



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine, I would like to present the Speaker's ruling from last week as presented on the point of order by the honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Gallery Interruptions: QP - Add'l. Time (Pt. of order by Hon. S. Belliveau [Hansard p. 3739, Apr. 15/15])

On Wednesday last week, the honourable member for Queens-Shelburne rose on a point of order with respect to two interruptions to Question Period resulting from disruptions in the gallery by protestors. He suggested that some additional time should have been allotted to Question Period to compensate for the interruptions.

The honourable member is quite right that I, as Speaker, have the power to extend the time of Question Period if it is delayed or interrupted. This is clear from both O'Brien and Bosc at Page 424 and from rulings from previous occupants of this Chair in this Assembly. I have had the Clerks review their records and am advised that the total time lost over both interruptions totalled 35 seconds. We had gotten through 19 questions on that day, which is a good number according to our recent performance.

While I did not consider the delay on Wednesday to be so significant as to warrant adding extra time that day, I do want to assure this House, and in particular the members on the Opposition benches, that I will be vigilant to preserve the right of the Opposition to hold ministers to account through the mechanism of Question Period. In any case in which I think there has been an impact in proceedings, I will ensure a delay is addressed by an extension to the end-time in that order of business.

We will now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition from residents of the area of the Deepdale Road in Inverness County. They are calling upon the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal “. . . to reduce the road safety risks and environmental nuisance caused by lack of maintenance and upkeep of the road.” This petition contains 212 signatures, including my own.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1505

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

Whereas every year during Education Week we recognize the inspiring work of teachers and administrators who are dedicated to educating Nova Scotia's young people; and

Whereas this year's theme is “Schools as Communities: Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors,” a celebration of the important role our teachers and schools play in our communities; and

Whereas we are celebrating the efforts of our teachers and education partners who work to support student development by engaging the community through service learning, community projects, and co-op education, and help students recognize their influential role as a prominent member of their community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly hereby acknowledge and thank the 2015 Education Week Award recipients, organizing committee, and all Nova Scotian educators who are empowering the next generation of Nova Scotians to be forces for positive change in this province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 93 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 155 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Executive Council Act. (Mr. Tim Houston)

Bill No. 94 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 402 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Retail Business Uniform Closing Day Act. (Mr. Chuck Porter)

Bill No. 95 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1996. The Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, Respecting Aquaculture. (Hon. Keith Colwell)

Bill No. 96 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Revenue Act. (Hon. Pat Dunn)

Bill No. 97 - Entitled an Act to Protect Health-care Information to Promote Quality Improvement. (Hon. Leo Glavine)

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 Cumberland South.

FILM TAX CREDIT - CONSEQUENCES

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All members now know that the gutting of the Film Tax Credit has resulted in many consequences that this government did not understand.

Erin Oakes is a victim of one of those unfortunate unintended consequences. Three weeks ago Erin was working in the film industry and feeling optimistic about her future - she was preparing to purchase a family home and volunteering whatever time she could in her daughter's school, but negotiations for three projects, including two documentaries, have been cancelled, and partners in a co-production say they are forced to find a partner in another province. Even worse, the chaos surrounding the Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia equity investment fund also killed a documentary series her company was working on. Three staff members will be laid off in the next couple of weeks and Erin believes she will be without a job in the next few months.

She says the actions of this government have devastated her industry and her life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, before I do my member's statement, would I be permitted to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of members to the west gallery where we're joined today by a group of people who are involved in the film industry. I'm not permitted to read the names of everyone who is here, but I will identify three people who are here who participate in an apprenticeship program in the film industry called Film 5: Andrea Levesque, Dominic Fegan, and Daniel Bows. I'd ask them to stand please - and with them are members of the cast and crew of this Film 5 team. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FILM TAX CREDIT - FIN. & TREASURY BD. MIN.: CHANGE - EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, many people still cannot understand the change of heart of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board regarding

the Film Tax Credit. Let's not forget that in November 2012 she called the tax credit "an essential part of the industry's success here in Nova Scotia." She blamed bureaucrats in the Department of Finance for a slow turnaround time on applications. Now, as Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, she has gutted the credit with no consultation or analysis to the point that it won't be much benefit to anyone at all.

What has caused the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to have a change of heart, and why has she gone from thinking the Film Tax Credit was essential in 2012 to disposable in 2015?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

BROSHA, JEANETTE - PROV. VOL. AWARD

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating Jeanette Brosha on receiving a Provincial Volunteer Award.

Jeanette was chosen for the award by the Municipality of the County of Antigonish. She started volunteering more than 40 years ago. She started by helping a group of children in organizing a game of softball that grew into a group of 55 youth playing softball every Saturday, which eventually led to their revitalization of the Heatherton Recreation Committee. She also volunteers with seniors, 4-H, Catholic Women's League, and is on the board of directors for the Heatherton Group Home, as well as the Heatherton Walking Club. Jeanette is an integral member of the community, and the Heatherton community in particular is extremely lucky to have someone like Jeanette.

From personal experience, I've seen first-hand as one of the youth who participated in some of those activities with Jeanette as a volunteer organizing those events, and it was really appreciated as well, so I was very personally excited to see her receive this award. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACDONALD, JOAN/BUTLER, BRENDA: GAELIC LANGUAGE - COURSES/WORKSHOPS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to speak about two individuals, Joan MacDonald and Brenda Butler, and they have dedicated a great deal of time over the past several years promoting the Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia, passing their own knowledge of Gaelic on to others through courses and workshops.

Their Pictou County group, Féis na h-Aibhne Móire, will be hosting a series of free instruction to Gaelic classes every Thursday evening during the month of May, which is Gaelic Affairs Month. The Gaelic community feel that the recent staff cuts to the Gaelic

Affairs Office by the Liberal Government are deep and can harm what they know has been considerable progress during the past number of years. Joan and Brenda feel the two women who lost their positions will be irreplaceable because of the contacts they have globally, along with their extensive knowledge of the Gaelic language and culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

TURNAROUND ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS: RECIPIENTS

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, last evening I had the great honour of attending the first ever Turnaround Achievement Awards held in Windsor. This is a group of students who last night were honoured, seven students from the West Hants area: three from the West Hants Middle School, three from the Avon View High School and one from the Windsor Education Centre for Adults.

Mr. Speaker, Connor Johnson, Grade 7; Michael Crossley, Grade 8; Austin O'Donnell, Grade 9; Catherine Harvie-Card, Grade 11; Matt Boone, Grade 12; Chad Bosworth, Grade 12; and Devon Upshaw-Oakley, Grade 10 were all recognized for outstanding achievements in turning around their lives as young people.

Starting out getting on the right track, Mr. Speaker, is important in our education system for all of these young people and I want to thank the partners who helped on this, including the Terra Firma organization for initiating it. Thank you.

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

MINING ASSOC. (N.S.) - FUEL TAX REBATE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, we know that the McNeil Government has broken yet another promise, this time to the Mining Association of Nova Scotia. In May 2014 *The Chronicle Herald* reported that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board wrote to the association confirming that their fuel tax rebate would begin in 2015. Well here we are in 2015, and there is still no sign of that promised rebate. The Minister of Natural Resources wrote to the Mining Association to apologize for breaking this promise.

Mr. Speaker, the way the McNeil Government is handling job creation and rural economic development so far, I don't expect to see the rebate coming anytime soon.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

VICTIMS WK. (04/19 - 04/25/15) - RECOGNIZE

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April 19 to 25, 2015, marking the 10th Annual National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, also known as Victims Week. The goal of Victims Week is to raise awareness about issues facing victims of crime and the service programs and laws that are placed to help victims and their families.

The theme of Victims Week 2015 is “Shaping the Future Together”, which acknowledges and empowers the victims of crime in this country to not be defined by experience and to shape their own future.

Victims Week, in addition to acknowledging these worthy goals also lauds and pays tribute to the countless volunteers, social groups and law enforcement professionals who give their time and energy to victims and their families at all levels of government and in all communities across the country.

I ask all members of the House to join me to recognize Victims Week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw members' attention to the west gallery where we have supporters of the Gaelic community here in Nova Scotia. I don't have all their names but I would ask that they stand: Norma MacLean, co-chair of Sgoil Ghaidhlig; Joan MacDonald; Cairra Clark; Georgia Atkin; Devan Clark; Laura Stirling and Brenda Butler. If there are others who have come as well, I would ask you to stand as well and receive a warm welcome from the Legislature. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GAELIC AFFS. OFFICE: STAFF CUTS - EFFECTS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, they are here in support of a statement of Gaelic which many of them will understand in that language but I will also read it in English at my earliest opportunity.

An-uiridh, ann am Mios na Gàidhlig, thuirt Ministear na Coimhearsnachd, a' Chultair san Dualchais gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig sa cultar a' cur Alba Nuadh ann an àite

sònraichte an Canada. Seo an t-aon àite a-mhàin san dùrthaich far a bheil a' chànan sa cultar air an cumail beò bho glùin gu glùin sa choimhearsnachd.

Chan ann mar sin a tha chùis nuair a chaidh dithis a ghearradh a-mach a còignear luchd obrach ann an Oifis bhig lomairtean na Gàidhlig; tha seo a' cur casg air an leasachadh a chaidh a dhèanamh bho chionn ghoirid ann a bhith cumail na Gàidhlig beò.

Ciamar a chumar suas an obair chudthromach seo ri linn leithid de chall?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness - with an English version?

MR. MACMASTER: With an English version, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Go for it.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, during Gaelic Awareness Month in 2014 the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage said that the rich language and culture of Nova Scotia Gaels make our province a unique place in the Canadian tapestry. Ours is the only remaining region in the country where Gaelic language and culture is being passed down from generation to generation within the community.

Cutting two of only five staff from the tiny Office of Gaelic Affairs is not reflective of that sentiment, and will curtail progress made in recent years to protect and revive the language and ensure it can be passed down to future generations.

Many Nova Scotians, like those visiting with us here today in the Legislature, would like this government to explain how this important work can continue with such severe losses, like those who signed a 1,200-signature petition. They want the government to reaffirm support for the Gaelic community and reverse staff layoffs at Gaelic Affairs.

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

RBC - ARTS/CREATIVE ECON.: VALUE - GRASP

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we know that the McNeil Government is a big supporter of the Royal Bank of Canada, known as RBC. We also know, sadly, that the McNeil Government does not appreciate the value of our film, television, and creative industries. Perhaps they should take a lead from their friends at RBC. CBC is reporting today that the multi-national bank has become the principal partner of the historic Old Vic theatre in London.

If a corporation like RBC can grasp the value of the arts and the creative economy, why can't the McNeil Government?

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

EDUC. WK. (04/19 - 04/25/15): TEACHERS - COMMEND

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, this week is Education Week across Nova Scotia. We celebrate Nova Scotia Education Week from April 19th to April 25th to celebrate teachers and education partners for their hard work and dedication. This year's theme is Schools as Communities: Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors. Education Week has been celebrated annually since 1935, whereby our communities gathered to honour the tireless commitment of all educators to their students.

This year the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development presented Education Week Awards to 23 teachers and five education partners at École du Carrefour in Dartmouth. This year's recipients are being recognized for outstanding support for students through service learning, community projects, and co-operative education.

All teachers are to be commended for the impact they have on the young minds of the future. I'd like to say a great thank you to all of the teachers across the province, especially those fabulous folks that I had the privilege of working with over the years, and congratulate all of them on a job well done.

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

DIXON, WALTER - MITTENS: KNITTING - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Walter Dixon of Marion Bridge, who knits and donates more than 100 pairs of children's mittens every year. Walter is 90 years old and donates many of these mittens to Marion Bridge Elementary School and to the regional hospital. Not only is Walter ensuring that little hands are kept warm and dry, he's a role model for young people in his community. Children are able to connect with their elders in small community-based schools like Marion Bridge Elementary. It is a true honour for me to have this opportunity to congratulate and thank Walter Dixon for his great pastime that ensures all the children's little hands are warm and dry. Thank you.

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

RILEY, DAVID/RILEY MCGEE, ANITA: FILM TAX CREDIT - EFFECT

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, David Riley and Anita Riley McGee have been in the film industry for close to 30 years. David is a senior rigger and a technician in film, TV, and live events. Anita is a writer, director, producer, and production manager in film and television, and sometimes for commercials. The moment the Film Tax Credit change was announced, productions pulled out and their job prospects vanished. This was

the tipping point for Anita and David, the deciding factor for them to move to B.C. They will start having yard sales and put their house on the market in June.

The Film Tax Credit will have a deep and profound effect on communities throughout the province. If the government backs down on their change, it's too late for Anita and David, but it's not too late for Nova Scotia. I urge the government to reconsider the decision to gut the Film Tax Credit.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**PHILLIPS, GRANT/SULLIVAN, VICTORIA
- DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD**

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate two exceptional youth, Grant Phillips and Victoria Sullivan, on receiving the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians, encouraging personal growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility, and service to the community. Through their outstanding efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project, these bright young Haligonians have received the award from His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada. I am proud to have Grant and Victoria as members of our community, and would like to congratulate them on their achievements. Thank you.

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

MCCLOSKEY, MARY LOUISE: FILM TAX CREDIT CUTS - EFFECTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, Mary Louise McCloskey is from French Village on the South Shore. She became a Canadian citizen in Nova Scotia in 1999 and got her first film job the same year. Since then, she's worked her way up and worked hard through almost every film crew department, landing in the highly skilled position of script supervisor.

Mary Louise has written a feature film script which she would like very much to make in Nova Scotia and to give back to those whom she has learned so much. She won't be able to finance it here if these tax credit changes are implemented. Mary Louise is one of the thousands of Nova Scotians whose lives will be changed forever by the short-sighted actions of this Liberal Government.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - LOBSTER LEVY

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'm about to say something that I've never said before. I agree with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. (Applause) Just wait now; there's more. He told the Canadian Press yesterday there is still no consensus among lobster fishermen on the implementation of a levy; that's true.

So I have to wonder why the minister would be bringing legislation forward before getting a mandate from the industry. I believe there are many questions that must be answered before any legislation is allowed to proceed. First and foremost, the McNeil Government must consult with the lobster industry and not use their majority government to force this legislation through like they've done in the past.

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

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: I'd like to rise on an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. ARAB: Mr. Speaker, if I could have the members' attention to the east gallery, where two of my constituents are visiting here today. Josh Denaro and his partner Allaura are both members of the film industry. Josh is a second cameraman and Allaura is an equally-as-cool production coordinator. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

HUGHES, JOANNE - PROV. VOL. AWARD/HRM VOL. AWARD

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, all communities benefit from the tireless efforts of volunteers. One such resident of Cole Harbour, Joanne Hughes, has recently been honoured by both the province and the City of Halifax by being awarded the Provincial Volunteer Award and the Halifax Regional Municipality Volunteer Award respectively.

For the past 17 years, Joanne has been involved in female hockey. She has sat on both the Female Council for Hockey Canada and the Female Council for Hockey Nova Scotia. Joanne has also served on the board of directors for Cole Harbour Place for the past 20 years. Her time there has done much to increase the stature of Cole Harbour Place and made it a community hub that residents are so proud of.

In addition to her work in women's hockey, Joanne has also volunteered at the IWK, volunteered as a Beaver and Cub Scout leader, canvassed door-to-door for the Canadian Cancer Society for eight years, and has assisted at numerous events and organizations. As the program for the 41st Provincial Volunteer Awards says, "Joanne is

an inspiration for women everywhere.” I thank her for her continued work and betterment of the community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SURRETT, WES - FLEUR MAINVILLE AMBASSADOR AWARD

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Wes Surrett for being selected as the recipient of the Fleur Mainville Ambassador Award at the first annual Destination Eastern & Norththumberland Shores awards gala. The ceremony was held at the Nova Scotia Community College Pictou Campus. Wes is the general manager of the Pictou Lodge Beach Resort and was one of six finalists for the award.

This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated great community pride. Fleur was a well-known entertainer and ambassador for Pictou County who passed away from cancer earlier this year. She could often be seen playing in the dining area of the lodge.

I am honoured to congratulate Wes on his award and wish him well in the upcoming tourist season.

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

PREM. - BUDGET: SHORT-SIGHTED DECISION - RECONSIDER

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, during the last election, the Premier told us time and time again that he would not be picking winners or losers if elected, but we now know that we cannot take the Premier at his word. Arbitrarily gutting the Film Tax Credit and creative industry supports while writing a cheque to a multinational for-profit corporation like the Royal Bank is picking winners and losers.

As filmmaker Cory Bowles - originally from Truro - says, seven local directors worked in comedy and dramatic television this year. Three were black. I am filled with hope and pride at this incredible number. I'm also filled with fear and disbelief as it quickly fades. I strongly urge the government to consider the effect on our black community, one of deep talent and potential, a collective voice with a unique perspective for Nova Scotia, and an invaluable part of our collective cultural voice. I urge the Premier to please reconsider his short-sighted decision with the budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll just remind the honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River that not taking the Premier at his word is an implication of another member's dishonesty, so I'll just throw a caution out there.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

BOAT HBR. - GOV'T. (N.S.): CLOSURE - TIMELINE

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, in June 2014, a pipeline carrying wastewater from the Northern Pulp mill to the treatment facility at Boat Harbour sprung a leak. Following this, our government arranged several meetings with the local First Nations band. As a result of this, our government promised to put a reasonable timeline on the closure of the Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility and make this into law within a year. This is the first progress we have seen in a long time on this issue. As soon as the treatment facility stops receiving wastewater from the mill, a full cleanup can begin.

