



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

4:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 91 - Entitled an Act to Amend Section 25 of the Acts of 1996. The Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. (Hon. Keith Colwell)

Bill No. 92 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

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 Sackville-Cobequid.

N.S. FILM JOBS - GOV'T. (N.S.): CUTS - STOP

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, Bob Mann comes from a political family. He witnesses the challenges of making tough decisions, unpopular decisions, but even Bob is asking, why weaken an incentive that seems to fit perfectly within the Ivany report recommendations - why weaken to the point of eliminating altogether an incentive that makes us competitive?

Bob says that the decision to gut the Film Tax Credit feels like a decision made by someone who said hey, the balance sheet will look better if we yank this thread over here - like a kid playing SimCity for the very first time.

Mr. Speaker, the government needs to stop playing SimCity and step back from gutting the Nova Scotia film jobs. Thank you.

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

SANGSTER, WAYNE - CURLING ACHIEVEMENTS

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, during the month of March, from the 21st to the 23rd, the Canadian Men's Senior Curling Championship was held in Edmonton, Alberta, where Wayne Sangster, a member of the Chedabucto Curling Club of Boylston and resident of Guysborough County, competed in this exhilarating championship as a skip for Team Nova Scotia. There were many donations made to help skip Sangster raise enough money for his travel costs. Holly Pyle-Nahrebecky, the CAS treasurer and Wayne's son, who is a member of the junior league, were both there when he received the final amount.

Wayne came in sixth place in the Canadian Men's Senior Curling Championship - Mr. Speaker, quite an accomplishment for a very small community with two sheets of ice. At the Thistle Curling Club in Edmonton there were many teams involved, and we are honoured to say that Wayne participated in the tournament, as well as many others.

I am very pleased to say that Wayne Sangster resides here in my constituency. I admire his determination and dedication towards this enjoyable sport and hope he

continues to appreciate curling and help to get others as interested as himself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

GOV'T. (N.S.): FILM TAX CREDIT - CUTS RECONSIDER

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, in September Bruised Productions announced that it would be filming a movie at the Pictou Lodge. The movie was slated to begin filming in the Fall of 2015. This could be an exciting endeavour for Pictou West that could open the door to future film productions with the Pictou shoreline and historic buildings offering a scenic background.

Steve Brazil of Bruised studios is in discussions for several other film projects as well; however, two of those projects are now in jeopardy and two others are looking at being filmed out of the province.

In the interest of the economic benefits to rural Nova Scotia that the film industry provides, I urge the government to reconsider cuts to the Film Tax Credit.

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

BALANCE-SHEET GOV'TS. - EXPENSES

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, as we heard earlier, Bob Mann comes from a political family. I believe one of my colleagues across the aisle benefited from his counsel during the last election.

Bob understands fiscal reality. He has five kids. His household budget always presents tough choices. But he also knows that balance-sheet governments lead to unanticipated expenses, and in this instance, the expense is we lose bright, creative people, we lose their taxes, their children, and their leadership. It's not just a line in the budget; it's a lifeline for this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

LIBERAL GOV'T.: IMPT. SERVICES - PROTECTION

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, our government is reforming the finances of the province. We can deliver sustainable services like health care and education for all Nova Scotians and we're committed to getting the most benefit for every tax dollar. We've eliminated tens of millions of dollars in wasteful and inefficient spending. It's a plan that's manageable, reasonable, and protects services, and will balance the budget by the next election.

The NDP couldn't balance the budget when they had the chance and instead slashed public education, cutting \$65 million from classrooms across the province and still leaving us with a deficit. The Progressive Conservatives are promoting a financial plan that would make Stephen Harper blush - they want cuts, cuts, cuts, but then they want spending, spending, spending.

We will do what the NDP couldn't, and we will protect important services despite demands from the Progressive Conservatives for deep and dangerous cuts and spending on the other side. Thank you.

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

**MCKEOUGH, DAVE & DONNA:
MEM. HOCKEY/MUSIC EVENT - FUNDRAISING**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a hockey and music event that will raise funds for the Memorial High School scholarship fund. This event is now in its third year in memory of Dave and Donna McKeough, who were both killed in a tragic car accident in 2012 - both rabid music and hockey enthusiasts. A hockey tournament, an auction, and a musical social were organized by friends, musicians, and hockey buddies of Dave and Donna. To date, these events have raised more than \$9,500. It's a privilege to thank those who participated, donated, and organized this event.

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

MACLEOD, ALISTAIR: DEATH OF - ANNIV. (1 YR.)

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, our province lost a valuable and celebrated author. Alistair MacLeod was a Canadian novelist, short story writer, and academic. His powerful and moving stories vividly evoke the beauty of Cape Breton Island's rugged landscape, where Alistair lived and created his stories. Although he is known as a master of the short story, MacLeod's 1999 novel *No Great Mischief* was voted Atlantic Canada's greatest book of all time. The novel also won several literary prizes including the 2001 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

MacLeod taught English and creative writing for more than three decades at the University of Windsor, but returned every summer to the Cape Breton cabin on the MacLeod homestead where he did much of his writing. In the introduction to a book of essays on his work, editor Irene Guilford concluded, "Alistair MacLeod's birthplace is Canadian, his emotional heartland is Cape Breton, his heritage Scottish, but his writing is of the world."

I wish to recognize Nova Scotia's artistic icon and extend my well wishes to his family, who are undoubtedly thinking about Alistair today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EDUC. WK. - CELEBRATION

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about Education Week. Education Week has been celebrated since 1935. It is also an opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions of Nova Scotia educators. Daily, teachers are assisting students in the developing of skills and the knowledge required for them to be successful in the future.

As a former teacher and administrator, I've witnessed first-hand the commitment and dedication that teachers and support staff bring to the classroom and school environment every day. Teachers across this province are engaging and empowering students through collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, and the importance of using social media in a responsible manner. This week is a celebration for what really happens in our schools: teaching excellence and student achievement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

LARADE, JULIE: PUBLICATION DE LIVRE - FÉLICITATIONS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, l'auteur acadienne Julie Larade de Saint-Joseph-du-Moine a récemment publié son premier livre, *Laura's Story*. Bien que fictif, le livre résonne avec les Acadiens et Acadiennes qui se reconnaissent dans l'histoire d'une héroïne acadienne luttant pour survivre dans la Nouvelle-Écosse rurale à compter des années 1930.

Mme Larade a été profondément influencée par sa famille et sa culture acadiennes. Fière de son héritage et fascinée par les histoires inédites de ses ancêtres, elle a décidé de les mettre sur papier.

Félicitations à Mme Larade pour cet important accomplissement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

N.S. COMMUNITY COUNTS: ELIMINATION - MIN. RECONSIDER

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Community Counts was an important data resource for people doing research and making decisions affecting thousands of Nova Scotians. Last week I asked the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board why the Community Counts program in her department had been eliminated. She indicated it wasn't a core service of her department. This is disappointing, considering that the Ivany commission recently stressed the importance of data resources like Community Counts for building a stronger economy.

The minister says that this data can be obtained through Statistics Canada, but the minister knows that that costs money and takes time that many researchers, businesses, and community organizations don't have. I'm calling on the minister to reconsider her decision to eliminate this important resource.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

COLLINS, BOB: GOOD DEEDS - RECOGNIZE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pictou resident Bob Collins for his good deeds in helping keep the sidewalk on the West River Road between Bark Street and Haliburton Road free of snow.

