demonstration projects throughout the province. That capacity is to better serve victims and inform the ongoing strategy work because we really felt that was important.

We also have conducted training sessions over the last year where we have met with 175 front-line workers and introduced trauma-informed training to them, both in the Justice and Community Services sectors. We also looked at bystander training, which is very important - that we not stand by when there is sexual innuendo or anything along that line.

We supported communities so they would be able to develop forums. For instance, there were a pornography conference in Yarmouth, the December 4th conference that we had here in Halifax, a youth forum, and of course Sexual Assault Awareness Month. I just wanted to assure members of this House that while the strategy is being developed, work is also ongoing, because it doesn't stop just because a strategy is being developed.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise and speak about the work being done on the province's first sexual violence strategy. From early on in this government's mandate, addressing sexual violence has been a priority. The member for Pictou West is anxious to see a comprehensive, inclusive, and passionate system for survivors of sexual violence. I can assure the honourable member that I'm just as eager to see a sexual violence strategy, but we want to get it right. Sexual violence is a complex issue and reducing its impact on our province will require a shift in how we think and act. This is a big task and it will take time and the participation of government service providers and communities.

I'm pleased to inform the House that a "What We Heard" document was released earlier this year outlining the issues raised during engagement with stakeholders and service providers and from over 800 people who participated online. We've heard that Nova Scotians want an ongoing and continued voice in addressing sexual violence. We also heard that Nova Scotians want coordinated supports that are available provincially. These supports also need to do a better job at reflecting gender, age, and cultural diversity. This will inform our work in the coming months.

We will be releasing key highlights of the youth engagement from last Fall. Youth don't identify with the approaches to supports and services that are currently available; that is what we heard. We also have other progress updates this Spring, including a year-one report on the innovative approach and next steps for the sexual violence strategy. We welcome every voice and encourage the involvement of all Nova Scotians as our province moves forward in supporting victims and survivors and preventing sexual violence in our communities.

I thank both Parties across the aisle and certainly my own colleagues who want to see this done right, who want to see this done in a sustainable way, because victims of sexual violence absolutely deserve no less. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her comments. She knows this is an area that I'm keenly interested in as well. I know the minister doesn't need reminding, but I would like to make the point that the province's nine women's resource centres are perfectly placed to help implement the sexual violence strategy. Recent events in the media, including those at Dalhousie, emphasize just how important it is to get this strategy right for sure, but also to move past the consulting and the researching and the discussing, and starting to implement things that will actually help those people who need it.

I'm confident that the minister and her staff recognize the important role that the women's centres should play in the delivery of the strategy and it should be a significant role. I'm hopeful that as she starts to finalize her strategy and starts to move forward that she'll certainly keep in mind that there are resources in existence now that have a lot of knowledge and can be leveraged. With those few words, I'll take my seat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: In the absence of further comments on the late debate topic, we will take the opportunity to bring it to a close and thank the member for Pictou West for submitting such an important topic. We'll stand adjourned until tomorrow.

[The House rose at 4:16 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1269**

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Emile Aucoin is the trainer for the Harbour City Lakers U16B Ringette Team and through her dedication to the sport the team has secured a well-deserved and rewarding win; and

Whereas the team travelled from Nova Scotia to Ottawa to compete at the West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas on February 15, 2015, they competed in a total of three games, winning two and losing only one, to go on to the final game;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Emile Aucoin, along with head coach, assistant coaches, trainer and players on their gold medal win and wish them luck in all future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1270

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Andrea Temple is one of the assistant coaches for the Harbour City Lakers U16B Ringette Team and through her dedication to the sport the team has secured a well-deserved and rewarding win; and

Whereas the team travelled from Nova Scotia to Ottawa to compete at the West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas on February 15, 2015, they competed in a total of three games, winning two and losing only one, to go on to the final game;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Andrea Temple, along with the head coach, the other assistant coach, trainer and players on their gold medal win and wish them luck in all future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1271

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Sherri Doyle is one of the assistant coaches for the Harbour City Lakers U16B Ringette Team and through her dedication to the sport the team has secured a well-deserved and rewarding win; and

Whereas the team travelled from Nova Scotia to Ottawa to compete at the West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas on February 15, 2015, they competed in a total of three games, winning two and losing only one, to go on to the final game;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Sherri Doyle, along with the head coach, other assistant coach, trainer and the players on their gold medal win and wish them luck in all future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1272

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Liz O'Hanley is head coach for the Harbour City Lakers U16B Ringette Team and through her dedication to the sport the team has secured a well-deserved and rewarding win; and

Whereas the team travelled from Nova Scotia to Ottawa to compete at the West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas on February 15, 2015, they competed in a total of three games, winning two and losing only one, to go on to the final game;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Liz O'Hanley, along with the assistant coaches, trainer and players on their gold medal win and wish them luck in all future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1273

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Hannah Temple was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers UJ16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Hannah Temple of the Harbour City lakes U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1274

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Brook Dunn was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Brook Dunn of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1275

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Amber Piercey was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Amber Piercey of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1276

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Catherine Bernier was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Catherine Bernier of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1277

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Claire Hudson was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Claire Hudson of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1278

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Jenna Croft-Henley was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jenna Croft-Henley of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1279

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Jenna Leadbetter was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jenna Leadbetter of Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal, and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1280

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Victoria Phillips was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Victoria Phillips of Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal, and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1281

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Mackaela Jason was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mackaela Jason of Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal, and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1282

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Mikayla Aucoin was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mikayla Aucoin of Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal, and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1283

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Nakita Staple-Beaver was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nakita Staple-Beaver of Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal, and best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1284

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Nathan Staple-Beaver was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nathan Staple-Beaver of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and the best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1285

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Rachel Doyle was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Rachel Doyle of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and the best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1286

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Samantha Naugler was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Samatha Naugler of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and the best of luck in future tournaments.

RESOLUTION NO. 1287

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Taylor Bullen was one of the players of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division Ringette team who competed in the 2015 West Ottawa Ringette Tournament; and

Whereas the team competed in three games, winning two and losing only one, placing them in the final game; and

Whereas after the thrilling final game against Gatineau, the Harbour City Lakers won their match in overtime and were awarded the gold medal;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Taylor Bullen of the Harbour City Lakers U16B Black Division for winning the gold medal and the best of luck in future tournaments.