To echo the words of the Minister of Internal Services, this government is committed to removing this environmental scar and making Boat Harbour a place the community can enjoy once again. I am proud to be a member of the government who has finally moved forward on this very important project and I would hope that members on all sides of the House support this initiative.

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

BIANCHINI'S REST. - ANNIV. (38TH)

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bianchini's Pizzeria on Commercial Street in North Sydney on 38 years of delicious service to the Northside. The pizza shop has evolved into a restaurant with a menu that is quite varied and that includes a Maritime invention, the donair. With a staff of 10, Bianchini's has passed the test of time. It is my pleasure to wish Donnie Bianchini and staff another 38 years of continued success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SAINT GEORGE'S YOUTHNET - FUNDING CUTS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Saint George's YouthNet describes itself as "a home away from home" for youth at ages seven to 17 in the North End of Halifax. Their programming is offered free of charge to families, many of whom come from low income, and includes nutritious lunch programs, after-school programs, and team-building activities over the summer. They have a small but dedicated staff team and have a genuine impact on the children and youth they serve.

In the not-for-profit world, every dollar counts. Unfortunately, the Minister of Health and Wellness doesn't understand that, which is evident in his decision to cut funding to Saint George's YouthNet and other small community-based organizations that support children in our communities and in our province.

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION LEADER: DEPT. CUTS - ADVISE

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, you know, they say you can't be all things to all people, but the Leader of the Official Opposition is irrevocable in purporting to be just that. On one hand, he echoes the sentiments of Team Pictou by demanding that the government lower taxes. On the other hand, he keeps promising continued profligate program spending.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has repeatedly asked the government to balance the budget immediately. Can the Leader of the Opposition state unequivocally which departments he would cut? The PC caucus laments the reduction of FTEs in this budget, yet campaigned on essentially this. Which department would they cut FTEs in? Surely not in Pictou. Surely not in rural Nova Scotia. Surely not in DNR. Surely not in Community Services. Surely not in Service Nova Scotia. As hard as he tries, he cannot have it both ways. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC. MIN. EA: ACTIONS - SITUATION CORRECT

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture's executive assistant used Twitter to attack members of Nova Scotia's film industry. He also, among other comments, questioned why the government was holding meetings with this group.

The executive assistants are senior members of a minister's staff. Their actions reflect on the minister they work for and on the government. At a time when the government is holding meetings with the film industry, the Twitter comments showed a shocking lack of respect. Only the Minister of Agriculture can make this very unfortunate situation right. Today I urge him to make amends for the profound inappropriate actions of his executive assistant.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTIONS - CUTS REVERSE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in May 2012 the previous government released the province's first mental health and addictions strategy, called Together We Can. One of the key actions included funding community agencies, to help Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addictions.

Now the McNeil Government is cutting these grants for mental health and addiction works. These organizations support Nova Scotians with a variety of mental health issues,

such as eating disorders and schizophrenia. They also support the mental health needs of Aboriginal, immigrant and the LGBTI communities.

I'm calling on the government to reverse these cuts and support the mental health needs of Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**PARK VIEW EDUC. CTR. DIV. 1 BOYS SOCCER TEAM
- PROV. CHAMPIONSHIP**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Park View Education Centre Division 1 boys soccer team. Park View Education Centre is made up of several feeder schools that come together as one group in their Grade 10 year. The boys soccer team is made up of young men who are from all corners of the county and have put past rivalries aside to compete together.

The Park View Division 1 boys soccer team were successful in representing their region at the provincial tournament this past October and came back provincial champions, defeating Citadel 2-1.

I would like to congratulate the Park View team on their championship banner and a successful season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - PROACTIVE COMMUN. ORGANIZATIONS:
SUPPORT - CESSATION EXPLAIN**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, in a 2013 column the Minister of Health and Wellness wrote that proactive health care is the best way to restore long-term wealth to our province. It must have left some people scratching their heads when the Healthy Living Tax Credit, which provided an incentive to families to enroll children in active recreation programs, was cut by this minister.

Surely ensuring children are physically active is a proactive measure. I can only imagine how surprised the dozens of not-for-profit organizations were on April 9th when they were informed that the minister was no longer funding their proactive work.

The programs offered by Chebucto Connections, St. George's YouthNet and Split Rock Learning Centre support young people, including those struggling with poverty and mental health issues and give them tools to succeed in the years to come. Why has the minister now given up on supporting proactive community organizations?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MARTIN, HANNAH - LORAN SCHOLARSHIP

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Colchester North, I would like to make a member's statement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Hannah Martin, a Grade 12 student from Tatamagouche, for receiving the Loran Scholarship. Hannah was chosen among the top 30 of 3,800 applicants for her character, commitment to service and leadership potential. She attended a social justice camp in Mexico and continues to recruit host families, has worked as a waitress and a tour guide, helped plan a church service and school assembly to share her Mi'kmaq culture and volunteers as a drum instructor.

The scholarship provides an annual stipend of \$9,000 for four years with a matching tuition waiver, a summer program with funding up to \$8,500, a week-long orientation expedition in Algonquin Park in Ontario, one-on-one mentorship and participation in the Loran Scholarship community.

Hannah is the only student from Nova Scotia to receive the Loran Scholarship this year and the first student from Tatamagouche to do so. She is particularly proud that a student from a small rural community was able to achieve this and hopes to be an example for others.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

RICHARDS, DAN: NORTHWOOD CORP. - VOL. (20 YRS.)

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to speak about a great Volunteer of the Year for the Town of Stellarton, Dan Richards. Dan serves as director of softball operations for the Stellarton and Area Minor Girls Softball Association. He also has served on numerous other sports committees in a number of capacities, as well as chairperson and co-chair for three hockey Nova Scotia provincial championships.

This year Dan will mark his 20th year of volunteering at the Northwood Corporation, providing emergency response services to seniors in his community. His words and actions speak for themselves. Dan is an example of volunteers who do not necessarily have the time, they just have the heart. Thanks, Dan, for being an amazing community volunteer.

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

**FRIENDS FOR LIFE/CHEBUCTO CONNECTIONS/YOUTH VOICES (N.S.)
- PROG. CUTS**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, FRIENDS for Life is a world-renowned school-based anxiety prevention program. It helps children and teens cope with anxiety, depression, and fear by building their self-esteem and teaching them cognitive and emotional skills to handle these feelings throughout their life. In fact, the FRIENDS model is the only childhood anxiety prevention program acknowledged by the World Health Organization.

Chebucto Connections, based in Spryfield, has been offering this programming to students in their family of schools since September 2013 and it is so sad to hear that eliminating funding for this valuable programming has taken place and is being cut by the McNeil Government, as well as programs like Youth Voices of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Council for the Family.

How many more election promises is this Premier going to break? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP TROPHY: MIC MAC MALL - UNVEILING

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I rise in this House today to recognize the unveiling of the FIFA Women's World Cup trophy at Mic Mac Mall on Saturday, April 18, 2015. Canada is fortunate to host the FIFA Women's World Cup this coming June and July. Over 20 countries will be represented as athletes compete in a tournament that captivates millions around the globe. The trophy itself represents the hundreds of thousands of athletes who have successfully trained for and competed in an opportunity of a lifetime. It represents a forum that fosters camaraderie between people of different nationalities, ethnicities, and languages. This is truly commendable and aligns with what Canadians value most.

My daughters have a passion for soccer and were able to join me at this magnificent display. The Fairview Junior High girls regional champions team was also present with their coach Peter Wicha. It was a privilege to have participated in Nova Scotia's one stop on the road to the FIFA Women's World Cup, and I wish all the teams the best of luck in the tournament. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**MAINLAND SOUTH HERITAGE SOC.:
HIST. PRESERVATION - DEDICATION**

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, February 21st marked the 21st Annual Heritage Tea and Display at the Captain William Spry Community Centre. For the past 21 years the Mainland South Heritage Society has been promoting our local history through this annual event. The theme of this year's display was shipwrecks and featured artifacts from three local shipwrecks: *Tribune*, *Humboldt*, and the *SS Atlantic*. The annual tea and display is open to the community and offers residents a chance to learn more about the history of our community. I was honoured to attend this event and look forward to next year's display.

I would like to thank the Mainland South Heritage Society for their dedication to preserving and promoting the local history of the area. The society has collected many artifacts and pictures from the past that tell the story of our rich heritage.

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

STARZOMSKI, NIKOLAS - VIMY PILGRIMAGE AWARD

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to recognize Nikolas Starzomski from Howie Centre for being one of 20 winners across Canada of a Vimy Pilgrimage Award. Nikolas, who is a sea cadet at Victoria Park in Sydney, will be touring around former battlefields of France after winning this national contest. The Vimy Pilgrimage Awards recognize the actions of those who demonstrate outstanding service, positive contributions, notable deeds, and bravery and/or leadership. Those who are selected attend a week-long educational program in Vimy, France to study Canada's First World War effort. It is a true honour to congratulate Nikolas Starzomski on this award. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I draw the members' attention to the west gallery where we are joined today by Robert Ganong, a CNIB counsellor who helps Nova Scotians adjust to losing their vision; Caroline Ferguson-Davis, CNIB's program and services manager; and Catherine Kieran, CNIB's communications manager. I'd ask them to stand and enjoy a warm welcome from members. Thank you. (Applause)

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

**CENT. C.B. COMMUN. VENTURES:
AROS NA MARA WORLD OCEANS DAY - HOSTING**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the work that Central Cape Breton Community Ventures is doing around heightening public awareness and celebration of the Bras d'Or Lakes. They're hosting an Aros na Mara World Oceans Day at the Iona Port Wharf and the St. Columba Hall on June 7, 2015. I would encourage all Nova Scotians to come out and learn more about the role we can play in maintaining the health of the world's bodies of water.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**REG. EMERGENCY MGT. ORGANIZATION (REMO)
- FLOODING: PREPARATIONS - URGE**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: The long, harsh winter may be over, but bad weather may still lie ahead. The Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) is warning South Shore residents of possible severe springtime flooding and is urging people to prepare for the worst. With temperatures rising, the melted snow and ice is expected to change into about 300 millimetres of water, which could cause problems for people's basements and flood roads. REMO expects this year's Spring flooding to impact not only those who live near rivers, lakes, and streams, but potentially everyone.

For more information to be prepared, visit emergencymeasures.ca. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all members join me and REMO in urging people to prepare for potential flooding and the damage that comes with it, wherever they may live.

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

DEWOLFE, SAVANNAH - SENATE PAGE PROG.

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today about a wonderful young lady from Eastern Passage. Savannah Dewolfe is well on her way to having a successful career, and her accomplishments deserve recognition. Savannah will graduate from Carleton University this year with her Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management, with specialization in human rights and a minor in law.

Every year 15 university students from across Canada are selected to participate in the Senate Page program. This opportunity allows exposure to parliamentary procedures. The students are directly involved with a wide variety of activities pertaining to the legislative process. Savannah was sworn in at the Senate as a Senate Page in February and is excited about her learning opportunity. Savannah says she is loving Ottawa and her new job, but that Eastern Passage will always be her home.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Before I read my statement, could I make an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. IRVING: I'd like members to direct their attention to the east gallery, where we are joined today by Mr. Bill Fleming from Wolfville, along with a friend of mine from Hants West, Shelley Bibby. Both are involved in the film industry, and I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**MANKO, MS. KATHIE/OLDHAM, MR. CARL - WOLFVILLE:
COMMUN. SERV. - CONGRATS.**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to two members of the Mud Creek Rotary Club, Ms. Kathie Manko and Mr. Carl Oldham, for being honoured with prestigious Paul Harris Fellowships. Paul Harris founded Rotary International in 1905, and the fellowship recognizes a substantial contribution to Rotary's humanitarian and educational programs. Mr. Oldham and Ms. Manko have now joined the over one million Paul Harris Fellows around the world.

Mr. Oldham is a town councillor and a member of both the Rotary and the Lions Club in Wolfville, and Ms. Manko dedicates herself to the Wolfville and Area Food Bank, and working in partnership with her friend Ms. Janet Roberts, to providing important client support. On behalf of the House of Assembly, I would like to congratulate Ms. Kathie Manko and Mr. Carl Oldham and thank them for their years of dedicated service to the community of Wolfville.

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

KEATING-OWEN, MYRENE/LEA PLACE WOMEN'S RES. CTR. - THANK

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, LEA Place Women's Resource Centre in Sheet Harbour has been providing their community with a vital service since 1981. They are dedicated to providing women with information and support they need to make informed and healthy decisions for their families. They also strongly believe that positive social change results in a more just, equitable, and caring society. Therefore it remains important that they combine their direct service and programs with social change initiatives that address the root cause of poverty, violence, and discrimination.

Truly, this place has it all. Their experienced staff are knowledgeable about women's lives, issues, and situations, and are able to provide individualized, confidential support. Myrene Keating-Owen and her team have an amazing understanding of what women are facing, and know the services available to best tailor fit anyone's needs. These ladies are true problem-solvers. A large thank you to Myrene Keating-Owen and her team for continuing to provide such an incredible service to our communities. I am proud of the positive change they are creating every day.

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

**MINDFUL MANGO CAFÉ/PARTNERS FOR CARE:
MENTAL ILLNESS - PATIENTS ASSIST**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Fairview-Clayton Park we have some remarkable businesses. One in particular is the Mindful Café located at 7071 Bayers Road. The Mindful Mango Café is a socially conscious enterprise designed to help people living with mental illness to discover and follow their path to self-sufficiency.

They believe in recognizing the individual strengths in everyone, to help build and develop a person's gifts and talents. They also serve delicious and healthy food, and they are mindful of our environment through their policies that help reduce waste. They are attentive to the environmental costs of shipping, cleaning, and disposal practices.

This local business is one of the progressive community programs of Connections Halifax, a mental health outreach division of Capital Health. The café is operated with the additional expertise of Partners for Care, an organization that supports the patients of Capital Health through a diverse range of associated businesses and community opportunities. We are very fortunate to have such a business in our community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

NICHOLSON, DR. BRIAN - PROV. VOL. AWARD

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, every April municipalities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a provincial volunteer award. This year the Town of Antigonish nominated Dr. Brian Nicholson as their representative, and on April 7th Dr. Nicholson was presented an award from Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor and the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, Brian is the founder of the Highland Touch Football League and spends a lot of his time scheduling games, booking fields, ordering uniforms, training officials, keeping track of records, and recruiting others to join this game. When he first moved to Antigonish he formed the JAGAS Football League, which has introduced more than 500 students in the Strait Regional School Board area to the sport.

Mr. Speaker, to list all the ways Dr. Nicholson has positively affected members of all ages in the community through the power of sport would take more time than I am allotted. Besides his long list of contributions to the sport community, Brian embodies the true meaning of being a volunteer: he does it to give back to his community. If he can do that while encouraging people to be more active, then he is happy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

MACEACHERN, ZOE: RBC BLACK HIST. MO. ESSAY COMP. - CONGRATS.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to highlight an achievement of a high school student in my riding. Zoe MacEachern, a student I taught during my teaching years, who is currently attending Auburn Drive High School, won a \$500 scholarship from the Royal Bank of Canada's Black History Month Essay Competition.

Zoe's essay, *African Canadian Women Role Models*, highlighted the lives and careers of some well-known women. Among them were former Governor General Michaëlle Jean, and Zoe also wrote about three incredible historic Nova Scotia women: Viola Desmond, whom we all know as a champion for social justice; Dr. Carrie Best of New Glasgow, a pioneering radio broadcaster and founder of Nova Scotia's first African Nova Scotian-owned newspaper, *The Clarion*; and Maxine Tynes, a poet and beloved teacher who is still missed by the Cole Harbour community and beyond.

It's with great pleasure that I'd like to thank Zoe for her great work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HFX. BOYS HONOUR CHOIR: MUSICFEST CAN. - WELL WISHES

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today to congratulate the Halifax Boys Honour Choir who will be representing the Province of Nova Scotia at Music Fest Canada in Toronto in May 2015. We are privileged and honoured to have the choir group represent our region in a national light.

Showcasing their musical talents and passions is an opportunity these students take very seriously, and of which they are extremely proud.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize two people in particular who understand the importance of music education and are very dedicated in their support of the Halifax Boys Honour Choir: Earl Leslie, a constituent of Halifax Armdale, is a representative of the choir who works hard to advance the group's performing goals and community presence; and Pam Burton, the director of the choir and the music specialist at John W. MacLeod/Fleming Tower School located in Armdale.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my very best wishes to the students as they represent our province in Toronto, and thank the dedicated people who work hard to support the choir and music education. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: FILM IND. - RELOCATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It is becoming increasingly obvious to Nova Scotians that this government does not know what it's doing when it made its changes to the film industry here in our province. I'm not just referring to the tax credit itself, but the elimination of the office of Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia as well. That office administered an independent production fund that in the last two years disbursed \$3 million of private money - private investment - to the film industry, supporting 10 different productions totalling \$57 million in economic activity. Now that fund is in limbo.