For the past six years, Bob has been clearing the snow away on this section of sidewalk. He likes to keep it clear for the safety of pedestrians, particularly students and seniors. Bob likes to give the town work crews a hand, as they have had an enormous task keeping the streets and sidewalks clear this winter. The town presented him with a gas card as a show of appreciation. I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize and thank Bob Collins for his good deeds. Thank you.

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

N.S. FILM TAX CREDIT: CUTS - TIMELINE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier told us that he was grateful that the film industry representatives were sitting down with government officials and that he was going to work until we find a solution. Well, that sounds encouraging.

We must not forget that the Premier is the one that made the arbitrary decision to gut the Film Tax Credit in the first place. The timeline goes something like this: he promised he would expand it, he cut it instead, and now he is working to find a solution to a problem he created. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

WILLISTON, SCOTT - SKIING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand today to acknowledge a young athlete who lives very close to my home. Scott Williston is recently back from the 2015 Canada Games, where he competed on Nova Scotia's freestyle ski team. Scott placed 6th in the Slopestyle skiing event and had a 19th place finish in his Big Air event at the Canada Games in Prince George, B.C.

Williston took home provincial titles in Slopestyle and Big Air events earlier as part of the Nova Scotia provincial championships at Ski Wentworth. I look forward to following Scott's ski career and cheering him on as he follows his passion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FILM TAX CREDIT: CUTS - CONSULT

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, as the McNeil Government continues its after-the-fact consultation with the film industry, projects are on hold, many are being cancelled, and producers who are owed money from productions already completed are owed thousands of dollars and wondering how they are going to be repaid. The uncertainty around the tax credit has filmmakers and the people they hire - carpenters, craftspeople, costume designers, directors, and actors - all waiting to hear if they will be able to work in Nova Scotia this summer. In addition to this, the few producers from outside the province who are already exploring projects here are unable to get the information they need, since the McNeil Government also eliminated Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia.

I urge the Premier to give the industry some clarity for this summer filming season. Please, announce today that no changes will take place on July 1st, and wait until the consultations are complete before making any changes to the Film Tax Credit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS DAY: SYDNEY MINES JR. HIGH - CONGRATS.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the organizers of the Mental Health and Wellness Day recently held at Sydney Mines Junior High. The day-long event focused on the promotion of positive mental health and wellness. More than 25 presenters brought their expertise to the event, which was a great success. Workshops and presentations helped the students to be more aware of how their day-to-day activities, their decisions, and their challenges affect their overall mental health. It was a truly empowering day for all involved. It is my pleasure to thank all those involved and hope this wonderful idea spreads to all junior high schools in Cape Breton Island and the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.) - FUNDING CUTS: LIST - MISTAKEN INCLUSION

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, last week in Question Period the Minister of Health and Wellness indicated that the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia was “. . . one of the organizations that inadvertently got on a list and got sent a letter.” That letter eliminated their funding and we’re certainly glad that the minister is honouring the arrangement made to the Epilepsy Association, but the Minister of Health and Wellness mentioned that Epilepsy Association was just one, just one of the organizations that inadvertently got on the list. I have to wonder, what were the other organizations that were mistakenly told their funding was cut.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

LISMORE: COMMUN. ACTIVITY - PARTICIPANTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, when the call to become more active was made in the Lismore area, people from ages five to 95 answered that call. If you walked, jogged, biked, or knit, your activity was tallied either in miles or hours. The original target of community activity of 32,000 hours that was set in November was obliterated by February 15th with a total of 44,251 hours. The goal of getting people to consider being more active was certainly achieved and under the guidance and encouragement of Don Butler and Faye Kinney the goal was surpassed. It would be a challenge to find a more active community or one with greater spirit than this little part of Pictou East.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FILM IND.: INFORMATION - PREM. LISTEN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Premier on Friday of last week about his lack of understanding about and lack of consultation with the film industry he said that “. . . we’ve looked at all kinds of information that the people have presented to us.”

It’s true that a lot of information has been presented to the Premier. We know that Screen Nova Scotia submitted a lengthy position paper to Laurel Broten as part of the McNeil tax review, and in many in the industry attended the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board’s follow-up tax consultation. In fact the department’s own report acknowledges the overwhelming support for continuing and enhancing the Film and Digital Tax Credits.

Mr. Speaker, the problem has never been the amount of information available to the Premier. The problem has been and continues to be the fact that the Premier isn’t listening.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**CAMPBELL BROS./BROOK VILLA FARM
- HOLSTEIN CAN. MASTER BREEDER AWARD**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, Inverness County dairy breeders are among the best in the world. The Campbell brothers of Brook Villa Farm along with Garry van den Heuvel of Pine River Farm, both of Brook Village, Inverness County, have been honoured by Holstein Canada with Master Breeder awards. In order to be even eligible for the award, a farm has to have been breeding dairy cows for a minimum of 18 years. The Campbell brothers - Collie, Kevin, Angus, and Jackie - all work on the dairy farm. They have a large operation with 220 head of cows. May we in this Legislature recognize them for their hard work and this noted achievement.

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

COMMUNITY COUNTS PROG. - CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's becoming increasingly clear that this is a government that doesn't make decisions based on evidence or data. The Community Counts program in the Economics and Statistics Division of the Finance and Treasury Board Department has been eliminated but the Ivany report said good information on economic performance and making it available to the public is an essential key if key sectors in our province will be drawn into a project of building a stronger economy. We've seen the Harper Government reject evidence-based decision making and good data. The McNeil Government's cut to the Community Counts program is just like Stephen Harper eliminating the long-form census.

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

**STEWIACKE VALLEY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOC.
- TOWN OF TRURO VOL. AWARD**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, recently the Stewiacke Valley Museum and Historical Society received the Colchester/Town of Truro Volunteer Award for their contributions to the local community. The Museum and Historical Society strives to preserve and display the history of the Stewiacke Valley. They have been able to achieve this mandate since 1987 thanks to their volunteer's generous donations of time and talent.

On April 13th several members of the Society including Leon Miller, Pat MacIntyre, Georgie Laidlaw, Stephen Johnson, Ruth Graham, Ian Wright, Judy Miller, and Betty Rogers accepted the award on behalf of the entire membership past and present. It is an honour to congratulate the Stewiacke Valley Museum and Historical Society on receiving this well-deserved award.

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

CDN. MENTAL HEALTH ASSOC. - CUTS (2016)

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the entire Liberal caucus have told us over the last few weeks that we need to prepare ourselves to feel some pain. What they didn't tell us was that community-based organizations would be among the first hurt.

We have heard that by this time next year the provincial office of the Canadian Mental Health Association won't get any support from the Liberal Government. Perhaps backbenchers like the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville or the member for Lunenburg should have tweeted a bit more on Bell Let's Talk Day to raise money for mental health initiatives because pretty soon their Liberal Government won't be giving a cent.

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

**CDN. MENTAL HEALTH ASSOC.
- COM. SERV. MINISTER: CUTS - ATTITUDE**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, members of the Liberal Cabinet have been telling us for weeks that we all need to prepare to feel some pain as they carry out their agenda. They have also said that under their watch there would be no winners or losers.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government is hurting some more than others and there are definitely winners and many losers. Not only is the creative community losing but also our community regions, our youth, our students and people living in poverty.

It has now been confirmed that the Minister of Community Services has slashed the provincial funding for many important organizations, including the Nova Scotia Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association. As a personal champion for mental health, I just can't understand why this worthy organization would be one of the ones singled out as a loser.