I'd like to ask the Premier, where does he expect the film industry to go now that he has eliminated this source of private funding?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I want to thank the honourable member for his question, Mr. Speaker, and I want to correct him. We have not in any way eliminated private citizens or private sources of funding into any entity across this province. What we have done is transferred the creative economy into NSBI. By all accounts, people are encouraged by that. They're looking at the export opportunities. I'm also encouraged by the conversation that is happening between the creative economy, the film industry, and government so that we can come to a resolution that works for everyone.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this is no way to run a government - to make it up as you go along. The fact of the matter is that Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia was the only CRTC-approved funder using private money to encourage our film industry. NSBI is not approved to do the things that Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia was approved to do. Now our film industry is going to have their own money used against them, as those funds are forced to go somewhere else until the government gets its act together.

Why did the government act without ensuring that there was a proper fund in place for the use and encouragement of our growing film industry?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all those who have been working with government to come to a solution that works for them as well as working for taxpayers. I'm encouraged by the support that NSBI has been showing, reaching out to members of the industry who have questions. We're going to continue to do that as we continue to move forward to ensure that not only can we build on the creative economy across this province, but that we move this province back to fiscal health.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not thanking our film industry. He is waving them goodbye by the actions that he has taken without knowing what he is doing, and this is just the latest example. As we speak, real jobs and real productions are being lost, and now the money that is collected - private money to invest in our own homegrown Nova Scotia industry - is going to be spent promoting another province's film industry instead of our own.

I'd like to ask the Premier, will he ensure that Nova Scotia Business Inc. has the approvals in place right away so that not another job need be lost?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I again want to say to the honourable member, NSBI is working with industry to make sure that all the transition is taking place in a proper way. I want to tell him I had the good fortune of meeting with three gentlemen from the film industry yesterday; I've met with others. I'm very encouraged by the way they conducted themselves and the very thoughtful presentation they presented to me yesterday. We had a great conversation about how we can both meet the needs of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia the same as we're ensuring supporting an industry that we all want in this province. I've been very encouraged by the relationship that's taken place at the negotiating table between the industry and government.

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

CNIB: REHAB. - REPLACEMENT SERV.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind is one of the oldest and most respected charities in Canada. Since 1918, CNIB has helped people who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence and the skills to fully participate in life. They provide essential rehabilitation therapy to those who have lost their vision to help build their independence.

The program is now at risk because the McNeil Government has slashed their budget by 30 per cent. My question to the Premier is, where will people go to get these much-needed rehabilitation services if they've lost their vision?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. First of all, on behalf of all members of this House and indeed all Nova Scotians,

I thank the CNIB for all the tremendous work that they do here in our province. (Applause) Not only do they do it here but they do it across our entire country. As the honourable member would know, as a former Health and Wellness Minister, we have \$4.1 million in the Department of Health and Wellness that works with partners across many jurisdictions to help provide services to Nova Scotians who require extra support, and we will continue to do so.

MS. MACDONALD: Work that they did, not work that they do. CNIB isn't the only non-profit organization whose funding has been slashed by the McNeil Government. There's quite a long list of NGOs: the Deafness Advocacy Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Association for Community Living - I could go on.

My question to the Premier is, why isn't support for the province's most vulnerable a priority for the McNeil Government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the honourable member for the question and completely disagree with the premise of her question. I don't question the motives of anyone in this House when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable citizens.

The reality of it is that we have \$4.1 million being spent on the Department of Health and Wellness working with partners across many jurisdictions, across many communities, to provide services directly to Nova Scotians who need support. We're going to continue to do that by working with our partners to make sure that those Nova Scotians who require those services will get them here in our province.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, many of the groups were very shocked by the comments of the Minister of Community Services when these cuts were announced. She told reporters, "I'm not looking at funding advocacy groups," and also said that these programs do not meet the department's core mandate.

My question to the Premier is quite simple. Does he agree with his Minister of Community Services that these groups are simply advocacy groups that no longer meet the core mandate of the McNeil Government?

THE PREMIER: Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. The minister was very clearly telling all Nova Scotians that we will ensure that the money that is being spent on behalf of the people of this province is being invested and being spent on those Nova Scotians that require those services.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - FILM TAX CREDIT: PLANS - REVERSE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. During debate on the 2013 NDP budget, the Liberal Finance Critic of the time actually strongly defended the Film Tax Credit, and in debate in this Chamber said, “. . . it’s very rare that I lose my temper here but I heard the suggestion that we should get rid of the film tax credit. We introduced the film tax credit when the Liberals were in government. It has been strengthened over time, with the support of all Parties.”

That critic is the now-Minister of Finance and Treasury Board for the Province of Nova Scotia. What changed? What changed? Will the minister, now that she has a chance, reverse course on her plans for the Film Tax Credit and bring in a new one that all Parties can support?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition. I think it’s important that we point out that there are funds in this year’s budget to the same amount as last year, that there are discussions underway about how that’s going to look in the future, that the tax credit has not been eliminated, and that there are funds in the budget as well in the out years. I think the most important thing is that we have agreed to not speak to the details of that, because we’re working in good faith with the industry. Thank you.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we can only wonder what the critic of two years ago, who said it was very rare that she loses her temper, would say in response to the answer of the current Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, being the same person.

There’s more. The minister also said on that day two years ago that, “All Parties know that that has created an industry where there was none . . .” She then went on to say, “Obviously we need it, we fight with other provinces to have the best one and to bring people here.”

What changed? We’re all wondering, what changed? Why does she no longer want to fight with other provinces to bring new people here?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, again, I think it’s really important that all members know - and I said it here in estimates yesterday - that the next meeting that we will be having is tomorrow morning with members and representatives of Screen Nova Scotia; that they are bringing their best ideas to the table; that in the previous two meetings, which have been lengthy and thoughtful and very frank discussions, there has been a good understanding on both parts about the numbers that have been presented; that we’ve had a great understanding about where each side is coming from; and that we agreed to talk further.

We also agreed that there would be no talking in public about the details of that discussion. There will be no solution unless we work in good faith.

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

PREM.: ATL. FILMMAKERS COOPERATIVE/FILM 5 - SUPPORT PLAN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government's decision to eliminate Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia left an enormous void of support, most notably for participants of the FILM 5 program administered by the Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative. This is kind of an apprenticeship program for young filmmakers. Daniel Boos is a director in the FILM 5 program, a 26-year-old filmmaker, and has had his work at international festivals.

He was set to begin filming in a few weeks. He has auditioned actors, he has hired people for equipment . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier if he can tell Daniel why, after a year of intensive planning, booking supplies, actors, and equipment, he is now going to have to put that all on hold.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I remind all members of this House that the Film Tax Credit, as it existed on April 8th, still exists in this province today. We budgeted for the same amount of money in this year's budget as was spent last year. The same rules will apply.

What we're talking about is on a go-forward basis with the industry. I'm pleased with the conversations that have been taking place with the industry and I look forward to continuing those to find a resolution that the taxpayers of Nova Scotia can be happy with and the industry can be happy with.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier needs to understand that more than the Film Tax Credit was slashed and jeopardized. Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia disappeared and they had other programs. For 20 years, this FILM 5 program has produced some of the province's most successful and internationally renowned filmmakers - Thom Fitzgerald, Andrea Dorfman, Jason Eisener.

My question to the Premier is, what is the Premier's plan to support young filmmakers now that he has moved this program over to NSBI and nobody seems to know anything about it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell her and all members of the House that NSBI has been in contact with members of the industry who were looking for information and concerns that they had since the April 9th budget was introduced. We're encouraged by those conversations.

We understand that there is some uncertainty for people, as there is at any time there is change, but we are very encouraged by the conversation that we are having with Screen Nova Scotia. Hopefully, we'll come to a resolution that can allow all sides to move forward in a way that they see fit.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

PREM.: OFFICE RENOVATIONS - DETAILS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, through a freedom of information request, our office has learned that over \$42,000 was spent on renovations to the Premier's office. I remember last week when the Minister of Business said we are broke. Maybe today I should be asking for a definition of "broke", but instead, I will ask the Premier to please explain to all Nova Scotians why he felt the need to spend \$42,000 of taxpayer money to renovate his office.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I'm not exactly sure what he is referring to. I will tell you that my office has not had renovations done to it. My office has been there from when Premier Hamm was there, I think. The only change in my office is that a door has been relocated. I don't believe that would cost \$42,000. My office exists the same way as it did before. As a matter of fact, I don't even believe I've moved the desk.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think this piece of information may refresh the Premier's memory a little bit, because I want to tell the members of this House that we did learn about this \$42,000 through a freedom of information request, a request that yielded a half-page of information that I will table today.

Our office had been told it would take five hours to produce this half-page of information and that the charge for that would be \$30 an hour for anything over the top two hours.

My question to the Premier is, did this half-page of information really take five hours to compile or was the charge an attempt to prevent our caucus from learning about taxpayer-sponsored renovations to the Premier's office?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's a freedom of information request. I know this may come as a surprise to the member opposite, but the freedom of information officers do not call me to ask me about what they should be charging people. There are many more

pressing issues facing our province than whether or not we're going to charge the honourable member for freedom - but I can tell you, the office I have the good fortune of sitting in today, on behalf of the people of this province, has not changed other than a door had been changed.

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

TIR: *BLUENOSE II* - PROJ. COMPLETION

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of TIR who has now inherited the *Bluenose II*. According to the briefing note prepared for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, and obtained through a freedom of information request, approved project budget for the *Bluenose II* was \$19.6 million. The remaining budgeted funds as of March 9th were \$617,252.00 - and I will table that information.

We know the project has already been dogged by costly overruns and taxpayers have expressed concern about the handling of this project to date. So my question to the minister is, what assurance can the minister who inherited the *Bluenose II* file offer this House that the project will be completed within the budget outlined in his colleague's briefing notes?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the assurances with respect to the *Bluenose II* are all based on the AG's Report. I think Michael Pickup gave us a very good picture of what this file looked like from 2008 when the file was initiated for the *Bluenose II* project, what the process has been, what the timeline has been, and what the expenditures have been since that point up to the present day.

What I can tell the member opposite is that I've been down to Lunenburg three times so far, I have a full commitment to get back there as often as I can for the steering committee meetings. We have tremendous staff working directly on *Bluenose II*, we're going to follow the AG's recommendations, and we're going to get this right. We're going to do our very best and we look forward to the Spring when we get a real good look at the boat, all Nova Scotians can get a real good look at the *Bluenose II* to see what's happening. Thank you.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that answer. According to the March 9th briefing note, there remains a number of outstanding issues before the vessel can resume regular operations. The document also says a firm date has not been established for moving the *Bluenose II* into regular operations. That was prepared on March 9th and we're now at April 21st, can the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal now reveal a firm date for when the *Bluenose II* will move into regular operations?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, currently, with respect to the steering committee and their work to have the vessel sailing once again, there are a number of deliverables that have to be reached. Some are technical and relate to the ship directly, others are about the manual, the international certification requirements for Transport Canada, those types of pieces.

There's a very great knowledge base in Lunenburg. The people who are on the historical society, the museum committee who are supporting this project, the LSA, the shipyard alliance who built the vessel have done tremendous work despite some of the challenges, again, as outlined by the AG. At the end of the day, I want to tell the member opposite and all Nova Scotians, Lunenburg, the people of Lunenburg whom I've spoken with, the many who are represented here in the House by elected officials - they're positive about the *Bluenose II*. They want to change the channel and get to the positive news that this is a sailing icon for us, we want to get it back in the water as soon as we possibly can. Thank you.

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

PREM.: FILM & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES - ELIMINATION EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, until last week the Partnerships in Training program was administered by the now-eliminated Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia. This program was a long-time supporter of the Centre for Art Tapes. Becka Barker, an educator in the film industry, phoned NSBI yesterday to inquire about the status of that program and was told that NSBI has no information about what their responsibilities will be regarding any of the programs formerly belonging to Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia.

I want to ask the Premier if he would explain why Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia was eliminated and some of the programs were moved to NSBI but with no plan in place?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure her that they were moved to NSBI. There was expertise in exporting and expertise in driving economic growth in sectors.

The member referenced a name in her question. I'm not sure why the person she had been speaking to would have given her that information but we'd be more than happy to try to find that out for her and present that response.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia was a centre of excellence for economic development of our film and creative sectors. With the move of some of the programs over to NSBI, the province is losing expertise of an organization that had nearly 30 years of experience working in this sector. There doesn't

appear to be anyone on staff or on the board of NSBI who has a specific background in the economics of cultural industries.

Mr. Speaker, I want the Premier to please explain how NSBI is going to be able to assist members of the film and creative sectors when it has no prior experience, expertise or background working in the industry?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the minister responsible for NSBI to respond.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I just want to remind the member that in the transition from the former department to NSBI, we recognize the need for subject matter expertise in NSBI. Three resources from the former department, with expertise in tax, film and music have gone to NSBI.

We recognize that there are priorities and the need to continue with ongoing work. We have three additional resources that will work within NSBI to meet the needs of those who are challenged by the opportunity to continue with the film industry in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GAELIC AFFS.: OFFICE FUNDING - RESTORE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Gaelic Affairs. We have a budget for Gaelic Affairs that is determined by the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage but it is the Minister of Gaelic Affairs who is ultimately responsible for this office. The minister's own constituency of Antigonish is one of the prime beneficiaries of the work of this office.

Why didn't the minister stand up for the Gaelic community when his government proposed eliminating two of five positions in this small office?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question of this important area of cultural contributions to the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned previously, the positions that were cut, unfortunately for the individuals affected who I knew personally, were primarily focused on administrative aspects in the Office of Gaelic Affairs. We are able to provide those services in a more efficient and effective way by collaborating and joining forces with Communities, Culture and Heritage.

We've maintained the cultural, on-the-ground core program delivery funding and positions. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I know the Gaelic community will see that as a very weak defence. We keep hearing from the government that it was only an administrative cut. They don't seem to know about the education, the translation, the communications work that was being provided by these employees.

Will the minister restore funding to the Gaelic Affairs Office so that he can return proudly to the Highland Heart of Nova Scotia, his own constituency?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, through you I'd certainly like to advise the member opposite that I always return proudly to the Highland Heart of Nova Scotia. When I return to my office here and in this Legislature, I also come from the Highland Heart of Nova Scotia, proudly, to represent the constituents of Antigonish.

With respect to the position, as I had indicated, those positions primarily focus on administrative aspects. I am well aware of the work of those two affected individuals. In fact, the Office of Gaelic Affairs is right down the hall from my constituency office. I know these individuals personally, I am well aware of the work that they were doing, and I'm confident that we can continue to deliver on the core mandate and deliver the services for Gaelic Affairs in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

TIR: MOBILE INSPECTION POSITIONS - VACANCIES CONFIRM

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Nova Scotia Vehicle Compliance is responsible for the safety of all road users and the protection of infrastructure. My understanding is that there are 12 mobile inspection territories within the province, but it is also my understanding that there are several vacant positions that have not been filled. Some positions have been vacant since August 2014.

Will the minister confirm there is a staffing issue and whether or not these vacant positions will be filled? And if so, when?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I agree with the member that Vehicle Compliance is certainly an important aspect of our complement of road safety in the province. For the mobile unit, there are 13 positions across the province; there are three vacancies at this point. I've spoken to Dan Leopold as recently as today, who is the director for Vehicle Compliance. He assures me that the search is active to fill those three positions and they will be filled within the next few months. Thank you very much.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer. In addition to holes in the compliance coverage in the province, many public complaints about safety are not being addressed, especially in my constituency of Pictou West, which represents Vehicle

Compliance Area 87. I received many, many calls regarding the salt trucks travelling the Sunrise Trail this winter. In fact, calls became so overwhelming that I had discussions with the RCMP, who are immediately working on monitoring the area more.

Can the minister explain why this area is currently understaffed and not being monitored to the degree it should be, considering that Pictou County actually has the second-highest registration for commercial vehicles next to the HRM?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have any of the information the member just mentioned. I've never heard of that issue whatsoever. The member may be getting many calls as she has suggested; they must be local calls. I haven't had any of those.

Dan is very competent, he's very capable, and he usually gets me information of anything that's pressing, so I'd be happy to collect that information for the member and explore as best I can. Thank you very much.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS SUPPORT: GRANTS - CUTS EXPLAIN

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in November 2014, the Minister of Health and Wellness announced funding grants to 23 not-for-profit organizations that provided support for individuals living with mental illness and addictions. In the release, the minister was quoted as saying, "There is clearly a need for more access to mental health and addictions supports." My question for the minister - given the need for more mental health and addictions supports, why did he cut grants to these organizations?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to tell the honourable member that while we have taken a percentage of grants right across the Department of Health and Wellness this year, I'm very pleased and proud that our government added \$1.1 million to mental health delivery this year.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in the same press release, the Minister of Health and Wellness said, "We can never lose site [sic] of the critical role community support plays in the recovery and well-being of someone living with mental illness or addictions."

Six months later, the McNeil Government has already cut funding to these same organizations it promised to support. I'd like to ask the minister, over six months ago, the minister supported organizations that provided this important information and support for those living with mental illness and addictions. What happened that changed his views?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to tell the honourable member that as we look at the report of Dr. Jana Davidson, who took a look at all of the mental health work relating to adolescents in our province, the focus was to do a great deal more work in the early years. I'm pleased to say that in our two budgets to date, we have added to the SchoolsPlus program and that is what's going to make the real difference in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ENERGY - EFFICIENCY N.S.: RATES - STATUS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Last year we saw the government reconfigure Efficiency Nova Scotia and at the time the Premier defended the new structure saying the new stand-alone Efficiency Nova Scotia entity is actually driving down fuel costs, which in turn ensures that power rates go down. Meanwhile, according to a media report, Nova Scotia Power is saying that Efficiency services will actually add up to 3.1 per cent to power bills.

My question for the minister is, does the government still say that their plan will drive down rates when the utility is saying the exact opposite?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the legislation that was created meant that Efficiency Nova Scotia would put in their requests for funds to carry out their programming, while Nova Scotia Power would present what they believed was the appropriate amount that should be invested. The legislation was such that the Utility and Review Board will meet to hear this matter, look at what has been presented from both parties, and at the end of the day make a ruling as to what the appropriate amount of funding for Efficiency Nova Scotia should be. We have made it extremely clear to the Utility and Review Board that we do not want to see the funding for Efficiency Nova Scotia have any impact on the rates paid by Nova Scotians.

MR. HOUSTON: We appreciate the little history lesson, Mr. Speaker. Nova Scotians will certainly remember the Premier saying that he would break the monopoly and that he would reduce power rates. Well, a Nova Scotia Power pamphlet compared 2014 rates to 2015 rates and despite the Liberals claiming the efficiency fee is eliminated, rates remain the same. So my question is, while Nova Scotians were expecting real change to lower electrical rates, when will they see that, instead of hearing more Liberal double-talk and schemes?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the legislation that was passed by this government has been working and the fact is that Efficiency Nova Scotia is helping Nova Scotians reduce their demand on power, which is going to help lower rates in this province and make power more affordable for all Nova Scotians. What Nova Scotians were looking for in the last election is a Party that was going to come with a real plan instead of a Party in the Official Opposition, which I believe, at the time, was playing a little bit on the movie

Frozen and thinking the Leader of the Official Opposition could be like Elsa and just somehow freeze power rates and just magically do so. Nova Scotians voted for a real plan, that plan is working.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC.: EA REMARKS - MIN. APOLOGIZE

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In the days since the budget we have heard many comments from the government about how much the people who work in the film industry are valued. However, it recently came to light that the Minister of Agriculture's executive assistant had been using social media to criticize the film industry. I understand that the staff member has since apologized to the industry for the remarks. My question for the minister is, would the minister also like to express an apology to the members of the film industry who are here with us today and assure them that this government has far greater respect for them than the unfortunate comments on social media would reflect?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, this indeed is a very unfortunate incident. I am very, very disappointed that a person who works with me made such comments and I want to apologize to the industry. It didn't reflect me, I had nothing to do with it. It doesn't reflect government policy. I think it was totally unacceptable.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture for that apology. The ongoing negotiations with the film industry are under a media blackout and this industry needs to feel that there is confidence and goodwill from the government as they continue those negotiations. Social media is a venue for individuals to express free speech but in government positions it is important that employees be respectful of others. Will the minister confirm that the government does have a policy on social media to ensure that this does not happen again and potentially undermine government negotiations?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that any employee under my jurisdiction will not be using social media for this kind of activity ever again.

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

PREM. - N.S. FILMMAKERS: JOB TRAINING - DETAILS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, by eliminating the successful agency Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia, the McNeil Government has thrown the future of the youth-based FILM 5 program into complete chaos. The youth who depend on this program aren't even sure it still exists. Some of them are here today looking for answers. *Paper Thin*, a film by 25-year-old producer Dominic Fegan, was scheduled to begin filming next

month, but because of the lack of vision and planning by this government, this young filmmaker's project is now in jeopardy.

My question for the Premier is, what is his plan to provide on-the-job training for young Nova Scotian filmmakers like Dominic? Or is this government going to continue with the old adage "don't call us, we'll call you"?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members of this province who call my office, whether it's the Premier's office or my constituency office. I appreciate hearing from Nova Scotians.

Over the last number of weeks we've heard from Nova Scotians who are involved in the creative economy and those who aren't, expressing their opinions on a policy position that government has taken. It's been part of the conversation that has taken place with Screen Nova Scotia to come to a point where all sides believe the direction the province is going in is fair to everyone. We look forward to continuing those conversations.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, Dominic Fegan says he feels like the McNeil Government slammed the door on his career before it even started. Young filmmakers are now having to look at other provinces for the opportunities that they need to build successful careers in the creative economy, as I once had to do.

I stand before you today, asking on behalf of Nova Scotia's youth, why is the Premier driving young Nova Scotians away with his hasty decision to dismantle Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia without a backup plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I want to remind her that there was \$6 million in this budget for the digital rebate. There's an additional \$6 million for the film industry. There's an additional \$6 that has been set aside for the creative economy, \$4 million of which is for the film industry, and another \$2 million for recording as well as publishing. That is not a government that has turned its back on the creative economy.

We have heard from some members of the creative economy that the delivery model we're using doesn't work for them. I'm very proud of the way they've responded, to sit down with government to say, okay, here's the fiscal envelope, so how can we best change this so we can use a delivery model that works for them? I've been encouraged by the way they've shown such great leadership on working with government. We're going to continue to work with them, no matter how much rhetoric comes from this floor, and find a solution that works for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

NAT. RES. - MINING/QUARRY SECTOR: MOTIVE FUEL TAX - REMOVAL

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The Mining Association of Nova Scotia asked to receive their promise from this government for the removal of the motive fuel tax for the mining and quarry sector. Last week the Minister of Natural Resources said, "The indication that we've given to the Mining Association was that this credit would be looked at and distributed over the course of our mandate."

I hope the minister has had a chance to reflect on that statement over the weekend. My question to the minister is, does the minister stand by the answer he gave with regard to when his government promised to remove the motive fuel tax for the mining sector?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we've made it very clear that this government has a priority to restore fiscal health to this province. It needs to be made clear to everybody that it is to ensure that future generations aren't saddled with crippling levels of debt and deficits, so we can fund the core services this government needs to provide to Nova Scotians.

When it comes to taxation questions, we are looking at all of those, and we still have on our agenda to provide that tax credit, but we will not do it before we can afford to.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Mining Association of Nova Scotia dated May 13, 2014, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board confirms that the Liberal Government will remove the motive fuel tax from the mining and quarry sectors over the final three years of the government's mandate. Given that the normal mandate for a government is four years, the fuel tax removal should have begun during this budget.

In addition, in a November 10, 2014 news release, the Minister of Natural Resources said the government will start phasing in a fuel tax rebate program for mining and quarrying vehicles and introduce a revised Mineral Resources Act in 2015.

My question to the minister is, why won't the minister admit that he was unable to follow through on a clear promise he made to members of the mining industry?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, where this is a question related to taxation, I will refer the second part of this question to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk to this subject as well about the fuel tax rebate which is a rebate that is offered to farming and to fishing. The mining industry felt as well that they have vehicles that don't go on our roads that should have the same benefit.

Mr. Speaker, the commitment remains. We promised to do it within this mandate but the problem we ran into was that you couldn't do it in phases, that is going to match the farming and fishing and it needs to be done at one time. So that's why we've committed to do that within this mandate.

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

BUS.: TRUCKING COMPANIES - LICENSING FEES

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Business. Nova Scotia trucking companies haul millions of kilograms of freight annually across North America. On April 1st it was announced in this Legislature that a 3 per cent increase in trucking fees seemed reasonable to the government, despite the fact that a commercial trucker hauling more than 6,000 kg will now pay \$4,012.15 annually for a licensing fee.

My question to the minister is quite simple. How many trucking companies did the minister consult to see if they thought that 3 per cent was a reasonable increase?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, let me first acknowledge the value of our trucking industry to the movement of goods and services throughout the province and other areas of the country. The fee associated to truckers - obviously the trucks themselves cause greater damage to the surface of our highways and the intent is not full recovery, but the 3 per cent increase is an across-the-board fee increase that addresses the opportunity for government to generate some support to continue to provide that road surface structure in the province.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information, commercial trucking licence fees have increased 15.8 per cent in just the last seven years here in Nova Scotia. In recent years they have seen five increases, ranging anywhere from 2 per cent to nearly 6 per cent.

Government talks about user fees being imposed to cover costs, but surely it can't cost this amount of money to print off a commercial trucking licence. Mr. Speaker, how can the minister really justify a 15.8 per cent increase over seven years as just another fee increase?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I do want to remind the member that the fees are not specific to recovery of the costs of printing of a licence, but the fees are intended to reflect a much broader application of the need to continue to provide that road service and, in some way, to continue to support that mechanism in the province.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: EATING DISORDERS SUPPORT GROUPS
- FUNDING CUTS**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness - 10 per cent of those diagnosed with an eating disorder will die within 10 years according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

The number of women admitted to hospital emergency rooms because of eating disorders tripled between 2010 and 2013 in Nova Scotia. Despite this fact, Mr. Speaker, the minister has reduced funding for eating disorder support groups in his budget. I'd like to ask, how can the minister justify cutting resources for people struggling with eating disorders when a growing number of people are accessing our health care system looking for help?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know a number of our organizations had a reduction in their budget. They haven't been eliminated from the support of the Department of Health and Wellness and we will continue to support those organizations to the extent that it is currently possible.

One of the good news stories here is the additional work with eating disorders that is taking place through the IWK program.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in May 2012 the previous government released the province's first Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. One of the key actions was to include funding community agencies to help Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction. Now the McNeil Government is cutting those grants to mental health and addiction services. These organizations play an important role in getting someone healthy that goes far beyond what you can get in the emergency rooms and the hospitals here in Nova Scotia. Why isn't the Minister of Health and Wellness supporting agencies trying to help Nova Scotians with mental health issues like eating disorders?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises an important issue for Nova Scotians that we be aware of doing all we can to support those with eating disorders, mental health problems. We know that by investing a great deal more through the school programs we will have both immediate and long-term success.

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

NSCAD: PROF. - VOYEURISM CHARGES

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we learned that an associate professor at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design allegedly used a camera in a bathroom to capture images of a former student. Police have charged him with voyeurism.

The victim told CBC News that she is deeply hurt and affected by the events that happened that day with Gene, someone she had known and trusted for many years, and I'll table that.

She added that she is "... troubled by the position of trust and the direct interaction that he continues to have daily with young men and women at NSCADU.", and so are we. The president has made a public statement about the charges. It said, "Due process will be followed. Further information will be provided . . ." My question to the minister is, will she confirm that the professor is still working at NSCAD today, and if so, will she immediately inform the House if she has placed any restrictions on his interactions with students as he awaits his trial date?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question and I do believe the university will be handling this with their faculty member. Thank you.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, NSCAD is funded by tax dollars and the people who work there for the school represent and reflect not only the university, but the province. The accused will certainly have his day in court but the minister is ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of the students. So my question is, can the minister assure students that this type of action will not occur on school property?

MS. REGAN: I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. I've made it clear to the universities that I expect their premises to be safe for all students and I expect them to act accordingly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

TIR: POTHOLE SEASON (KINGS CO.) - STAFF ALLOCATION

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of TIR. Last year pothole season lasted throughout the summer and late into Fall in Kings County; in fact, some never got done. This hard winter has added a considerable number of potholes. My question for the minister is, can the minister confirm that enough resources and staff have been allocated to get the job done for pothole season this year in Kings County?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that's certainly an important question for Kings County but also for all regions of the province. Just like the winter budget, which is tied with the summer budget in terms of the annual allotment, if one goes up, the other is affected and vice versa. At the end of the day we don't spare any resources, we don't spare staff, materials, time, and energy when it comes to pothole season. It's a dangerous reality on our roads and it certainly impacts not only the financial coffers of Nova Scotians when they hit potholes and have that added expense, but it's also about safety. Despite the tough winter we had and the significant potholes, we certainly won't sacrifice resources and we'll look after them, as we do every other year, the best we possibly can. Thank you very much.

MR. LOHR: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. Last summer in Kings County there was also a considerable amount of protest which occurred over roadside brush trimming, which has really been falling behind. I would just like to ask the minister, can he confirm that roadside brush trimming will be on his agenda this summer for Kings County?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things we look at . . .

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

Just before we move on to Government Business and a couple of other agenda items, I just want to take a minute to remind all members of the guidelines for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

The member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River posed a question on behalf of a constituent. That is not permitted, so we want to just be mindful of the phrasing of how we bring forth such questions. Also, the question earlier from the member for Northside-Westmount on the NSCAD case - that is a matter before the courts. It is not within our purview to pose any questions about judicial matters that are in fact being considered by our courts. Just a friendly reminder.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was asked a question by the honourable member for Kings North on Agriculture. Actually, it's not Agriculture; it should have been directed to my Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. I want to make sure that's very, very clear.

MR. SPEAKER: That's not a point of order, but we will make a note in Hansard for you there. Thank you for that clarification.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that you 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 the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Probably, Mr. Speaker, the first thing I'd like to say is to recognize the important task and job the minister completed and thank you to the (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. If there are any conversations that need to take place, please take them outside the Chamber.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre has the floor.

MR. DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like at this time, again, to recognize the important task completed by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and the department staff that worked and supported preparing for this budget. We know that hours, days, weeks, and months of preparation go into this here and it's certainly one of the major tasks of the year leading up to the Spring sitting.

One could say that the present state of our economy is bleak. Too many Nova Scotians are working outside the province. Too many Nova Scotians are unemployed. Rural Nova Scotians feel the government has forgotten about them - the closure of tourist centres, seasonal jobs lost in Nova Scotia parks, small businesses closing due to high taxes.

We were anticipating a budget that would actually excite Nova Scotians, a budget that would create jobs and grow our economy. We were looking forward to a vision, a plan from this government. This apparently hasn't happened. There is no plan going forward. There is no plan to create jobs. There is no plan to help rural Nova Scotia. They're one-and-a-half years into their mandate. It's time to see some progress. It's time to see more Nova Scotians working. It's time to see more Nova Scotians returning home to work.

Nevertheless, all is not doom and gloom in this budget. As the Education Critic, education is receiving some attention. (Applause) Additional dollars have been added to the Education budget. These dollars are needed to meet the expectations of the minister's Action Plan. I'm pleased to see that attention has been given to math and literacy programs. Certainly, we all agree that our math and literacy assessment scores must improve. High school curriculums will finally have a citizenship course, and that's something that we've been looking forward to for a long time. That's positive, and certainly it is long overdue, Mr. Speaker.

In the future, high school students will require a third math credit. Again, this particular initiative is something that most educators are looking forward to. Hopefully, with the influx of dollars and human resources in the early stages of a child's education, we will see improvement in scores not only in math, but also in literacy.

Staying with education, the SchoolsPlus program that was mentioned by the Minister of Health and Wellness earlier in the day is another plus from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Changes to the reporting system - if there is one thing that educators across the province, from P to 12, and teachers, administrators, and parents wanted to see, it was a change in the reporting system. There appears to be a revamping of that process.

There's also attention given to early intervention. This is a very critical, important area. Basically, it is either pay now or pay later. These are very positive initiatives.

However, it is critical that front-line workers are involved in this process. Teachers and school administrators need to be engaged. They have to be involved in the solutions. The minister is committed to this positive, and this is very important.

The Gaelic Affairs movement is very worried and concerned. They are presently experiencing a modest renaissance. They are finally seeing the fruits of their labour. They have 300 students studying Gaelic from Primary to Grade 12; however, they are faced with doing the same with less. They want to not only keep the language, but the culture, alive. They want it to grow and thrive.

Another concern is tuition fees. What will the impact be for university students? Students are frustrated and surprised with the tuition change. Foreign students and out-of-province students may look elsewhere.

Again, the Film Tax Credit. Why didn't the government sit down with the industry prior to introducing legislation, explain the financial situation the province is faced with, and come to a compromise suitable to both sides - talking to the industry, understanding the industry, and working with the industry? We cannot afford to lose one job, let alone 2,700. We certainly cannot afford to lose our educated, talented youth.

Health care in Nova Scotia has many people worried. Will we have enough doctors in rural Nova Scotia? Will we have an adequate number of nurses in Nova Scotia? Are we going to face a shortage of qualified health workers?