When the Canadian Mental Health Association opened their new Halifax office this past summer, the Minister of Community Services was more than happy to pose for pictures, holding a sign that said "I love CMHA". I have to ask, where is that love now?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MACPHERSON, REBECCA - ACADIA UNIV. 1ST YR. ATHLETE OF YR.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my congratulations to swimmer Rebecca MacPherson of Canning who was Acadia University's choice for First-Year Athlete of the Year. Ms. MacPherson won four gold medals at the Atlantic University Swimming Championship and was named both female swimmer of the meet and rookie swimmer of the meet. She also qualified for the Canadian Inter-University Sports Championships.

Ms. MacPherson's commitment, hard work and determination is impressive and indeed an inspiration. Thank you.

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

CRAWFORD, DEBBIE: COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS - CONGRATS.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, at the 41st Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony, Ms. Debbie Crawford of the Town of Stewiacke was honoured with a Representative Volunteer Award. Debbie has been a leader in her community for nearly 30 years. She began her volunteer career with a community newsletter, a recreation committee and a ladies auxiliary.

In 1988 she turned her volunteer focus to the Stewiacke Fire Department where she has been an associate member, group leader, medical first-responder and a rehab facilitator. Other duties have ranged from making sandwiches for firefighters, traffic control, rehabilitating firefighters and comforting people who have suffered a loss during tragedy.

Today I am proud to extend my congratulations to Debbie Crawford for her tireless contributions to her community.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today to speak going into Supply. First of all let me thank the Minister and her staff of the Department of Finance and Treasury Board for a difficult task that they had to go through to come up with this budget.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, I wish they had done some more consultation with some of the different groups that were affected by this budget. We heard about the tax credits for the film industry, we've heard about health care and the unions, that have had no consultation or little consultation before the fact that went into a budget that is difficult for a lot of people in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there is a 6 per cent increase in administration staff. There is \$80 million in departmental spending overall. Small business is going to take a \$30 million tax increase in what the government says and what the Premier says was a loophole that he closed off.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Northside-Westmount has the floor.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, small businesses are going to have a hard time absorbing this \$30 million. Small business is the backbone of our communities; they are the people who employ Nova Scotians on a day-to-day basis. They are the people we look to, to keep employing Nova Scotians so we can run this province effectively.

Mr. Speaker, there's also a \$30 million income tax increase due to bracket creep, something that the government, when they were in Opposition, spoke about that they would like to see ended.

Then before the budget we also had an over 3 per cent increase in over 1,400 user fees - fees on ferries that are vital links to some of our communities, that can help people get to and from doctors' appointments, dental appointments, school.

Mr. Speaker, we haven't really seen a job plan in this budget but it's not all bad - there are a few good things here: the increase in the Education budget to make sure class sizes are capped in the younger grades; to make sure that math is a priority in this province so we can bring up the math grades of our students to equal the rest of the country; and there's also some increase in the health care budget, and one in particular is an increase in the orthopaedic budget to try and clean up some of the surgical wait-lists.

Mr. Speaker, that has to number different working factors in it - recovery beds, beds on the orthopaedic floors, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. There's no mention in how this budget is going to correct that so they do increase the orthopaedic times. We know

now that our beds are backed up due to waits for long-term care, if these beds are backed up with that, we hope that we can free up these beds for the orthopaedic money.

We're glad to see the government, with the help of the former member for Sydney-Whitney Pier, increase and expand the HPV vaccination to young boys, to Grade 7 boys.

Mr. Speaker, we do have some concerns with the health authority. The new authority is up and running, we're hoping that the finances that they said they were going to save will come true, but we know that's not going to be the case for a couple of years. We've had major labour issues around the new health authority and how the nursing staff, the medical staff, the other staff in the hospitals are going to be represented. We hope that has been rectified, but time will tell - and we still don't know the cost of delivery of the new health authority.

Mr. Speaker, there are also other things, like university cuts. They're going to open up tuition this year for a one-time tuition increase for the students who attend Nova Scotia universities and they're going to open it up so that graduate students and students from out of the province are not going to have the cap at all.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from student groups and I've heard from students themselves who are very concerned about this tuition cap being taken off for this one-time deal. Their concern is that they won't be able to afford to attend university here in Nova Scotia, and the people who come from other areas of the country will not come to Nova Scotia to pursue their education.

Now we've also heard some things about some top-up on some upfront grants and some stuff for student loans, but I've also heard from people that these upfront grants and these top-ups aren't going to cover what could be increased in tuition. We have students who attend university out of the province who can't get their education here in the Province of Nova Scotia - or could, if they had to wait a long period of time - doesn't affect them, they still have to get loans to attend universities in other areas of the country and/or other areas of the world. So, Mr. Speaker, that concerns me in this budget.

We also are concerned about cuts to campgrounds in the province. These cuts are jobs that are in rural Nova Scotia, jobs that aren't easily replaced. The concern we have is that the people who lose these jobs either have to leave our province to go and find work or they have to leave the area they live in, which depletes these valuable people in our communities. They are hockey coaches, they are volunteers with Boy Scouts, they work on hospital foundation boards, they do all kinds of volunteer work in our community. If they are not here, the community has a big hole in it.

We've heard about closing the Visitor Information Centres. The Ivany report says we should increase tourism. The concern is the closure of these centres may have a negative effect. I also heard of some cuts to the Community Services Department that happened

after budget estimates. Cuts to people like CACL and People First - I hear there's up to a 30 per cent cut in their budget. They deliver a valuable service to our province, and the concern is, where do people turn if those cuts are there and they don't have the budget for these people?

Let's not forget about the Film Tax Credit. We've had a lot of debate in the Legislature. We've had a lot of protest in this Legislature about the cuts to the Film Tax Credit. My impression is there's a \$26 million investment, but there's a \$130 million return and over 2,700 jobs are going to be affected by this cut to the Film Tax Credit. We know they've met; they're going to meet again. My concern is, the more they meet without a change, the larger the effect is going to be on people wanting to locate in the province to do their film shooting.

We've heard about wage challenges and I've heard a lot about how much the wages have increased in the province over the last number of years. We're having a hard time retaining our health care professionals now. People are leaving our province. They're retiring and we're having to bring people in from out of the province to make sure that valuable services like surgical care are performed here. I think our health care workers are worth what they're being paid and probably more. I do understand there are fiscal restraints in the province, but if this is known up front to our health care workers, we should be able to work with them to maintain the service we have.

We want to make sure we keep the people here in our province. We haven't heard a lot in this budget that may do that. We're hoping that in the coming months and weeks, we can work out how the Health Authority runs, make sure we keep our fine people here in this province, and they will reverse the Film Tax Credit cut and make sure our youngest and brightest creative people stay here in the province. With those few words, I will take my seat.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place for a few minutes going into Supply to talk about this budget, to talk about our province and the challenges that our province faces, and to talk about the pain that this government has inflicted as a result of this budget - we're going to probably see a fair amount more of it.

There isn't anybody in this Chamber who's unaware of some of the challenges that our province faces. Our province has a demographic challenge, for sure. Simply put, the birth rate of the province has been dropping. The out-migration, particularly of skilled and younger workers, has increased substantially in many respects. We have an aging population - a greater proportion of our population are aging. They're retired; they're not in the labour force.

This doesn't make them unproductive by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, I think if you look at the income information that is associated with that growing demographic, you will find that we have the most prosperous group of seniors to ever retire retiring. The baby boom generation has actually done quite well. They benefited from the post-war consensus, which was a consensus that saw a very strong social safety net and an investment in people and in communities. The result of that is that we have a group of people who will retire with defined benefit pension plans and they will retire in better health with an expanded health care system.