The removal of the Healthy Living Tax Credit has disappointed parents. The Healthy Living Tax Credit was something that young families were getting accustomed to using and getting people involved in recreational sports.

The real test for a government is: are they improving the quality of life for Nova Scotians? Are they creating jobs? Are they improving the economy? Are they improving wait-lists at our hospitals? Are they committed to ensuring Nova Scotians that we'll have an adequate number of nurses and doctors in rural Nova Scotia?

Regardless of what is in the budget, it is time to stop the studies, reviews, discussions, and meetings, and get on with creating jobs and improving our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

[3:00 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[7:21 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: 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.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 79.

Bill No. 79 - Civil Service Act.

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

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 79, an Act to Amend Chapter 70 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Civil Service Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

Nova Scotians expect to have an efficient Public Service that effectively delivers services they depend on. The Civil Service Act is being amended to simplify procedure and clarify that deputy heads may delegate in writing those powers and duties that have been delegated to them by the Public Service Commission; remove unclear and redundant sections on citizenship and eligibility to work in Canada; and make some general housekeeping changes.

Mr. Speaker, under the Civil Service Act a deputy head's powers related to human resource management are delegated to him or her by the Public Service Commission. The Act provides a mechanism for deputy heads to sub-delegate authority to manage aspects of the day-to-day operations.

By simplifying and clarifying the authorities of deputy heads, they will be able to administer their departments more efficiently, improving day-to-day operations. Removing outdated language or redundant clauses in the Civil Service Act includes removing a hiring preference for residents of Canada. People will only need to have authorization to work in Canada to be hired in the Public Service.

These changes are in line with key government priorities, and they support broader government workforce and immigration strategies. They also bring us in line with most other Canadian jurisdictions.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the amendments to the Civil Service Act will clean up and modernize the language in the Act. This includes making the language gender neutral.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now close debate on third reading of Bill No. 79.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I have concerns with this bill. I understand the government is trying to be supportive of immigration into our province, but I represent an area of high unemployment. I have an Aboriginal population of almost 1,000 people, where there is high unemployment.

There are companies that are working with the band at Waycobah to try to improve employment prospects for those individuals. They are working very successfully at Port Hawkesbury Paper, as one example. There are efforts being made at LNG Terminal. It has been in the papers the last couple of weeks, where they are trying to come to an agreement.

Mr. Speaker, my challenge with this bill is that all things being equal, Canadians can be overlooked for positions. There are a lot of Canadians that I represent in my constituency who are looking for employment. What do I say to them? Do I say that I sat in the Legislature quietly and let this bill pass, when many of them are looking for employment here in this province, wanting to stay in this area? I have great difficulty

supporting a bill and going back to them and telling them that I didn't stand up and say wait a minute, there are Canadians who could benefit from these jobs - including Canadians, I think, especially the Aboriginal population I represent, people who were here long before Canada became Canada and we called ourselves Canadians.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I will take my place.

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

The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one comment. I find it contradictory to say that a government will give somebody the ability to work in Canada but we will not allow them to work in the Public Service or for government. That is what this bill does - it gets rid of that inequality.

I would also like to say that immigrants, when they come to Canada, they tend to not work for the public service, they tend to actually be entrepreneurial and come into our community and create jobs. I'll speak to my experience in the Greek community; we have 2,000 people who are immigrants in this community, in Halifax, and none of them work in the Public Service. The Lebanese community, over 10,000 people in HRM and there is a handful, about five, who work in the Public Service.

When you have a government that wants to be representative of the population, immigrants are not looking at the Public Service or looking at government, because when they come here a lot of times they have language barriers and they might not even qualify for those positions. It tends to be that the only positions they can get is working for themselves. When they do, we've seen the success stories across the communities that have come here: the Dutch, what they've done in agriculture; the Italians, when they came; the Greeks; the Lebanese now; and all immigrants who are coming to Canada. They don't come here looking to work for government. They actually come here and because of challenges they face they tend to start industry and they hire Canadians and they increase the value of Canada and they increase all of our economic ability to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I move third reading of Bill No. 79.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 79. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 83.

Bill No. 83 - Elections Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 83. During second reading and Law Amendments Committee we heard from members of this House and stakeholder groups about this bill. I want to thank everyone for the points they brought forward; in particular I want to thank Mr. Mark Coffin from Springtide Collective for sharing valuable information with us. I commend the work that they are doing to improve our democratic system.

Secondly, I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Parker Donham's important points regarding our youth and getting them more involved in the electoral process. I absolutely agree - we must continue to encourage our young people to vote and I am confident the amendments brought forward will improve that. Mr. Donham makes a valid point on their engagement with social media and technology with respect to the youth. As Justice Minister I must balance that with other values such as protecting the sanctity of the ballot.

I just want to share only one personal story on the importance of the secret ballot - one that I thought about actually when we were coming to make amendments to the Elections Act and when I heard the comments that were made by Mr. Donham at Law Amendments Committee. When I was campaigning for the 2013 election I, just like everyone in this House, went door to door and I met so many wonderful, great, interesting people.

On two such occasions I spoke with two wonderful women in my riding who shared something very powerful with me. They told me - and I reflected on that probably in the last 10 days or so - that going into an election and walking in with their husbands to vote, leaving that husband at the door and then going behind that ballot box and putting an X on the ballot, is the only thing that they've done in their life without their husband being with them. It's the only thing that they've ever done that can be kept a secret for them. To these women, those values were empowering. It was clear to me that that affirmed the importance of the secret ballot, and that we as individuals and collectively as a society must safeguard that long-held belief by many of the importance of the secret ballot.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to the bill also maintain the integrity of our elections, while improving access to voting for electors and overall improving the electoral process. These important amendments will extend voting opportunities and permit constituents to vote at any returning office or advanced voting location in the province. Ballots will be improved, which will reduce the reliance on write-in ballots and decrease ballot error. I am

pleased that these changes will make significant improvements to adapting the use of technology. Voters will be able to register online, scrutineers will be able to correspond through text and email with their headquarters, and the ban on Election Day advertising will be lifted to align with modern forms of advertising, including websites and social media.

I would also like to note that after review of the initial bill we made an amendment to include that Elections Nova Scotia will remain as the arbiter of election advertising. This bill, in conclusion, represents a positive step forward for Nova Scotia, as voting opportunities are extended, ballots are improved, and accessibility for candidates has been enhanced. I believe these amendments provide Nova Scotians with much-needed practical amendments and is responsive to the needs of a modern electorate, given the rapid changes in technology and the increasing mobility of voters. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise again to speak to this bill, and I do recognize the minister's points about improving various aspects of the Elections Act. However, as we have mentioned before, the main issue that we have with this bill is the glaring lack of a fixed election date in the bill. The report from Elections Nova Scotia, as you will recall, said the main point was that most of the recommendations they made hinged on having a fixed election date. Not only that, the fixed election date would save the province approximately \$1.6 million.

I recognize that we're in a time of discussing the budget, and there have been a number of austerity measures and some of the civil servants have lost their jobs. I know none of that is easy, and for the stroke of a pen here we could have another \$1.6 million in savings that could be put somewhere else in our system. It's very unfortunate that that's not taking place simply so that the government would have the option of calling an election at their convenience rather than at the convenience of - or with everyone being aware of and anticipating the date.

There's considerable savings to be had in a fixed election date. Again, I would express very great disappointment in the fact that that's not in the bill. Furthermore, I know that the Party in power, our government, was in favour of a fixed election date, and on numerous occasions while in Opposition stated that they wanted fixed election dates. In fact, early in the mandate, I recall the Premier saying that they would bring in a fixed election date. So for that main reason, which is a very significant reason, we do not support this bill. We're very disappointed with that lack of that fixed election date in the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill No. 83.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 83. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 84.

Bill No. 84 - Statute Law Repeal (2015) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 84, the Statute Law Repeal (2015) be now read for a third time and do pass.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 84. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 89.

Bill No. 89 - Boat Harbour Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 89 be now read a second time. Practice does make perfect. After previous governments said they would stop the flow of effluent into Boat Harbour, we're doing it. (Applause)

Governments have been talking for 25 years. In June 2014, a pipeline carrying waste from the Northern Pulp mill to the Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility ruptured. It was dumping water and chemicals into Pictou Landing First Nation. As a result, the mill had to shut down its operations. The band began a peaceful blockade. The situation was resolved when this government promised to introduce legislation within a year to establish a reasonable timeline for the closure of the Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility. We honour that commitment with this bill.

The Northern Pulp mill in its current and past iterations has been an economic driver in the Pictou region for decades. The mill has provided well-paying jobs in the region, employed harvesters in local woodlands and sawmills, and has been a catalyst for job creation through the goods and services it buys from the community.

That prosperity has not been without its drawbacks. Last summer, we heard many, many complaints from Pictou residents about smells emanating from the mill's air emissions. However, for many years, the Pictou Landing First Nation community as well as the broader community have endured the smell of the effluent in Boat Harbour, a very pungent smell of sulphur. The bill we are considering today would close the Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility by the end of January 2020. (Applause)

Five years seems like a long time, and it is longer than the band would like to see. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to Boat Harbour. It is a problem that evolved over almost 50 years. In 1967, effluent began to flow several kilometres to Boat Harbour through a pipeline from the then new paper mill at Abercrombie Point. At first, it was dumped into Boat Harbour without any treatment. By the early 1970s, an effluent treatment plant was built because so many people were worried about how the effluent could damage the environment.

From the pipeline, the effluent goes into settling ponds where solids in the water fall to the bottom. They are collected and then moved to a landfill at the paper mill. The remaining waste water stays in an aerated stabilization basin for about five days where air is added to help very small organisms digest organic material.

The waste water remains in Boat Harbour for about two more weeks before it flows into the Northumberland Strait.

Knowing what we know today, Mr. Speaker, we believe that five years is a reasonable time frame to close Boat Harbour and to begin remediation. It could take up to five years after the closure of Boat Harbour to fully remediate this site.

At the bill briefing last week, Mr. Speaker, members of the media asked about what would replace the existing effluent treatment plant. This is a question that will be resolved in the future discussions with Northern Pulp. The design and cost of a new treatment plant will depend on the amount and the quality of waste water flowing through the mill at that time.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, this legislation rights a wrong that has gone on too long. Previous governments, in conjunction with the mill, promised to close Boat Harbour several times in the 1990s but they did not. In the 2000s the governments of the day promised to close Boat Harbour but they did not. Boat Harbour could have been remediated by now but earlier governments changed their mind. On that note I shall take my seat and I look forward to hearing from other members gathered here today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise tonight and speak to this incredibly important bill. It is incredibly important that we have a solution that works, that works for the people, works for the economy, works for Pictou County and, indeed, for all of Nova Scotia. It's incredibly important for the people of my community. I care deeply about my community and not just because I'm the MLA. I care because the people of the community are my friends, my neighbours and my family.

When we sit in this Chamber and talk about Boat Harbour and we heckle or we say some things back and forth, know that I live 10 minutes from Boat Harbour. To me Boat Harbour is not something that is somewhere else, Boat Harbour is in my community. It's an issue that is incredibly super-charged. It's an incredibly emotional decision for the people of my community.

As we discuss this bill, I am thinking of the people in my community. I am thinking of the families of my community, I am thinking of the children in my community, I'm thinking of the seniors in my community and I'm thinking about all those people and the people trying to make a living working in our community. In Pictou County and in all of rural Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, we all know the situation with rural Nova Scotia. It's harder and harder to make a living so I'm thinking of all those people and the people who are working in the woods and driving trucks and whatever the case may be, we want a solution that works for all those people.

That solution is possible. It's not an easy solution but it is possible. So as we discuss this bill, I am thinking of all these people and I am searching for a solution that works for everyone, a solution that works for Nova Scotia. That's what I am searching for and hopefully that is what all the members of this House are searching for, a solution that works.

I remember moving to Pictou County in 2007 and most of the people I met when we first moved there were people who I met through my kids, through their school, through

their sporting activities. One of the first families I met was the Denny family. It was actually through a birthday invitation - their son invited my son to a birthday. Over the years, getting to know the Denny family, it's very interesting hearing these kids and my kids talk about Boat Harbour - driving past Boat Harbour, talking about Boat Harbour. I can tell you there aren't many people in this House who have had the opportunity to hear children talking about Boat Harbour. It's a very powerful thing.

When I'm speaking about Boat Harbour, it's not words on a piece of paper to me, it's an issue in my community. I can tell you that I care deeply about Wayne, Bev and their children and that extends to all of the people of the Pictou Landing First Nation - Chief Paul and the members of council, the many elders who have invited me into their home for tea, for a bite to eat. They've fed me and they talked to me, and these are people that I respect because they know the meaning of honour and I consider them my friends. I have many good friends in that community and I would say I count some of them amongst my best friends.

This is an important issue for me; it's not a political issue with words on a paper. Pictou Landing is an area that encompasses much more than just the First Nation, and Boat Harbour is a concern for all of the residents all the way from Pictou Landing First Nation to Hillside, back the other way through Little Harbour, Kings Head, Melmerby and beyond to the greater Pictou County community. This is an extremely important issue to all of us.

In the greater Pictou Landing area I've sat on porches and in living rooms and listened to the concerns of the people and shared my concerns with them. We have the same concerns; we want the same things. And I'm thinking of Jane and Calum and Josie and Glen and Sue - and I could go on. I could name many people I've sat and talked with about this issue and the other issues of our community.

I've listened to them over coffee and conversation talk about the history of the area and talk about their dreams for the future of the area. This is not just an issue and a bill for me because these are people I trust and respect and these are people that I care about - and not because they're voters, I care about them because they're my friends, because they're my family.

So when I tell you that Boat Harbour is a big issue in Pictou County, I'm talking from a place of sincerity because we all care about this issue. From the MacLeans to the MacGregors to the Frasers, to the Gunnings, to the Sobey's, to the Dewties - the names of Pictou County. Each one concerned about this issue, and all are people I am proud to represent and proud to stand in this House and speak to issues on their behalf.

To me this is an important bill, and, as I discuss this bill, know that I am thinking of these people and I want to stress to the minister and to the Premier how important it is that we find a solution that works for everyone involved here. Nobody should question my affection for the people of my constituency and my sincere heartfelt feeling that we deserve

the best. Nobody should question that. All Nova Scotians deserve the best possible solutions to the very real issues we face. We all, as MLAs, come into this Chamber and we try to make decisions that make the lives of Nova Scotians better, that make things better for Nova Scotians. We all want that.

This is a well-intentioned bill. This bill speaks to an issue that we all recognize and that is the status quo is not an option; the status quo is not an option for Boat Harbour. We all know that the status quo is not an option; we all accept that. We need to move forward. Tomorrow should always be better than yesterday. We should always be looking for ways to do things better.

The use of Boat Harbour to treat effluent is not the way of the future, Mr. Speaker. I don't think you could find a Nova Scotian who wouldn't say we need to find an alternative. I don't think you could find a Nova Scotian who wouldn't say we need a new, modern effluent treatment facility. Everyone wants a new, modern, treatment facility because a new, modern treatment facility is what is needed.

I support this bill because it recognizes that we need to find a new way to treat the effluent. Now the government hasn't done that yet. I hope they do. They put a date down on a piece of paper. We can't claim success just yet but I certainly hope that we see success on this bill. As a father, as a friend, as a neighbour and as a MLA for Pictou East, I will tell you that I know the status quo is not an option and my Party agrees.

I think back to Murray Scott's letter in 2008 and I didn't know much about politics back then, Mr. Speaker, and I still really don't, but I'm learning. Back then, the Party realized that Boat Harbour couldn't go on. A new treatment facility was needed and the Boat Harbour area needed to be remediated. That was obvious to the PC Party back in 2008, long before I was a member of it.

That government was defeated and a new government was elected and that government was defeated and now we have a new government. So seven years later, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be standing here tonight and supporting this bill. I support the replacement of Boat Harbour with a new treatment facility. We all should do that because the status quo is not an option.

It's time to move forward with a plan that leads us to a treatment facility that is new and modern, that protects the jobs and addresses the concerns of the community. We need a solution that moves Pictou County forward. So we are looking at this bill through that lens, Mr. Speaker. Let's make sure that this bill does move the county forward and it does protect the environment and it does protect the economy. We all want that.

In looking through some of the media on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, I was reading *The Chronicle Herald* and I saw the comments from Matt Gunning and it describes that. I'll read from *The Chronicle Herald*. I could table it if you like. It says, "But Matt Gunning,

a spokesman for the environmental group Clean the Mill, says he doesn't want to get too excited until the details of the remediation plan are released." He goes on to say, "Clean the Mill supports the early shutdown and cleanup of the treatment facility. . . but the group is also concerned about maintaining jobs at Northern Pulp."

We're all concerned about those things, Mr. Speaker. I saw some comments from Bruce Chapman, general manager at the mill. He said that our goal was to meet our environmental responsibilities, while at the same time enabling the mill to have a long-term future.

We all want the same thing, Mr. Speaker, and the mill's owner was also quoted in there, Pedro Chang, he says, "We want to continue to be a long-term, environmentally and economically sustainable business in Pictou County and the surrounding areas. . ." Everyone wants the same thing here, so I hope - and it is my sincere hope - that there are plans underway to achieve these goals, to achieve the results the community needs and deserves.

Now on the face of it, from what is visible to me from where I stand and what I heard from the minister at his press conference - there are no discussions taking place that have involved the mill. The minister said at his press conference - and I believe he said it in his opening comments tonight - that those discussions would start now. I hope he means that. I hope he meant it on Friday when he said it on Friday. In fact, I hope the "now" was Friday. I hope those discussions have started already, because the only way to find real solutions is to involve all the stakeholders, and gee whiz, we need a thorough plan to find a full solution. That plan must involve everyone. That plan must involve the mill. The mill is a big stakeholder in this process and if it's true they haven't been involved so far, that's a concern to me and I sincerely hope that that changes right away. I would have thought that the mill might be involved from the drafting of this bill.

It makes me wonder what discussions are happening. If you want to find a real solution, if you want to solve a real problem, you talk to all the stakeholders. (Interruptions) I hear the members opposite and it's probably a bit of a giggle for them to heckle about Boat Harbour, but it's certainly not a bit of a giggle for me. Maybe some of these members can stand up and talk about it. (Interruptions)

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

MR. HOUSTON: I hope that those discussions happen. I strongly encourage the minister to get those discussions going, because I can assure you we want this bill to work. There is a lot of analysis and research and planning that has to happen in a relatively short period of time. Five years is not a long time in the context of approvals and permits and major construction. Again, I urge the minister to include the stakeholders, to include the mill to be involved and to have the opportunity to be part of the solution, because to leave

them out would send the wrong message. It would send the wrong message to the people involved in this situation. We can't have that, even if it's inadvertent. I urge the minister, open - and keep open - the communications.

When I look at this bill as drafted, I have questions and my constituents have questions also. I have been asked, how will this happen? How do we make sure we get a new treatment facility put in place? How do we make sure that this is not just another broken promise? These are questions people have. People want to know what the steps are to get a new treatment facility in place by 2020.

When I look at this bill, when I look at the words on this paper, I can't answer those questions. I don't know the plan. But I hope there is a plan to make this happen, because without a plan, without that detailed plan that people have said they're waiting for, without a plan, there is a risk that this bill just offers false hope. The people want real hope. The people want a real solution. The people want to be part of that solution. We all want this to work.

So, how do we make sure that this is not just false hope? Over the next few days, weeks, and months, we'll be looking forward to receiving answers to some of these questions that the people have. Questions like, what alternative treatment options are possible? Questions like, how will these alternatives be analyzed? Questions like, who will do the analysis? In fact, has there been analysis done already? We don't know, and maybe the minister has some ideas that have already been researched.

These are the questions we have, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister have a timeline in mind that shows when he expects the application for environmental approvals for the new facility to be submitted? Does that timeline exist? What does the timeline say about when things will be approved? What do the actual words of the bill mean?

It's a short bill. It's a one-page bill, and there are a couple of paragraphs in there that we don't know what they mean. I don't know what they mean. Legal words about "No action lies against Her Majesty" and "is deemed not to be a repudiation or anticipatory repudiation" - I don't know what these things mean.

We have questions about this bill. People are asking these questions. People are asking, why not wait until after the June 9th appeal? Is there any risk that this bill might prejudice that appeal and open the province to legal and financial risk? We don't know.

The biggest question of all, why wasn't Northern Pulp involved in the discussions? Does the minister think that the mill has a real part to play in working out a timeline? What's the plan to establish a working relationship with all of the parties? These are just the questions that I heard over this weekend, and they're all legitimate questions, because they're concerns. The best way to overcome concern is with information. The only remedy for concern is understanding. The people need to see, the people need to hear, that the

Liberals understand the importance of this bill and that they understand all of the moving parts.

When you put a bill like this down, it comes with a huge emotional factor to the people of the area. We want to make sure that the government understands the importance of this bill. This bill gives us a date, and we all want that date to work. We want that date to work for everyone, and making it work for everyone is where I will focus. I'm going to focus on making this bill work, and that's where my Party will focus.

It's my hope that I can be standing there with the government cutting the ribbon the day that the switch is flicked and the effluent goes to a new treatment plant, because that will mean that it no longer runs into Boat Harbour, and that's what I want: a new treatment facility that everyone can be proud of.

The Liberals have drawn a line in the sand here with the date. I applaud them for that. I want that line to work, and I will do what I can to make sure that it works for everyone. Making sure that it works will require getting down to the business of creating a plan right now. No time can be wasted. Plans need to be worked out, financing secured - there are lots of moving parts here. This is my constituency. I live in the area, and my friends live in the area. Many of my friends are either directly or indirectly employed by the mill, so I have a particular interest in seeing that this gets done right.

The history of Boat Harbour includes many broken promises. We can't have another broken promise. This has to be done right, and I hope the members opposite understand the weight of that, because I am saying that while being mindful of what we have already seen with some bills in this Legislature. I'm thinking of the health bill where an arbitrator ruled that the government couldn't do what it was trying to do. The arbitrator said no, you can't do that. I'm thinking of the tobacco bill, which had a false start and has now been brought back again for another try. I'm thinking of the Film Tax Credit. In November, the Liberals passed a bill saying that they wouldn't change the Film Tax Credit for six years. In April, they gutted it.

So why do people say they are cautiously optimistic? Why do people say they hope it works? We could go back through history and find many examples of politicians breaking promises. We could go back through history and find many examples of politicians changing laws. I raise these examples only to stress that I want this bill to work and that it will require a well-thought-out plan to make it work. We need to have a plan.

When I speak to the importance of this bill and I hear some of the chatter over there, it just makes me wonder if the government understands the importance of this bill. I know the Minister of Environment does. I hope it works.

I raise these examples only to stress that I want this bill to work and it will require a plan. It will require a well-thought-out plan, a well-executed plan to get a full and proper

solution that sees the effluent go to a new treatment facility. Without a plan, there's a risk of failure. Let's not risk failure on this bill. Let's make sure there's a plan that works.

Boat Harbour does need to be replaced. Finding the way to replace that facility without undermining the jobs - it's not the political thing to do; it's the responsible thing to do. This can't be about hollow words. It's too important.

We look forward to seeing the timeline. It's often said that nothing happens without a timeline, so we want to see the timeline. We have to see a timeline for how we get from here to there. We can't underestimate how much work is going to be required in that.

Let's involve the people of the community. Let's involve the people of the industry, the experts, because the idea for the most effective, efficient treatment facility might come from an unsuspecting place. I hope there's a plan to ask and to listen and to get this right, because we all want tomorrow to be better than today - on everything. Whether it's your sports team or your job or your kid's future, we all want tomorrow to be better than today on everything. Progress comes from working together; progress comes from collaborating.

In summary and in closing, I will say I support this bill and I hope it works. I will do whatever I can to make sure that it does work and that a new treatment facility is commissioned before 2020. With those few words, I'll take my seat.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate listening to the words from the previous speaker, especially since Boat Harbour is within his constituency. It's important to hear from those MLAs who are directly affected by some of the things that legislation is required to improve.

I don't know if I heard this right. When the minister first stood up to call second reading, I don't know if he implied that this legislation was perfect or if the government themselves were perfect for introducing it, but that's, I think, far from the truth. There are many Nova Scotians who might not agree with that comment.

I say that because I was at the launch of this legislation at the news conference, and one thing that stood out to me was the limited details that this piece of legislation had. The first question that was asked of the minister from one of the media, the minister didn't know the answer and couldn't answer it. The second question, which surprised me, was around when discussions with the mill took place; it was the day before the news conference happened. Similarly to my colleague who just spoke, that does concern me because this issue, as was stated, has been around for almost a generation and there have been commitments from previous governments to do exactly what this piece of legislation is indicating it will do. But there are limited details in here and it surprises me that the government did not start consultation with the mill earlier.

There was a commitment to Pictou Landing First Nation some time ago - it's within a year, I know that - but I would have thought, knowing that the government had made that solid commitment to bring this piece of legislation in before year-end, that those discussions with the mill would take place. I mean, it's my understanding that if the effluent treatment facility is to close, there needs to be another one in place. I would assume that the mill would be required to build that and would be required to ensure that the waste that they produce is treated in an appropriate facility. So that is concerning to me.

I listened and I spoke with Chief Paul and some of the other people who were in the audience that day who took the approach of being cautiously optimistic. I think that's really where we stand today. We are cautiously optimistic. As many have said in the past, this is something that needs to be dealt with. I hope that as we move forward and closer to the 2020 date, more details will be in place.

For those who don't know, the agreement currently with the mill is to have the current effluent treatment facility open to 2030. I applaud the fact that there will be 10 years taken off that. The minister indicated five years seems like a long time away, but I don't believe it's that far when you try to figure out how much work needs to be done between now and 2020, in five short years.

If that plant is closed, then a new plant needs to be up and running. It needs to have been tested and ensure that the safety and environmental rules are being followed. That won't happen overnight. I hope that there is time enough between now and then to make sure that that all happens.

We have a history here in our province around sites like Boat Harbour - and I'm of course talking about the Sydney tar ponds and the time that it had taken to clean that site up. It's amazing to go down there today and see what's there now, knowing what was there just a few short years ago, but that process took decades. Even in here, with this closure of the Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility - the current one - we won't see that remediation completed for approximately nine, maybe even 10 years down the road. The details still aren't known on exactly what approach or what type of remediation will take place there. I know that has been a challenge, and that was a challenge in Sydney with the tar ponds.

So we are cautiously optimistic that this is going in the right direction. I think it's much more difficult in the future for any government that comes after the current government to back away from this, because if it's in legislation, it will need another piece of legislation to come forward and wipe this out if a future government doesn't support this. It is a positive thing to have it enshrined in legislation, and I want to thank the government for doing that.

As my colleague said, there are a lot of people in that community who are on different sides of the argument around what should happen, how fast, what it looks like.

We don't want to kid anybody. The mill has been a strong economic driver for that region of the province for many, many years. I don't think anybody wants to see the economy of that area just go away. I would believe if the mill did close, that would happen. It would have a devastating effect on the area.

I know the member who just spoke indicated some comments from the mill manager and the owner, who I think are genuine and committed to ensuring that they follow any environmental rules or changes that the government comes forward with. I believe they want to do the right thing and hopefully move forward so that the cleanup of Boat Harbour can take place.

Again, limited on details. I understand that negotiations have to happen. I would have hoped over the last five or six months that would have started by now, but we'll be keeping track of the minister and the government and the progress as we move forward. I hope finally we do see that day in 2020 that that effluent treatment facility is closed and no longer doing the damage to the environment that we know is going on right now.

We do look forward to this going through the process, going over to Law Amendments. I'm not sure if people will come forward and speak at Law Amendments, but we'll have to see. We'll be here ensuring that the government lives up to the commitment and that they move forward in the appropriate way, and that's with consulting a broad number of organizations and the community itself, but most importantly, with the mill. They will be a key component in ensuring the 2020 date is achievable. Thank you.

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

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favour of the new proposed legislation, Bill No. 89, the Boat Harbour Act. This bill will enable the elimination of the Boat Harbour treatment facility by January 31, 2020.

Before I go on much further, I was not very happy with a lot of the comments made by our esteemed colleague for Pictou East. He seems to be very negative about anything that happens in the House. I think your glass should be half full rather than half empty. Also, the repetitiveness of his comments (Interruptions)

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

MR. HORNE: Thank you. I have many friends up in the Pictou area. I have visited (Interruptions)

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

MR. HORNE: I don't live there, but I do know the area very well, and I must admit that the last two summers, going up there, the air emissions were not good at all. As I drove by the mill I would hold my air in my lungs until I got by, as much as I could, at least. It was not a very nice aromatic smell coming from the mill's emissions.

I want to be clear, the government is the first to establish legal commitments to residents of Pictou Landing First Nation and all of Nova Scotia to establish a timeline to eliminate all effluent to Boat Harbour. I think that in itself tells you what we're here doing tonight that has not been done in the last 50 years by any other government.

Boat Harbour has been assaulted since the beginning of the Abercrombie Mill in 1967, initially by allowing waste, for a number of years, to go directly into Boat Harbour without any treatment. In the early 1970s - and I'm going to show a connection that I have with this mill also. As I said, I have friends up there and neighbours, the Williams, Glen and Jane, Jim and Allan Sinclair, the Dumonts, the Frasers, and one of the Fraser girls married a cousin of mine so I do have some good knowledge of the area. I'll go back now to - in the early 1970s, the outfall of the treatment plant was installed and went into Boat Harbour, after some treatment.

I do recognize the mill's importance in the economic driver for the jobs provided by the different mills that were in process of producing paper. Also it's important to remember that environment should never be compromised so we are going to set that straight. Boat Harbour is an inlet cove that was pristine, a tidal estuary that sits behind Pictou Landing First Nation and connects to the Northumberland Strait through a small channel next to the community. Pictou Landing First Nation welcomes this new legislation that has taken over 50 years to come to fruition. The bill will not be a broken promise.

Coincidentally, and this is my other connection, at a similar time in the 1970s I began my work career as a chemist in the federal Department of Fisheries, the pollution section, then soon to be officially a new department, Environment Canada in 1972. As an inorganic chemist at BIO, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, my staff analyzed many thousands of water samples and sediment samples from Boat Harbour, over my 25 years involved in the chemistry lab.

Samples were collected by Environment Canada field staff, engineers, and technical staff. Samples were collected and analyzed for parameters that fall within Environment Canada's pulp and paper regulations under the federal Fisheries Act. The Act says under section 5(1) that the deposit of a deleterious substance in water frequented by fish is a violation of the Fisheries Act. With that, charges can be laid and fines can be delivered.

Tests include a simple test like biological biochemical oxygen demand, that's a test to indicate an idea of the toxicity of the water and the sample. Suspended solids, ph, are fairly straight forward: dissolved oxygen readings are important to know what the inlet's

oxygen ability is to be sustained, and nitrates and phosphates. In addition I used atomic absorption spectrometry and later plasma emissions spectrometry to determine over 30 metals including mercury, cadmium, lead, copper, and zinc, which are some of the high levels of pollutants in that water.

Also the organic chemicals such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, (PAHs), furans and dioxins analysis under organic laboratory using ion chromatography.

At the same time, biologists were conducting fish toxicity tests using trout and/or salmon in 20-litre tanks of water from the mill. Samples of different percentages were tested to determine the concentration in which 50 per cent of the fish would live.

From memory, over 37 years, the company regularly failed to meet all of the required standards set in the regulations. In addition, air contaminants were also determined. Today, that will all change, and I'm pleased to strongly support Bill No. 89.

The planning of Boat Harbour remediation is well in progress. Over the years, over 30 reports have been produced that will provide information for the consulting engineers. Once we understand the best remedial technology option, we will then define the remediation plan that will be subjected to an environmental assessment. When we have the appropriate approvals in place and the effluent stops flowing into Boat Harbour, the remediation will be completed in three to four years.

This summer, there is a plan to collect samples and test the sediment samples from Boat Harbour. It will take place to help determine the remediation action and preparation plans. At this time, I am pleased that Boat Harbour will be remediated back to a pristine condition to be an important recreational fishing site for all the communities once again.

The Minister of Internal Services, Labi Kousoulis, stated recently . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I remind the honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank not to refer to other members of this Assembly by their proper names.

The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

MR. HORNE: As I said, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Internal Services stated recently, "This government is committed to removing this environmental scar and making Boat Harbour a place the community can enjoy once again."

I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I think it's very important. I've spent in my community - my colleagues at work when I worked with Environment Canada will be very pleased to see this issue solved and replaced by a proper treatment plant that will end the effluent going into the harbour. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely thrilled to be able to be in this Chamber and speak to this bill, because I'll be honest - I was hoping that I would, within my four years until the next election, have an opportunity to speak to such a piece of legislation.

I want to point out that it was almost a year ago, this past June, that probably ignited the reason for this piece of legislation. I do want to commend the Minister of Environment for following through on a promise that was made after many, many discussions. I will say that the other day, when the bill was introduced, I literally wanted to jump up, I was so excited with joy. I will say, then I read the bill, and once again it was a little bit bittersweet, because I was like, oh wow. I guess I was expecting pages and pages, so I'm still trying to wrap my head around why there are not more details.

Before I go on, I just want to say that everything that my colleague from Pictou East stated, I absolutely concur with. My words will not be as eloquent as his or as detailed, but I think we all know that we are absolutely in need of better environmental standards in Nova Scotia. Indeed, this is a move in the right direction. The people of Pictou Landing First Nation, the residents of Pictou East, Pictou Centre, and Pictou West have been waiting for a very, very long time for a commitment to clean up Boat Harbour.

All governments have played a role in this. We're all to blame, and hopefully we'll all be a part of seeing this piece of legislation move forward and be completed in 2020. The interest in what has been happening, in fact - the support and interest have expanded way beyond the borders of Pictou County, beyond Nova Scotia, really. I'm very, very pleased about this piece of legislation, but for me it has been an ongoing emotional roller coaster.