All of these things that give us a very high quality of life and things that were fought for primarily by the labour movement and progressive social democratic Parties in provinces across this country and outside of our boundaries - a tradition I'm proud to associate myself with.

I feel a great deal of concern as I see what is happening with the dismantling of social programs, of social protections, of the kinds of things that will give the generation of which I'm at the tail end advantages that the generations coming behind me could only hope for. It's really a tragedy if we allow the coming generations to be generations that are worse off than we were. I very much fear that we're seeing that unfold right in front of our eyes, and when I look at this budget and I listen to some of the talk coming out of the Executive Council and members of the government and the Premier, I feel great despair.

The Premier was at the chamber of commerce not that long before this budget, and he talked about how this would be a budget that would be more about things that the government shouldn't be doing than the things they should be doing. He talked about how there would be pain in this budget and it would be inflicted on everyone. I'm not sure that that's a really good approach to governing the province. For example, young people, who we desperately need to stay in our province, could perhaps have been spared - a little less pain than they're going through now, with the anxiety they feel about seeing their whole industry jeopardized by the recklessness of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and the Premier with respect to the evisceration of the Film Tax Credit.

We've all heard the stories from people over the last number of days. The young people - the many, many, many young people who have either come to this province or who are from this province, who have stayed here or who are from Nova Scotia and who moved away but came back because of the growth in the screen industry - these are the very people who we should be looking to to solve our problems in terms of our demographic challenges, in terms of our economic challenges, and in terms of our fiscal challenges and the need to grow our economy.

We have a government that has failed to really understand the value and the importance of this particular industry and this group of people to the future of our province. I hope that in this process we've been going through here in this Legislature and outside,

they're coming to understand the importance of moving away from their decision to eviscerate the Film Tax Credit in this budget.

There are other measures in this budget that we all have to be very concerned about. I am particularly concerned about this government's approach to the health care system. We're approaching two years of this government being in power, and we've seen what their approach has been so far. Before they picked a fight with the film and television industry, the screen industry, they picked a fight with health care workers: people who provide home care, people who provide long-term care, people who work in acute care, and particularly nurses in the health care industry. Now we're seeing that physicians have joined that group. Obstetricians, for example, are in the position now where we're seeing a very significant large number of obstetricians who are retiring and who are leaving the practice. Maternal care will suffer if this occurs, if this is allowed to occur, yet the government doesn't seem to be all that worried about it.

They are a small group, I recognize that, but what kind of message does this send into our small communities, in our rural communities, when those women with higher risk pregnancies require specialized services that are beyond the capacity for a family doctor, a GP, to provide?

I think this is a very good example of the concern I have about where this government is going to take our health care system. I have said, right from day one of seeing this budget tabled, that they have put \$33 million more into health care this year. That is less than a 1 per cent increase in the health care budget that will be eaten up very rapidly by inflationary pressures inside the health care system; in fact, it will mean that if they intend to hold to these amounts of revenue for health care, it will mean cuts throughout the health care system. People will feel the impact of those cuts in longer wait times, and workers will feel the impact of those cuts in increased caseloads and in diminished working conditions, where patient safety will pay the price.

The new area that is emerging for the pain that this government is inflicting on people in the province is in the area of the Community Services budget. I, like probably many people, was absolutely horrified - and I don't think there's any other word to describe it - to see that the Canadian Institute for the Blind was losing a significant amount of revenue, along with a number of other organizations that are probably near and dear to the hearts of many people in this Chamber, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Deafness Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia, Heartwood Centre for Community Youth, the Nova Scotia Association for Community Living, People First Nova Scotia, as well as the Nova Scotia Council for the Family, Youth Voices of Nova Scotia Society.

Mr. Speaker, these organizations are the backbone of many charitable efforts in our communities, and they provide supports to people living in the community for when there are often not any statutory or formal supports. I know that in the coming days we'll have an opportunity to have a fair amount of conversation and debate about the real work, the

real important work, organizations like CNIB do for people who are blind or have visual disabilities.

The other group of course that will be impacted by this budget, and for whom we still don't know what that impact will look like in the longer term, are students in our university system where the government has decided to be the first province in the country to deregulate tuition.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We have no less than six conversations going on here while the honourable member has the floor.

The Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure people are discussing all of the details of the budget and the many emails they are getting from their constituents about why the government has made these choices.

I'm hearing from many people who live in my constituency in the north end of Halifax. It's always wonderful to hear from people in the constituency you represent, but it's also painful when you listen to the information they tell you, the stories they tell you about the impact of government decisions on their lives.

People who suffer from mental health disorders, for example. Mr. Speaker, you probably know that I have a particular passion to use my time in this place, however long that is, to do work on behalf of people who have mental illnesses. Our health care system is not adequate when it comes to meeting the needs of people with mental health disorders. People with mental health disorders lead sometimes very isolated lives in our communities and they require support and assistance from charitable organizations and organizations that advocate for better public policy on behalf of these groups.

This government has significantly cut the operating revenue of an organization that advocates for people with mental health disorders and has said that is not a core function of government. Well excuse me, Mr. Speaker. That's been a core function of government - of Liberal Governments, of Conservative Governments, of NDP Governments - for probably 50, 60 years in this province, dating back to the whole movement to provide services and supports to people with mental health disorders.

The same thing with the Canadian Association for Community Living. The same thing for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. For a government to get up some morning and a Premier and a minister to decide, oh, this isn't something that government should have been doing. So for 75, 100, or 125 years - however long it has been that governments have been supporting the Canadian National Institute for the Blind - are you seriously saying government should not have been providing them with support? I certainly hope not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The motion is carried.

The House will now recess for a few minutes while we resolve ourselves into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

[4:53 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[9:05 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met and has made considerable progress and begs leave to sit again.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 90.

Bill No. 90 - Tobacco Access Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to share with the members of this House some details on Bill No. 90, which I had the pleasure of introducing last week. As you will recall, we brought legislation forward last Fall to address flavoured tobacco, e-cigarettes, and water pipes. (Interruption)

Yes, I got a little ahead of myself, Madam Speaker, and I do now rise and move second reading of Bill No. 90.

As you will recall, Madam Speaker, we brought legislation forward last Fall to address flavoured tobacco, e-cigarettes, and water pipes. The bill was passed and made

Nova Scotia the first province to ban the use of e-cigarettes and water pipes in indoor public places and workplaces. It also made Nova Scotia the first province to make it illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors and restrict the promotion of e-cigarettes at the point of sale.

Other provinces have taken steps in this direction, but Nova Scotia is the first to cement these important changes in law with an effective date of May 31st this year. I am proud that Nova Scotia is a leader in tobacco control and I hope other provinces will continue to take similar action to make non-smoking the norm across the country. Creating this non-smoking culture is key to helping protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians and all Canadians.

While we took this important action last Fall, we also heard from Nova Scotians about flavoured tobacco, e-cigarettes, and e-juice through presentations at Law Amendments Committee. People told us that consultation was needed before we determined our legislative direction on these flavoured products.

This winter, we consulted with tobacco vendors, e-cigarette vendors, health stakeholders, youth, and the general public. In surveys, we asked Nova Scotians about their awareness of these products and if they are concerned about their availability. We asked if there are any flavours that should be exempt from a ban on flavoured products. Vendors and health stakeholders shared their insights with us, which deepened our understanding of the issues and their positions. We gained some valuable perspective from young Nova Scotians, who we are most concerned about protecting from the health harms of tobacco. A lot of different views were expressed that gave us a greater understanding of all the issues involved. I thank everyone who participated for sharing their insight and opinions. Their input has helped us determine the way forward.

The bill to amend the Tobacco Access Act reflects what we heard in our consultation. This bill will ban the sale of flavoured tobacco in Nova Scotia. We know that nearly half of Nova Scotia youth who use tobacco are using flavoured tobacco. Banning its sale in the province is an important step to remove the temptation for young people to experiment with tobacco, which can lead to a lifelong addiction.

This ban will include menthol. I know some of the members opposite argued in favour of including menthol in the ban during debate last Fall. I want them to know that I was listening and taking their points into account; I also wanted to hear from Nova Scotians before making the final decision. Through consultation we learned that there is indeed support of including menthol in the ban. Given that 34 per cent of youth who smoke are using menthol, it is important to get this product off the shelves in Nova Scotia.

Other flavoured products that are appealing to young people include paper used to roll your own, as well as smokeless products such as chewing tobacco and snuff. These products will also be included in the flavoured tobacco ban. By removing these products from the marketplace in Nova Scotia we will help protect young Nova Scotians from the

health harms of tobacco addiction. We will also help prevent the health care costs and the economic productivity costs associated with chronic diseases related to tobacco use. This is an important move to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, there are a couple of exemptions that will be made through regulations under this Act. First we will exempt, through regulation, cigars in the flavours of port, rum, wine, and whiskey that are five grams or more, and a \$4 price point. We are making this exemption because during our consultation we heard from adult smokers who want the freedom to choose which products they use. They told us that port, rum, wine, and whiskey flavoured cigars are popular among adults. We want to give adults some freedom of choice, while still discouraging smoking - exempting these four flavours strikes that balance and is consistent with the federal government's approach.

We also know that youth find smaller tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigarillos and chewing tobacco more appealing than larger ones like cigars. We know that cigars are twice the price of many cigarillos; therefore, establishing the weight of five grams and the price point at \$4 will serve as a deterrent for youth who might otherwise experiment with these tobacco products. This is consistent with the approach being used in Alberta. The cigar exemption is an effort to balance the desire for freedom of choice with our responsibility to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians.

The second exemption, which also will be done through regulation, is for e-cigarettes and e-juice, but make no mistake, we continue to have concerns about the quality and safety of these products. They need regulation. We are particularly concerned there are no required standards for quality and safety in terms of packaging, labelling, ingredients, or safety testing. Some vendors are even making their own e-juice. These issues of concern fall under federal jurisdiction. During our consultation we heard from tobacco vendors, e-cigarette vendors, and health stakeholders that their regulation should be done nationally by the federal government. In addition, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health stated similar concerns in its report of March 10th on e-cigarettes and it called for federal regulation.

Therefore, through these amendments, we will give ourselves the ability to further regulate e-cigarette products in the future. However we do not intend to use this ability for now, instead we strongly urge our federal partners to take swift action to regulate e-cigarettes and e-juice for the health and safety of Nova Scotians and Canadians.

Once passed, this bill will become effective on May 31st along with the changes made to tobacco legislation last Fall. This means that starting May 31st the sale of most flavoured tobacco will be banned. It will be illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors; display and promotion of e-cigarettes will be restricted in stores where minors are allowed entry; it will be illegal to use e-cigarettes and water pipes in indoor public places and workplaces;

and public health inspectors will have the ability to issue summary offence tickets for the sale of tobacco or e-cigarettes to minors.

In addition, we will continue to encourage our federal partners to heed the advice of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health to regulate e-cigarettes and e-juice for quality and safety across the country.

We know there are many businesses across the province that will need clarity on the new laws to ensure they are in compliance starting May 31st. We have already sent letters to all permitted tobacco vendors as well as to all e-cigarette shops that we know of to advise them of their responsibilities under both the legislation passed in the Fall and this legislation that we're discussing today. For vendors who have flavoured tobacco in stock, there should be enough time for them to sell it before May 31st.

We will continue to follow up with vendors through correspondence and visits by inspectors to ensure they know their responsibilities for compliance and have an opportunity to ask questions. I also want to note that the province's 1,200 tobacco vendors, most of whom also sell e-cigarettes, have been very good about complying with existing tobacco legislation. I thank them for their compliance and have no reason to doubt their full co-operation with these new laws.

These amendments are important to advance our tobacco control efforts and address new products as they emerge. Combined with our ongoing efforts to discourage smoking, including the increase in tobacco tax in the budget, these changes are designed to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians.

I want to thank Dr. Strang and his staff at the Department of Health and Wellness for their work on this legislation and their work to make non-smoking the norm in Nova Scotia. I also want to again thank everyone who participated in our consultation this winter. While there are many differing views, I am sure everyone will see their input reflected in the legislation.

All of these changes to our tobacco legislation, combined with other ongoing tobacco control efforts, will help keep Nova Scotia on the healthy path toward a smoke-free culture. I look forward to these changes coming into effect on World No Tobacco Day on May 31st. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand this evening and speak to second reading of this bill. I guess it can be paraphrased in some simple phrases. If you don't get it right the first time, try, try again. Or, maybe it's practice makes perfect. If you keep practising, you just might get it right - finally, finally, you might get it right.

We had the opportunity in the Fall. There's not a whole lot different between Bill No. 90 that we see today and the things that we saw in Bill No. 60 back in the Fall. As a matter of fact, I remember a whole lot of debate in this House of Assembly. I remember a whole bunch of amendments that were brought forward by Opposition and by a whole bunch of stakeholders that were completely ignored by this government.

What do we see here today? We see Bill No. 90 with a lot of these things in it that were in the first bill that happen to be in the second bill. I think this is the second mulligan that this government has done. The Statute of Limitations was the first mulligan where they had to redo it, and here we are again with Bill No. 90, which is a redo of what was a good idea and had the support of this Opposition last session, in the Fall. You had our support back then.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that why you're speaking?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, let me tell you why I'm speaking. It's because it's a mulligan. Because you should've done it right the first time and you didn't. You didn't do it right the first time.

AN HON. MEMBER: But the people spoke on it . . .

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The only people who were speaking were the people sitting in the committee. I remember in the Fall, I know the member for - Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You can't even get it right.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: We'll thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission for those really long ones.

The government members on the committee were so surprised by the changes that were brought forward by the minister, to gut his own bill. Instead of just saying, why don't we park it? We've got something wrong here. We want to go out and do a little more consultation on it. People are coming back with some negativity, but instead, they do something that is even more bizarre. They actually gutted their own bill. Yes, they took the issue of e-cigarettes and the flavours around that and did some work around that, but the whole issue, the one that had the most consensus by the Canadian Cancer Society, by many other organizations, was flavoured tobacco had to go. That was an across-the-board kind of thing.

Then lo and behold here were committee members sitting in that committee and they ended up gutting their own bill. It makes no sense. It made no sense at that time and it still makes no sense today. Quite honestly, I don't know if the minister knows why that all transpired on that fun day back in October or November. Here we are, again, like I said,

practice makes perfect so we practised it back then and here we are back with it today and hopefully getting this boat back in the water and pointed in the right direction.