I grew up in Pictou County. I've always been hyperaware of the situation. I have been to the Boat Harbour treatment facility many, many times, long before - I mean, I think I remember being there as a teenager on a school trip, actually, and having the process explained to me. I can't help but feel every time I go in there that it truly is this awful invasion of Mother Nature.

My concern is, was there any time given to enlist, to look for support from all the stakeholders involved? We should always emphasize that joint effort will benefit everyone's goal in this situation, and I often look at what we accomplish when we are at odds and when the odds are against us, but just think what we could be doing and what we could accomplish if we were collectively working together, and so it goes with this piece of legislation.

We knew almost a year ago that we wanted to put something forward. What I don't understand is, within this year, why there aren't more details around this bill. Maybe there

are and we're just not being told, or there are files and files of information that are being prepared to see this piece of legislation come to fruition.

Something that my father always told me - he would remind me that the best teams are horizontal. I agree with that. So I ask, why weren't there more stakeholders involved in helping to plan this piece of legislation? There should have been discussions with Northern Pulp, absolutely. I feel that after discussions with them, they certainly were shocked that there wasn't some type of dialogue with them. There should have been more consultation with all stakeholders to gain their input.

This decision to put a piece of legislation, once again, was almost a year ago, so I would think that it would have more details and more meat to it. I thought maybe there would even be a team put in place of how you're going to move this forward. These are things that raise concerns, not just for us but for the whole community. I think they're feeling a little bit jaded with this situation, and there is still that uncertainty of trust.

We have to get this right. I know that the Minister of Environment, especially, knows my deep concern around this. Any time I had questions, he communicated with me. A lot of people - as a politician, you often get, well, what side are you on? Are you on this side or are you on this side? I always believe that we should be able to coexist, but the right environmental standards have to be put in place and they have to be followed.

I don't want to see the mill close. I have cousins and uncles who work there. In fact, my father is 71, and still works in affiliation with Canso Chemicals, which is part of Northern Pulp. My grandfather worked there. However, he died at 62, with lead and mercury poisoning - no doubt, as the doctor stated, from his work.

It's scary trying to find that balance of what's environmentally right and correct and effective, but still securing jobs, because hands down, we need the jobs. We need work. Pictou County doesn't just want to survive; Pictou County wants to thrive. We have so much potential there and I honestly believe if we can just work together and collectively get all the stakeholders involved, we can have a very positive outcome.

It has been a real emotional roller coaster, especially for the First Nations people, but for all citizens though. It has been most disheartening because time and time again, they've been told by all Parties in this Chamber, oh, we're going to do something; we're going to fix that. It just seems that years and years go by. When we look at 2020, some people on the weekend were saying oh, my gosh, that's too far; that's way down the road.

But ideally, I think in order to put a proper plan in place, it is going to take five years. I hope that we will be able to relay to the public, to our constituents, who's going to be involved in securing a detailed plan to ensure that in 2020 this is going to happen. We talk about people who are negative or jaded or skeptical. You know what, folks? We have a right to be. Hope springs eternal, and that's what has happened here, but people do get

down. When you're living right in that and you're steeped right in that environment, you can't help but feel that after 30, 40 years of nothing being done, what's changed? What has changed?

I'm always worried about something. My friends say, oh, you're always worrying about this, you're always worrying about that. Well, you know, this weekend, I worried the whole time about this piece of legislation and what it actually means. I stayed up late at night reading documents I probably didn't have to. I spoke to lawyer friends. I spoke to all people whom I felt were stakeholders in this piece of legislation. I was trying to collectively put their opinions and thoughts together. At the end of the day, they all had different thoughts, but they also had the same concern in that they wanted to know where the details were. At least we're on the same page, many of us. We want to know where the details are.

I was thinking how we don't need to go around creating false fears. We are surrounded day in, day out by genuine causes for concern, and my concern right now is this piece of legislation. I think the concept is good, I support it, but I think it lacks details. It is limited. I heard a member earlier saying that it's limited to details.

I want to mention that I keep thinking about - maybe I just don't get it, and that's why I spent all weekend showing people and asking them, what do you think it means? I felt that it caused some confusion about this piece of legislation, and that was verified. Even when the minister had introduced it, there were a lot of questions he was asked by media that he could not answer. Even some lawyers failed to understand some of the content of this piece of legislation - the last two paragraphs.

I think people fail to understand one another even when they share the same opinion. I guess this is the good part, that we all want Boat Harbour to be cleaned up. We have all been calling on this. Now we have something we can put into legislation and move forward, but let's think about how the bill can be strengthened. Let's think about what we can add to this bill to increase the confidence in our constituents and Nova Scotians who are concerned about this piece of legislation and the lack of details in it.

We all know that difficulties and issues are not solved without involving everyone, all those affected, and without understanding their perspectives - that is why I think we need to open more dialogue with more stakeholders.

At the end of the day people expected more with this piece of legislation and they deserve better, really. We've waited a long time in Pictou County for this and it is my hope that we can work collectively to ensure this bill comes to fruition, because it is the right thing to do. Thank you.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to my feet tonight to respond to this bill, Bill No. 89, the Boat Harbour Act. I, too, am cautiously optimistic about the bill. I think it's about time this issue was addressed and I, too, am a little concerned that there's not more detail at this point in time. However, I think that knowing the area as I do, not as well, of course, as my colleagues to my right who live there and who have lived with this issue their entire lives, but I have many friends in the First Nation community and, as the new Critic for Aboriginal Affairs, this issue is near and dear to my heart.

I went down to Boat Harbour last summer when the broken pipe incident happened. I have a friend who works for Natural Resources and he took me through the whole area and showed me where the different problems have been. He showed me the effluent holding ponds and he took me all along where the spill was coming out of the broken pipe and down to the beach, and the dead birds and dead flora and trees that were in the area and, in fact, the toxic water leaching out into the ocean.

I have also been paying attention to the various people who are concerned in that community about what has been going on and pushing government to do something about the issue. I know that they are also cautiously optimistic, but they are concerned, they have various concerns.

The other night we were in Budget Estimates and I was able to ask the Minister of Environment what the plans are with the Department of Environment about the toxins in the effluent and what they are going to be doing with it. He did say several times that it was too early to tell and that the Department of Internal Services would actually be in charge and taking the lead now on this file.

I wish that the Department of Environment was a little bit more involved, I think this should fall under their auspices because as my colleague from Pictou mentioned, the environment we live in and its effect on the health and well-being of our people should be really one of the number-one concerns of our province. The old, tired tune of jobs versus the economy - I'm sorry, I don't buy that argument. I think we can have both. We just have to have strong rules and regulations in place to keep these businesses on the straight and narrow so that they are following the proper rules that will ensure that our population, our environment and natural wildlife are protected.

I'm pleased that the timing has been moved up and that a new system will be in place sooner. I hope that the government does stick to that. The other thing that I just want to talk about is that when I was in the area last summer and actually manned the barricade for some time, for a day, talking with the elders of the Pictou First Nation and hearing the stories of their memories of what it was like when they were children, when they could go to the beach and have picnics, when they could swim in the ocean, when they could go clamming, where they could eat of the beautiful bounty of Mother Earth and enjoy the gorgeous scenery. It was a very popular spot where many different people came to visit

and to stay and to swim and enjoy their family life. That has all been taken away from them.

I did tour the beach where all this used to take place and the signs are there saying don't swim, don't dig clams, don't eat any of the seafood in the area. I just have to say that life is an ecosystem and Pictou isn't very far away either so if it's dangerous in that area to clam and eat the seafood, Pictou is not very far away and so we need to keep in mind that everything is connected and this is a tiny little province so what affects one little area does affect other areas.

Nova Scotia is known for having more cancer, for instance, than many other jurisdictions and you don't have to look far beyond the tar ponds in Sydney and Boat Harbour, I think, to understand why. Why, for so many years, was the smell of money more important than people's health, because in my books health is your greatest wealth? Without your health, you have nothing. I would say that you ask any of the people in any of communities where their health and well-being has been compromised and the health and well-being of their children is compromised, and I bet you anything that they'll say that that is worth more than gold.

With those few words I will take my seat for tonight and I commend the government for passing, or introducing this bill and we here on our side are cautiously optimistic and with that I'll take my seat. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I'm grateful to have the opportunity to say a few words about this particular legislation and I'll try to be brief and to the point. I think we all agree on one thing: the status quo doesn't cut it. The status quo is not acceptable and change is required. I must say, I must thank the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Internal Services for bringing this legislation forth on the floor.

Experience is a wonderful thing. When we are talking about issues in the House, if you're connected to the issue then it certainly means much more to you. For example, it could be a bridge somewhere that is in need of repair, it could be a health drug that some constituent needs, it could be a Workers' Compensation issue. My colleague, the member for Pictou East who talked earlier, well he lives in the community, he's very familiar with the area, with the community, with the people outside the community and with Boat Harbour. I will make a few comments a little later with regard to my experience living in Pictou County and living not too far from Boat Harbour myself.

We need a new state-of-the-art treatment facility. It's critical that this process is correct. Where does that leave us? Once again there is very little information on this bill and perhaps that doesn't matter because the details and information will start to unfold as

time goes on. Do we really have a plan that will work? It appears at the moment there are more questions than answers. We certainly cannot afford to mess this up. I'm worried for the fact that just five years seems like such a short span of time. Five years will come and go very, very quickly and this is, I believe, a very massive undertaking.

I would like to say, let's walk slowly and do it right but I'm not sure if the timeline is there to do that. Back in late 2008 I was a member of a group that met with the First Nations community in Pictou Landing. At that particular time I believe my colleague was here with me, from Argyle-Barrington, and the former Cabinet Minister from Cumberland South at the time.

Mr. Speaker, a commitment was made to this community to begin a process to close Boat Harbour and find another alternative for the effluent. These plans sort of went south in the early Spring of 2009. However, the discussion hovered around what had to happen to close the treatment plant, create a new facility, and protect jobs at the pulp and paper plant.

Mr. Speaker, again when I look at what's ahead of us I do have concerns and questions, and I just hope the government did the proper consulting and planning required to do this job properly. This is a very emotional time for the First Nation community and, of course, the surrounding community in the area.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, I'm very familiar with the Boat Harbour area and the community. Although it's not in my constituency, I have a cottage not too far away and, throughout my career, I taught a lot of students from the First Nation community and the community surrounding the First Nation community. In fact, the present chief, Chief Andrea Paul, worked with me at the Trenton Junior-Senior High School for a period of time.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this will be one of the most important and serious files this government will deal with during their mandate. I believe the government must do a better job opening up the communication lines, especially with anyone whom this affects, creating a dialogue with all the stakeholders, where questions can be answered or issues and concerns are debated.

Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned before by several speakers, we certainly need more details, more information. I believe the government can do a much better job with communicating with the stakeholders in this process and creating a positive relationship and one of co-operation and trust.

It is critical that this legislation is handled very carefully, that all the questions are answered. The government's plan is to improve the area near the First Nation community, Mr. Speaker - they should already be involved in a plan to make sure this can, and will, happen. Again, five years is a short time to accomplish this job, closing the facility and

opening a new one. I trust that immediately there will be talks with outside experts, engage all stakeholders, create a timeline that is achievable, inform the public on a regular basis as this process moves on.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important and critical that we create an environmentally safe process and this would also protect vital jobs that are so important in this industry in our province. This project has to work, and the work has just begun. This project has to be manageable and achievable. Once again I'm looking forward to seeing the process as it unfolds and I'm hoping, like all other members in the House and especially in the community, that we can meet this timeline of five years, and it will be a successful one and the community will be safer as far as the environment is concerned, and the jobs will be protected. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be able to say a few words on this bill tonight and to follow the speakers, from the minister on to all the members who have spoken to this point. I hope you don't mind but I am particularly proud of the remarks of the three Pictou County members of the Legislature - Pictou East, Pictou Centre, and Pictou West. They live with this more than anyone; they are strong voices for their constituents. As much as anyone in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, I believe they are determined to see that the time has come, that Boat Harbour is cleaned up, that the economy and the environment of Pictou County are protected, and that a real plan is in place.

I do want to say that I know that it was the member for Pictou East who led off the Opposition response tonight. I thought he did a great job. If I could summarize what he said, it seemed to me he was saying that the time has come to address Boat Harbour, to clean it up, to protect the environment, to protect the economy, but he wants to see a real plan. I was so disappointed to hear the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank then say it sounded negative to him. Only to a Liberal would asking for a plan sound negative. (Applause) We've seen that in this House time after time - on the health administration, where is the plan? Never mind, we have a bill; it may or may not be constitutional, but we have a bill. Don't ask questions about the plan. On flavoured tobacco, never mind (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: My point is that here we have a member on the Opposition side saying yes, let's get going on this goal, and that's what he gets. So much for the quality of debate in this House. That is my point.

I can tell you that many people in this Chamber - including the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank apparently - have some connection to Pictou County,

have some connection to the economy and the environment there. I can tell you, as I point out on occasion when I'm travelling through Pictou County, my dad's from the Town of Pictou. I grew up in the summers in Pictou County. From my grandmother's house on Denoon Street, you could see the mill. You could smell the mill when the wind was blowing in the right direction. In fact, I heard the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River speak a few minutes ago - well, as far away as Truro, the presence of that mill was often in the evening air.

That was, of course, many years ago now, but you know what? It's now 2015 and Nova Scotians have correctly come to a point where the status quo is not an option. The people of Pictou County have been particularly clear that when it comes to Boat Harbour and the effluent and the emissions into the air - and this summer certainly made the point - the status quo is not an option. The mill must do better. The government must do better at regulating the mill and other large emitters.

But most importantly, when we look at this bill and we see hope to break the status quo - and hope is important - we also have to avoid putting Nova Scotians in the position of feeling that they have to choose between their job and the environment, because that is a false choice. That is not right. There is no need in AD 2015 to tell Nova Scotians, you can have one or you can have the other. There are many other parts of this country, many other advanced countries in this world, that are finding ways to have both decent jobs that pay a living wage, that allow families to grow and prosper at home, and to have a clean environment at the same time. That is the challenge of Pictou County. It is the challenge for the Government of Nova Scotia.

We join in on that challenge as long as the government avoids the rhetoric around creating this false choice that you have to have one or the other when, clearly, the residents of Pictou County have every right to decent employment and a clean environment. I haven't heard a single person rise in this Chamber yet, on the government side or on the Opposition side, and say, let's keep things the way they are, particularly when it comes to Boat Harbour. Nobody wants to do that. The time has come to put in place a real solid plan and clean it up.

I know there are some government members who are frustrated that in Opposition we want to see the plan, but do you know what? It's not just the members on this side of the House. Behind us are thousands of residents of Pictou County, the Pictou Landing First Nation, the people who work at the mill, the people who work in our forest industry beyond the mill, the people who own restaurants in the downtown of the Town of Pictou - they also want to see the plan. Do you know why? Because they have heard all of this before - not even once or twice or three times, but they have heard these things before. Sometimes it's in a platform, and sometimes it's a promise, and sometimes it's a letter, and sometimes it's in an election campaign.

The fact that it has been put into a bill is positive, but it's still a bill, and a bill that has a lot of unanswered questions. That's why it is important that people know what the plan is, this time above all. It's not too much to ask, and that's what the Pictou County members are saying here tonight, among others.

I know that the Boat Harbour cleanup has been an outstanding issue for the province for many years. I can tell you from experience that in the early 2000s - beyond Boat Harbour, even - were the Sydney tar ponds, an environmental mess that at that time was rated as the number one environmental mess in all of North America, ahead of Boat Harbour. The government of that day spent several years and \$400 million cleaning up the Sydney tar ponds. That was a great experience, and the experience still exists in the Government of Nova Scotia and the contractors and the regulators and the environmental engineers who worked on that project to get us through that environmental disaster.

All along, the thought was, once that is done, we can move on to Boat Harbour. That has been the policy of the Progressive Conservative Party from that time in the cleanup of the Sydney tar ponds to this day.

I know that all Parties - Liberal, NDP, and even the PCs - can talk about what they've done or not done in the past to get to this point. I'll put my two cents in. The PCs under the Premier Hamm Government worked very hard to clean up the Sydney tar ponds, all along building that experience to then move on to Boat Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect this will come up, but my predecessor in my seat, the Honourable Murray Scott, was a minister at the end of the MacDonald Government that put that in writing, that it was time to move on to Boat Harbour, and I'm awfully glad that he did. I have been asked about his commitments since I was elected, and I've said, absolutely, that remains a commitment of the Progressive Conservative Party - and it does to this day.

That is why it's relatively easy to get up and speak to this bill, following from the years of work cleaning up the tar ponds, on to the plan to clean up Boat Harbour. That government ended its term in office before it had a chance to act on that 2008 letter. The NDP were then in for almost five years, and now here we are today, able to turn to the government which has a bill about Boat Harbour, and say that we agree, and we like the idea of cleaning up Boat Harbour, and completely agree that it's time to get on with the job.