We believe protecting the health of young Nova Scotians is incredibly important, again, something we all here in the House can agree on. We are happy to finally see the government bring forward a bill banning flavoured tobacco. Last session when this was introduced we were supportive of that ban, as I said, on flavoured tobacco and we were listening to the concerns of Nova Scotians. What we heard was a lot of concern around the exemption of menthol from the government's legislation and I know debates and discussions I had with the minister was that he was looking closely at that one, so it was good to see it included in tonight's ban. While we are supportive, the legislation again is very puzzling of how we all got here.

When we called them to ban flavoured tobacco, we were stifled, or at least we felt we were not listened to, which is not uncommon in this House of Assembly. We put the amendment to do just that and the government, of course, at that time voted down that amendment. This is the second bill they have had to amend, as I said earlier, which is the Statute of Limitations, which was a do-over and here's the second do-over of the session, when they could have listened to Nova Scotians at that time, listened to our caucus, listened to the NDP caucus that it was wrong to remove the flavoured tobacco from the legislation.

Instead of recognizing the error and fixing it at the time, they bring back a second piece of legislation to cover their tracks. We need to stop bringing legislation to this House without the proper investigation and without the proper research because that is what, I think, happened with the minister's bill last time, that there was no research. (Interruptions) It keeps us busy, it keeps us talking about these things, it keeps us filibustering things in some cases, which I'm not doing tonight, but I do want to make sure I get my say in on this one. We need to stop doing it; we need to do the homework. Government needs to do homework to make sure that they are bringing the best possible legislation forward.

Is this bill the best possible legislation that they can bring forward? We hope. I hope they say yes in third reading and say it's the best one that they could have brought forward. Of course, there is a part of our process where we bring it once again to the Law Amendments Committee and listen once again, and hopefully at the 11th hour we won't have the minister walking in and gutting his own bill again, or having government gut their bill again.

The list of errors and redos the government has had to make is growing and when all they needed to do to prevent it was to consult with Nova Scotians and do their homework. We are happy to see a bill that finally covers some of the most dangerous products that attract young people to smoking. The Canadian Cancer Society educated us on the troubling statistics related to young people smoking menthol cigarettes, so the inclusion in this bill is essential.

We understand that Nova Scotians have free will to make their own choices, but it's the government's responsibility to crack down on products that target young people and encourage smoking. We cannot be negligent on that duty as legislators or as parents, as adults, saying this is a bad avenue to go down.

Nova Scotia's smoking rate has gone up and after years of being on the decline it is our hope that this ban will reverse that trend and result in fewer and fewer Nova Scotians smoking.

Our health care system is under a great deal of pressure, and we need to take the necessary steps to help improve the health of Nova Scotians in the long term. If this bill prevents some young people from picking up smoking, then we've done our job.

We support the ban on flavoured tobacco, and we look forward to hearing from Nova Scotians as the bill goes to the Law Amendments Committee. (Applause) I'm just getting started. I mean, with that kind of encouragement, Madam Speaker, I can say that maybe I haven't even cleared my throat yet. (Interruption)

It's not that easy. I know that the member for Halifax Chebucto is kind of getting tired of hearing me talk, but the Opposition has the right to be in the House, to stand and speak. Maybe this one, if he feels so strongly about it, he can get up and speak as well and support his minister, as I know the minister needs his support in many of the things that go.

We all need your support. That's why I think it's so important that you get up and actually take your opportunity to speak when it's your turn. I think it would be great to hear you actually stand up in this House and support something that the government has done.

Madam Speaker, I apologize for straying off, but the rabbit tracks are laid and therefore I follow the rabbit tracks a little too much sometimes too.

We didn't have to do this a second time. I really didn't want to do this a second time, because I felt that the bill that was brought forward by the department the first time around was one that encompassed the things that we had been contacted about, one that we had been consulted about, and ones that really did the things that we needed to do, which is to look at that population, which is the youth of Nova Scotia, to make sure that they are not picking up this bad habit.

Maybe things aren't the way they were 20 years ago or 30 years ago, when we had our parents smoking in our cars, smoking in our houses, where we saw it all the time. I don't know where they are seeing it now. I know a lot of those parents don't smoke, and yet you see their children out there on the side of the road, outside the school, having a puff. Where does that come from? I wish we could identify those things too. I think it's

more than just the flavours. Maybe there is a side of education that we need to do a better job of - one that I think we should all work very hard for.

I don't understand why this continues to happen. We are but one assembly in the House of Assembly, I'm sure, that has debated some of the very same things. When the Smoke-free Places Act was brought into this House of Assembly, I also remember at the time, when this debate was going on in this House, that there was all kinds of opposition by bar owners, you name it - that that was going to kill the industry. There were going to be no more bars and restaurants because people couldn't smoke in them.

Then the half measure of bringing up the smoking rooms. How many smoking rooms do you see in this province anymore? Well, we banned those too. And are those businesses still there? Absolutely, Madam Speaker. They are there, and they are doing business just as well as they did there.

We do need to identify the root causes of it, and not only on smoking, but - you know, why kids don't pick up sport the way they should be picking up sport, why they aren't as healthy as they can be so that they can be healthy and good adults. Those of us who've picked bad habits along the way need to find opportunities to get rid of the extra pounds that we carry. (Interruption) I resemble that remark, I really do.

But there's so much more that we can be doing to make sure that our communities are healthier. I thought the Healthy Living Tax Credit was a good one, and one that we'll talk about further on when we have the opportunity to debate the estimates of the Department of Health and Wellness in the House.

Every opportunity we gave to young people and to those families to participate in sport, to get the training they need to understand the dangers of smoking and tobacco, and then I thought we were doing the right things, and that's the stuff that you did find there. The kids had the opportunity to find out about healthy living. As much as we all enjoyed playing baseball in our backyards or playing with our friends, those opportunities aren't quite there like they used to be. I use the example of my children and if we leave them at home and my son, Alex, and I love them dearly and I should never have gotten that iPod for him - or that iPad for him, but he can get lost in that iPad really quickly and forget about it.

Now here is the best example, Madam Speaker. My wife is taking her master's so she had a class here in Halifax on Saturday, so on Friday night we went to a dinner. So she drives to the dinner with my son and he doesn't like bringing the iPad into dinners and things so he leaves the iPad in her glove compartment. Well she leaves to come to Halifax for her course, and he would come home with me - and he forgot his iPad in the car. Oh my God, he didn't have his iPad with him. Well I sat and talked with him, had a great time with him - and I let him use my phone so at least he didn't have the full withdrawal of it.

But you know what? On Saturday he actually cleaned the backyard. He actually was bored enough that he got out, he went outside - he's a really neat guy, he likes his bedroom in a certain way - so here he was picking up the garbage in the backyard after a long winter. He put the Tiki candles back out on the back patio, he edged the back patio with the little edging thing. You know, he spent two full hours outside moving branches and cleaning up because he didn't have the iPad there.

Luckily his parents make sure that he gets to go to soccer, that he gets to go swimming, that he gets to do all those things that keep him occupied and keep him busy, but I see far too many kids these days who spend far too much screen time - and I can see how it happens; it happens so easily and so quickly to me. Without that time occupying them, or those things to be able to occupy them, they fall into this trap of maybe smoking, or going and hanging out with some wrong people, or whatever it may be and we need to educate those kids to make sure they understand the dangers of smoking.

Maybe we can't talk them out of it. You know, we've all been young at one time and we've all thought we were invincible and we all tried things, I'm sure, along the way - and maybe some of us still do a little bit. But it doesn't mean that people have to pick up the bad habits of smoking or tobacco use, or chewing tobacco or what have you.

I'm not going to speak too much to the whole vapor issue because there are a whole lot of things that revolve around that one. But I think we need to do a better job of education, and I was kind of hoping I'd see a little more in here, and maybe during questioning of estimates as well, Madam Speaker, we'd be able to get to the root of some of these smoking cessation programs and education programs so we know what the department is doing in concert with education, with Sport Nova Scotia, or whichever other partner that they utilize to get the message out there that this is not a great thing.

I remember when I was in school - it's a long time ago now . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You must have a good memory.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: It's a really good memory. But there were a lot of kids who would just go outside that door to have a smoke, there were a lot of people there.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: Did you have long hair?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I had hair, maybe not long hair, but I had hair back then. I did have hair; I had nice hair - matter of fact, a lot like yours.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: Mullet?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I actually had a mullet too. But you know back in 1988 when I graduated everybody - I had it a little long, I think.

Rabbit tracks again, Madam Speaker, rabbit tracks. I had hair, that's the funny part.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: An earring?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I had two earrings in university, but that's different.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member to address your comments to the Chair please, instead of across the floor.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: You're blushing.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I know it's funny. No, really, I'm just worried that my wife is going to post something on Facebook, so please don't friend her.

At that time we saw a lot of kids who were out back of the school or just outside that door smoking away, and I see less of that today when I travel around. My high school is just down the road from my constituency office, or whether I'm travelling to Barrington or what have you - I don't see it like I used to see it. But I know it's still there and I know it's far too frequent. I don't have all my stats or data in front of me of how many people are picking up smoking today, how many youth are picking it up, what that ratio is between male and female. But there are still too many. It doesn't matter what that number is. We need to do the best that we can to make sure that that doesn't happen.

The ban will go a long way into getting that out of the system. But don't forget, they are getting this product illegally anyway, which is kind of the funny thing of this whole debate. Somebody is getting this product for them, regardless if it's a cherry-flavoured cigarillo or a grape-flavoured cigar or whether it's chewing tobacco - there are all kinds of different flavours in that - but they're getting it from someone. Somebody should be shaken up just a little bit that this shouldn't be happening. We should find a way to talk to them as well.

Again, it is about education. This ban will go a long way to helping these things happen, but I urge the minister to continue to do better. If he needs to bring another bill back, I would be more than happy to help him out and make sure it's done right. We don't want to see it here twice. We just want to see bills once, really. That's all we want to see. One good bill makes it so much better and easier to support when things come along to this Legislature.

With those short, few words, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill No. 90, an Act to Amend Chapter 14 of the Acts of 1993, the Tobacco Access Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, I guess it's a pleasure to stand tonight and speak on this. As my colleague mentioned, I believe we were here almost six months ago speaking on a similar piece of legislation that, for those who might not remember or recall, was a piece of legislation brought in by the Minister of Health and Wellness, by the government, that would ban flavoured tobacco. I had applauded that at the time. I spoke at length here in the Legislature on second reading. I had a lot of detail and the stats that go with the smoking rates and the effects smoking has on our population here in Nova Scotia.

I'm not going to go over all those stats again this evening, but I am concerned that we have wasted - government. Not we, not me - I don't blame myself on this. I fully put the blame on the shoulders of the government, of the Minister of Health and Wellness. Six months ago, we could have had a major impact with the smoking rates here in Nova Scotia. Six months ago, we could have had an impact here in Nova Scotia and been a leader in the country with banning flavoured tobacco.

But what did the government do? What did the Minister of Health and Wellness do? He walked into Law Amendments Committee and he yanked his legislation apart. You should have seen the look on the faces of the people who advocate for the Canadian Cancer Society. I remember the look on their faces. They couldn't believe the government did that. They couldn't believe the Minister of Health and Wellness did that.

Now I hear some chirping from the Opposition members. But they had a chance. They had a chance to bring this forward. They didn't. They chose not to. Now they think that they're the best at it, that they've done a wonderful thing. I do support this legislation, but I brought forward (Applause) But that's why I'm still a bit angry over it, because I think we could have been leaders here. But they yanked it.

We had government members, Cabinet Ministers - before the legislation even got through the process - standing up and saying that it was going to be unanimous in the House. It's going to be passed. It's going to be a tough piece of legislation. And we all agreed. But I don't know what happened over the 25 or 30 feet from this Chamber over to Law Amendments Committee and one day of Law Amendments Committee.

The only people who spoke against removing the flavoured tobacco were the people who worked in the tobacco industry. There was a lot of talk around flavoured juice, e-juice, I agree with that. They had concerns because they were not consulted. I don't believe you needed to go and consult Nova Scotians to find out what they thought about flavoured tobacco. I think the studies and the information in front of us - a lot of it provided by the Canadian Cancer Society - indicated that Nova Scotians understood that flavoured tobacco was geared toward and marketed towards our young people and women. That's how they get them to start smoking.

If we had done this six months ago, I think we could have had an even better impact and a greater impact on hopefully not having more young people start smoking. It has been

said almost 50 per cent of those young people who smoke, smoke flavoured tobacco. I stood up and talked about something that I had heard about - having a high school student in my house, my daughter, and a junior high student, my son - that the new trend is this flavoured chew and the sports teams, these young people who are active and fit, but they are chewing these flavoured chews - flavoured tobacco that they chew. It has been a trend for a number of years now.

I think the government missed an opportunity and I still don't understand, I never got a straight answer of who was telling them they needed more consultation around flavoured tobacco. I remember the Law Amendments Committee when I went in I was bringing an amendment because the piece of legislation, even though I supported it, I wanted it to be even better because it had forgotten, on purpose, not to ban menthol cigarettes. I couldn't understand why menthol cigarettes were not in the first piece of legislation because if you're going to ban flavoured tobacco, menthol is a flavoured tobacco. That was the amendment that I was bringing forward in Law Amendments Committee that day was to include menthol cigarettes. Then of course, we saw what happened - they actually pulled back all the flavoured tobacco and just talked about water pipes and e-cigarettes that you aren't allowed using them in indoor places, which we supported.

I hope the government and the government members don't pat themselves too hard on the back as this goes through the Legislature. I believe it will pass. I think we all agree that we need to do this. We need to be leaders in our country to hopefully reduce the smoking rates here in Nova Scotia. We know that in recent reports, I think it was February, that after many, many years we are starting to see an increase, unfortunately, of smokers. I hope with this piece of legislation, when it does pass and when it does come into effect on May 31st that in another year or two, we'll see those numbers go down.

I am a bit concerned with that fact that the government now is going to rely on the federal government to do something. I don't have a lot of faith in the federal government. I don't believe we are going to see - I can't predict the future - but I don't believe we're going to see the federal government in the next year bring any legislation in dealing with e-juice and the flavoured e-juice. I don't think we will. I hope the minister - and I will lend my support to his call for the federal government to move quickly on this because there needs to be some parameters around this I think. There needs to be something done to make sure that our population is protected from something that is new to the smoking scene, I guess.

I think everybody would recognize that the flavoured tobacco was geared towards trying to get the hooks into new smokers and attract new smokers. When you have flavours like chocolate, mint, cherry, peach, and strawberry, it sounds like you're eating candy (Interruption) and lipstick. I know when the Canadian Cancer Society came to our caucus, and I believe they've been to all three, they showed us the product that is being marketed

and that's for sale out around our province. You can't tell the difference between that and mints that you buy, breath mints, it's just unheard of.