In fact, we know that the status quo is not an option. Whether you're part of the Pictou Landing First Nation or a resident that lives in the area or someone who cares about the environment or someone that works at the mill, you want to know that this time a real plan will be put in place to really get the job done. We are here to work to strengthen that plan to make sure that people can see hope that this time this will lead to something very positive for Pictou County.

I mentioned the member for Pictou East a minute ago, but I don't want to let this moment go by without also talking about the commitment that the member for Pictou West has in this area, representing the other side of the harbour. I hope she doesn't mind my sharing this, but I was with her in the Town of Pictou on her first day as a politician - her first day as a nominated candidate for an upcoming election. I remember going to the radio station and she was going to be interviewed. What we assumed would be a relatively friendly interview - so you are a new politician, why did you run, what do you want to do, and it's great to see people stepping up - the very first question that the member for Pictou West was asked in her entire political career was, what are you going to do about Boat Harbour?

I was so proud to watch her say, you know, the status quo is not an option. We need to clean up Boat Harbour. We have to find a way to make sure we preserve jobs and opportunity in the area while also having a clean environment. That's what we need a plan to see and I'll work towards that. Having been in the downtown of the Town of Pictou with that member, talking to the shop owners, talking to the restaurant owners, talking to the people along the beautiful waterfront of the Town of Pictou who have been on the receiving end of those emissions last summer and for a lot longer than that, who worry about their businesses and their jobs and wonder if they count, too - a plan that gets this job done is also for them. That has been the voice of the member for Pictou West.

Of course, I can't leave out my colleague from Pictou Centre, who just spoke a moment ago on this same theme - that Pictou County, a proud industrial part of our province which has been built on natural resources, on manufacturing, on industrial activity, also has a chance now to take the lead on environmental cleanups. Now how great an opportunity is that to match those two together? That is what our Pictou MLAs have been saying since they came to this House, and that's what they're really saying to the minister and the government in response to this bill - this is something that I know we all have in common, that I know we all want to see done, that no one is going to stand in this House and say, let's leave things the way they are, but it's a delicate thing, it has been promised a lot in the past, it involves real people's jobs which we want to protect, and it involves the cleanup of the environment, in particular the situation at Boat Harbour.

There's nothing wrong, when you are faced with a bill of the magnitude of this one that is really so thin on detail, with calling on the government to actually produce a plan of action that people can see for themselves so they can decide for themselves whether this time, something is really going to change or not.

That plan has to include timelines. We see the bill foresee the end of the treatment plant at Boat Harbour in five years' time. I hope that experts will be brought in, whether they are experts on the environmental approval process federally and provincially, on the options for treatments, or on the time it takes to truly divert the effluent to some other place - which is also, by the way, not defined - so that we can judge for ourselves whether that timeline is realistic or not.

I'd like to think that when 2020 comes, all of those things will be figured out and the mill will see a future for itself in a clean Boat Harbour, in a cleaned-up Boat Harbour in an environmentally-friendly Pictou County with modern, clean treatment options, so that the people who work at the mill, who rely on those jobs and the forest jobs behind them, they'll also know where they sit into the equation. Because when you bring a bill of one page in like this without any thought to what the answers to those questions are that does leave people wondering, will my job still be there in five years? That's a valid question for the people who work in the mill or the surrounding forest industry.

For a shop owner, restaurant owner in the downtown Town of Pictou, will I really have an opportunity to expand out into the open air in my restaurant with clean air and happy customers after 2020? They have every right to know the answers to those questions, Mr. Speaker. If you own a campground or a bed and breakfast you have every right to know the answers to those questions before you are told to get too excited about this most recent promise, as the people are being told by the government. They are very reasonable things that people are wondering.

There are stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, with a very direct interest in seeing what the plan is beyond the skeleton of the bill. The Pictou Landing First Nation were here the other day; they are cautiously optimistic. I understand completely what they're saying. It was a great privilege to be able to talk to them here at the Legislature, and you know they have such dignity to come here and say we're cautiously optimistic, but you know we've been down this road before. We all understand that and the best way to show Chief Paul and the Pictou Landing First Nation that this is going happen on the timeline indicated is to give them a chance to have a say in the planning, and also a real plan - that's only reasonable.

The Forest Products Association that represents literally the thousands of Nova Scotians who work in our forest, who harvest our forest stands, who work in sawmills that surround the pulp mill, whether they're in silviculture or in harvesting itself or in trucking, whether they produce chips or cut lumber, Mr. Speaker, whether they buy or sell from the pulp mill itself, they deserve to know what the plan is and where they fit into it both now and, even more importantly, beyond 2020.

So I think, I hope, the minister and the government, they are listening not just to us but to all of these people who are affected by these actions, Mr. Speaker - and I will include Northern Pulp itself who, I believe, was not consulted on the bill at all until the afternoon before. You know they employ several hundred of our fellow Nova Scotians and yes they certainly have to change their practices around emissions, around effluent into Boat Harbour, but we can't leave them out of the process - that's not right either, they have to make decisions.

I hope that we have a plan and a framework that allows the owners of Northern Pulp to decide that they want to work, invest, and employ people in our province consistent with strong environmental regulations, with a cleaned-up Boat Harbour, and with tight

controls over emissions. A lot of that is being debated right now in their appeal of the industrial approval, but surely if we want employers like Northern Pulp to change and get with the program around jobs and a clean environment, they have got to know what the world is going to look like in Nova Scotia beyond the next five years. After all, the investments that we would be asking them to make are in the tens of millions of dollars and are for the long run, Mr. Speaker.

That actually brings me to a point, Mr. Speaker, that I do want to make about the right way to go about this, and that is to make sure that we have a thorough understanding of both the environmental impact of this bill and the economic impact of the bill, that as the government moves forward that it be ever mindful of the fact that the decisions that get made around Boat Harbour, around the appeal of the industrial approval, around our great environmental goals about emissions and other things, they always have to take into account the ongoing need to responsibly develop our natural resources and create jobs and opportunities for Nova Scotian families, particularly in rural areas.

This is a great balancing act and the great opportunity for rural Nova Scotia, including Pictou County is to be able to responsibly harvest our forests, responsibly mine our underground resources, responsibly develop our offshore resources in a sustainable way, using modern techniques, using best-in-world practices to protect the environment and to capture the economic value of those jobs. That is really the challenge before us all.

This bill doesn't really talk about the economic impact of what is about to happen, but it is important that that also be done properly. Yes, we are standing here saying this is a bill we can get behind, but it leaves a lot of unanswered questions. There are many unanswered questions about the environmental impacts of the bill and the feasibility of getting this done in the timeline that the bill foresees. We hope that it can be done and it is with hope that we ask to see the plan, but everything I just said about the environment is also true about the economic impact, that there are a lot of unanswered questions about what this means for the future of employment in our resource industries, in harvesting and in pulping in Pictou County.

We need to see what the plan is there as well, just as much as the workers do, both in the mill and in the forests themselves. The bill leaves a lot of unanswered questions for them and I think it's important that those questions be answered in a very timely way including, by the way, involving all of the stakeholders that I just mentioned and the expertise that can be brought to bear.

This is not unlike what happened with the Sydney tar ponds a little more than a decade ago. There were great environmental concerns about the cleanup and they were brought to the table. There were great concerns about the impact on Cape Breton Island, they were brought to the table. There were even concerns about what this would mean for the ability to attract and retain jobs in the Sydney area and that was brought to the table. I wish all of that could be done overnight, but we know from experience from the Sydney

tar ponds, it can't. I am hopeful that it can be done in the five years that the bill mandates, but we need to see a plan to make sure that that is true.

I think it was a government member who mentioned the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act of 2007. That important landmark piece of environmental legislation was passed with all-Party agreement in this House. The great goals that it set on renewable energy targets, on emissions targets, made Nova Scotia among the forefront of provinces and states in North America for actually enshrining in law important environmental goals. As far as I know, having had two other Parties form government since it was passed, it continues to have all-Party support.

I want to remind the government that it is the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act because it also included important economic goals, the biggest one being that we would strive to grow the economy of Nova Scotia at the national average or better each year. Let's not lose sight of that in our rush on these things. That bill was set to balance the need for both. In fact, the numbers in that bill weren't picked up out of the air. The environmental goals and the economy goals were actually set to complement each other. That's why you don't need to choose one or the other.

We have this great Act - it's the law of the province that says we want to meet these environmental goals and we want to grow the economy at the national rate or better each year, and they fit together. They complement each other. Why not do the same thing here with Boat Harbour? Why not generate the detailed plan that shows people that they can have meaningful employment and that we can have a cleaned-up Boat Harbour and a modern and much cleaner effluent treatment option at the same time, Mr. Speaker? That's really where we are.

I'm glad there's a bill we can get behind, and I am suspecting with all-Party support. That's a good thing, but we can't be a party to another attempt to clean up Boat Harbour that falls apart in the details.

Mr. Speaker, through you to all members of the House, I don't doubt that we all share the same desire to protect the pristine nature of our beautiful province, to clean up legacy environmental messes where we see them. We have had some success in that area over the past decade and a half. I don't even disagree that Boat Harbour is the next one that we should focus on. That's absolutely where we should put our resources now, but to make it true, to make it real, takes more than a vote of the Legislature. It takes a real plan.

The bill is short on those details, but we're quite prepared to work together to get to that point where the details are there and the people of Pictou County, the people who rely on the resource for jobs, the people who want to see a cleaned-up Boat Harbour, they can all know that together something real is going to happen by 2020, and what the work environment and the living environment will look like at that time.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the all-Party Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, we look forward to the continued debate on this bill here and in the Law Amendments Committee and then throughout the rest of the process. Thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, just for some clarification on the House - but before I get there, I would like to thank the members for Pictou East and West. They have been strong advocates for Boat Harbour and for their community.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of rhetoric that happens in here, I think it's safe to assume that every member in this House wants to see the cleanup of Boat Harbour. It's not only a black eye for the community of Pictou. It's a black eye for all of Nova Scotia.

A couple of things that were said, I'd like to add clarification for the House. The member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River was alluding to how it would be great for the Department of Environment to oversee the cleanup of Boat Harbour. What I'd like to add for clarification is that the Department of Internal Services will perform the cleanup of Boat Harbour but the Department of Environment is a regulatory body. They will oversee our department to make sure it gets done in the proper manner.

The other parts I would like to add are just for a little bit of clarification as to what is happening over the next five years. We have been testing in Boat Harbour. This province has been testing for quite a while. There have been over 30 Phase 2 environmentals done. There's been a lot of work done on Boat Harbour over many years, and we have still been testing recently, and we are looking at the particulate matter to know how to deal with it.

Over the next five years what we will be doing is pinching off an inlet. By pinching off an inlet, we know that on the coast, on the outside parts of Boat Harbour Lake is where the strongest concentration of the matter is that we need to remediate and clean up. When we pinch off an inlet, we'll be able to do a cleanup, and from what we learn in knowledge as to what is there and how we're going to clean it up, we will apply that knowledge to the remediation of all of Boat Harbour.

There has been a lot of talk saying that there were no negotiations done. There were lots of negotiations done and they were with the members of the Pictou Landing First Nation, whom we made a commitment to. With regard to this legislation, we could talk about adding more to the bill and making the bill longer and putting in a time frame and deliverables. My fear if we do that is that if we start putting goals (a), (b) and (c), if any of those are not met, then we don't get to the ultimate goal which we all want, which is to stop the flow of effluent into Boat Harbour.

I am not sure how a bill could be more precise than to say by January 2020, we will stop the effluent flowing into Boat Harbour. That is the commitment we've made. We have five years to plan, to do a full remediation, and in that period we will do a partial remediation of Boat Harbour. We will know what we're dealing with. In January 2020, we will stop the flow of effluent into Boat Harbour.

It was mentioned that this is nothing more than a piece of paper. I find that very disturbing because it's not a piece of paper; this is legislation. We're in here debating about legislation. Once this legislation passes, it's not a piece of paper; it is passed as an Act. If we want to ever change having the flow of effluent going to Boat Harbour, we're going to have to all come back in here, whoever is here in the day, and actually pass new legislation to have that happen. That is more powerful than any discussions or any words or anything written in the past has ever been done on Boat Harbour.

I had a chance to live in the Pictou area. I had the opportunity to live there back in 2005. I was the controller of TrentonWorks; I was there on a contract. It's a wonderful area - a beautiful area, a beautiful part of Nova Scotia. I very much enjoyed my time there. I got to meet many people in the community there, and even then, people would talk about not only Boat Harbour, not only the mill, but even the Nova Scotia Power plant, which every day covered my car in soot. That's a whole other issue, but I have an understanding of what the community goes through. The community is not alone - all Nova Scotians, just like Sydney tar ponds, want to see the cleanup of Boat Harbour.

I will close on this aspect. In order to gauge the seriousness of how we look at Boat Harbour, I ask people to go and look at our estimates this year, which is where we allocated money. There was \$20 million allocated to the cleanup of Boat Harbour. All of our testing we've been doing over the last year in consultation with the Pictou Landing First Nation has shown that \$20 million is not going to be enough to remediate this site. We actually booked the liability of a further \$30 million, and we have \$50 million set aside for the cleanup of Boat Harbour.

I'm confident that all of the actions our government is taking will give Nova Scotians ease that there will be a remediation done and the effluent will stop flowing into Boat Harbour. If I'm not in my seat in 2020, I can tell you one thing: if the effluent is still flowing into Boat Harbour, I'll go and be part of that blockade down there myself.

With those few words, I would like to close debate on Bill No. 89. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 89. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that the 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. We shall meet again tomorrow on Wednesday, April 22nd from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. During the day from 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. will be Opposition Day, for which I will ask the House Leader for the Official Opposition to give us business. Following Opposition Day tomorrow, we will resume government business, where the House will resolve into Committee of the Whole on Supply to continue the debate for four hours. At the termination of that, that will terminate the government's business for the day.

With that, I will now ask the House Leader for the Official Opposition to give us business during Opposition Business tomorrow.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, after the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Bill No. 93, the Executive Council Act, and Bill No. 96, the Revenue Act. After that debate we will, of course, be having a late debate as well.

I move that we now rise, to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 1 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn until tomorrow, April 22nd, between the hours of 1 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We now stand adjourned until 1 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 9:30 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1506**

By: Hon. Labi Kousoulis (Public Service Commission)

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians, encouraging personal growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility, and service to the community; and

Whereas more than eight million young people from 143 countries have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, including 44,000 Canadian youth since 1963; and

Whereas Victoria Sullivan, through her exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project, has been awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General, and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Sullivan on her exceptional achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 1507

By: Hon. Labi Kousoulis (Public Service Commission)

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians, encouraging personal growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility, and service to the community; and

Whereas more than eight million young people from 143 countries have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, including 44,000 Canadian youth since 1963; and

Whereas Grant Phillips of the 1st Port Willis Venturers, through his exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project, has been awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award by His

Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General, and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Phillips on his exceptional achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 1508

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services; and

Whereas Arnold Gallagher has been nominated by the Hants Shore Health Association, where he has been a dedicated volunteer for the past 20 years, and where he has served as board chair; and

Whereas Arnold has been a volunteer with the credit union and local 4-H group, and besides his career teaching in local schools he has been an active advocate for continued education, which is why the Hants Shore Health Association is dedicating a bursary in his honour;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Arnold Gallagher on receiving the 2015 Community Volunteer Award and thank him for his ongoing dedication and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1509

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others for a particular cause without payment for their time and services; and

Whereas Brooke McNeil has been nominated by the Mt. Denson Community Hall and Borders Rides 4-H Club where she is an active volunteer with the SPCA, 4-H, Hants Leaders Council secretary, Pro Show secretary and helped run the county judging clinic; and

Whereas Brooke has volunteered with the Relay for Life event with the Horton High School where she is also a member of the Me to We program, is leader of the Horton photography club and was on the Grade 12 prom committee, volunteered at events like the Future Farmers and Agriculture Ambassadors events, was recently awarded the Hants County most outstanding member of the year award, was awarded a trip to the National 4-H members forum in Ontario, and has won the most improved Hants County Dairy member award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brooke McNeil on receiving the 2015 Community Volunteer Award and thank her for her ongoing dedication and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1510

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others for a particular cause without payment for their time and services; and

Whereas Colton Lyon has been nominated by the St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in Poplar Grove where he has been an active member of this organization for the past five years; and

Whereas Colton has also volunteered with the Glooscap Heritage Archers Association with fundraising shoots for the past three years, participated in the Walk to Cure Diabetes for two years and is also an honorary Junior Firefighter for the Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department for bravery shown on February 25, 2006;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Colton Lyon on receiving the 2015 Community Volunteer Award and thank him for his ongoing dedication and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1511

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others for a particular cause without payment for their time and services; and

Whereas Amy McDade has been nominated by the Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department where she has been an active member with the junior program; and

Whereas Amy has had the highest training attendance of the juniors this year and has also participated in the most catering functions put on by the Brooklyn Fire Department Auxiliary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Amy McDade on receiving the 2015 Community Volunteer Award and thank her for her ongoing dedication and commitment.