I know that there has been a last-minute advocacy kind of attempt to get the government to not put menthol in. I want to applaud and congratulate the minister and the government for including menthol. I don't think we could have had legislation without that in there if you were going to ban flavoured tobacco. I know that that will be a key component, because when I spoke about this last year, I spoke about how the federal government tried to ban flavoured tobacco a number of years ago.

The industry has a heck of a lot of money. They have a lot of resources that can look at a piece of legislation and find ways around it. My attention was drawn to Bill No. 90, because in this piece of legislation there is something that refers to weight of cigars and the amount of money, and that was part of what happened when the federal government tried to regulate and ban flavoured tobacco - it was around the weight of that cigarette. The industry quickly adapted, and I think they went a little bigger on the tobacco, or on the weight, and they could drive a truck right through the federal legislation. I'm a little bit concerned with that, but I guess time will tell.

Like I said, the tobacco industry for many years has had a lot of resources, a lot of well-educated people who understand and know legislation and can find ways around it. I hope that's not the case here. I'm looking at our Clerks and hoping that's not the case here. I'm hoping that when the government made this legislation they realized that it needs to stand up to attempts by the industry to go around it. I don't think it will be that easy, but I am concerned, as I said, when you do mention weights of tobacco and cigars, that potentially there could be. I guess time will tell.

With that, Madam Speaker, I truly hope that when this leaves this room and goes down the hall here about 20 feet or 30 feet over the next few days - and potentially we'll still have people come in and talk on this. I would predict the industry may come. I don't know, maybe they won't, but we'll see what Nova Scotians have to say in the Law Amendments Committee. I surely hope that the government does not take the same path they took last year - when a little bit of pressure was put on them, they just took everything out of the bill that I thought was important, instead of improving the legislation.

That is really what the Law Amendments Committee is all about, and that process is that you hear from Nova Scotians, you hear about what the impact will be, positive or negative, and you try to improve the legislation. That didn't happen the last time. There wasn't a better piece of legislation that came out of that process, so I'm crossing my fingers and hoping that this time the government will do the right thing and make sure that flavoured tobacco is banned here in our province, and that we work toward reducing our smoking rates and work toward trying not to have our youth pick up a habit that has a devastating effect on their health.

I talked about that the last time - the rate of cancer that comes from smoking is something we just don't want to see. We don't want to see a rise in the rate of tobacco use in our province. We want to see that go down. Let's be leaders in tobacco consumption reduction here in the province.

Again, we support it, but I hope that it comes back here for third reading in a better - if not the same, then a better position than it leaves in, and that we don't repeat what we saw back in November. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I know the member for Argyle-Barrington was hoping for the member for Halifax Chebucto, but he'll have to settle for me. It's an honour to stand here and talk in the House here, especially after two former Health Ministers.

I take a bit of offence to the comments made by the members for Sackville-Cobequid and Argyle-Barrington. (Interruptions) I'm not easily offended. First, we consult too much, and then we don't consult enough. It seems their opinions go back and forth depending on their political needs at the time and not the needs of the people of Nova Scotia. It reminds me of a certain summer beach footwear. Just remind me, the members for Argyle-Barrington and Sackville-Cobequid - what department did they previously (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic has the floor.

MR. MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I had just a simple question. I was just wondering, what department did the members for Argyle-Barrington and Sackville-Cobequid hold while they were in government? I just don't know.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the flavoured tobacco and e-cigarettes legislation. The health and safety of our citizens is our number-one priority. We as a province have worked hard to shift from a smoking culture toward our goal of being a smoke-free province.

We have come a long way and we cannot afford to lose ground. I think back to the 1980s and the 1990s, the time of mullets and Guns N' Roses jean jackets - but it was also a time when the public could smoke in malls, restaurants, and just about anywhere they wanted. It was a smoking free-for-all.

I was one of those smokers - a pack a day. I think back to when I had my first cigarette. I'll be honest with you; it wasn't because of flavoured tobacco. Sadly, it was because of peer pressure. I still struggle to this day with tobacco. If you want me to tell you

the truth, I had a glass of wine this weekend and I tried a grape cigarillo. I smoked one with a friend and somehow I justified it to myself because of the flavour. It was just a treat.

The tobacco industry sells a product that kills. It kills the user. There's no disputing this. They have been very clever in finding new ways to attract new users in a smoke-free culture, and that is called flavoured tobacco - cherry, chocolate, grape, vanilla, watermelon . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Lipstick.

MR. MAGUIRE: Lipstick - the list goes on and on.

Last Fall, during Law Amendments Committee, we listened to stakeholders. They wanted more consultation. We listened and brought back what I believe to be the most progressive tobacco legislation in the country. Once again, this government is listening.

Here are the details which I am proud to support. As of May 31st, it will be illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors or to display or promote these e-cigarettes. This legislation will ban flavoured tobaccos under five grams. This will include cigarettes which have become so popular amongst our youth.

Our province is - and let me say this loud and clear - now leading the way with a ban on all menthol tobacco. I stand here today as an ex-smoker, someone who watched someone very close to me cough up blood for days, weeks, months, and then die of lung cancer. I stand here today and ask that all provinces and territories follow Nova Scotia's lead on menthol and flavoured tobacco.

There will be naysayers. There will be those who make claims that the sale of illegal cigarettes will rise. Let's call those comments what they really are - scare tactics by the industry that is desperate to keep a chokehold on our youth, on our friends, and on our families. The Minister of Health and Wellness, the Premier, and my fellow MLAs will not make legislation based on fear-mongering and an industry that profits off of death. We will make legislation based on the facts and what is best for the people of Nova Scotia.

This government listened and I am proud of this minister, this Premier, and this government for this historic piece of legislation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to add my voice to the members on this side as to how important this piece of legislation is. There has been a lot of laughing and carrying on and people are having a little bit of fun - I think it has something to do with the lateness of the night - but the reality is, it is a strong piece of legislation that

could have been here six months ago had the minister listened. But I also want to mention that I think the honourable member who just spoke - if he needs the services of the member for Northside-Westmount, who is a physiotherapist, to help him, because I'm sure he hurt himself when he was patting himself on the back, I would be more than happy to offer those services of our honourable member.

On a very serious note, I just wanted to say that tonight, this is a good piece of legislation. We are here and passing it. I think when it goes to Law Amendments Committee, it will have a much safer journey than it did the last time it was there. The Canadian Cancer Society thinks that we are doing the right thing as legislators. I know someone, when they were speaking earlier, did mention that as Opposition members we have the right to voice our opinions, as government members have the right to voice their opinions, but more importantly, we have to be sure we hear the opinions of the people who gave us the honour to sit in this House so that indeed their interests are brought forward and displayed on the floor.

This piece of legislation, even though it took longer than it should have to get here, does do that. It truly listens to what the people have asked for, and for that, I think we should all be very grateful. With that, Madam Speaker, I will sit.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members opposite for their comments. I move second reading of Bill No. 90 and I look forward to the valuable process of Law Amendments Committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 90. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That concludes the government's business for today, Madam Speaker. We shall meet tomorrow on Tuesday, April 21st, from the hours of 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. During that time, we will do the daily routine followed by four hours of estimates. If time permits, we will do second reading of Bill Nos. 89 and 91 and third reading of Bill Nos. 79, 83, and 84. If there is any other business, if time permits, we will call that as well.

With that, I move that the House do now rise to meet again from the hour of 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on April 21st between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 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.

We stand adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 9:59 p.m.]