



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 101 - Private Career Colleges Regulation Act.

Bill No. 102 - University Pension Plan Transfer Act.

Bill No. 103 - Municipal Government Act.

Bill No. 105 - Education Act.**Bill No. 109 - Tourism Nova Scotia Act.**

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the Minister of Energy, it is my pleasure to table the department's final Electricity System Review, which includes feedback from more than 1,300 Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of documents here following up on a question from Question Period earlier in the week pertaining to the direction of emissions in the Province of Nova Scotia. These documents clearly show emissions in line with both our regulations, below our regulatory caps and in a downward trend.

MR. SPEAKER: The papers are tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, moments ago, I tabled the department's final Electricity System Review report. This review is the result of an extensive, year-long consultation process. The final document includes feedback from more than 1,300 Nova Scotians, including members of this Legislature. We consulted with individuals, stakeholder groups, companies, and communities as part of this review, the first of its kind in more than a decade.

Ce rapport est le résultat d'un processus de consultations qui a duré un an. C'est le premier examen de la sorte en 10 ans et comprend les commentaires de plus de 1 300 Néo-Écossais de partout dans la province.

First, we worked with experts to gather and share information on our electricity system. In the second phase of the review, we reached out directly to Nova Scotians. We

conducted telephone surveys, face-to-face meetings, and webcasts, and received written submissions from stakeholders. We learned a lot from this process.

The experts reached some important conclusions. They found that we should be able to produce enough energy from current and committed projects to meet our needs and our environmental targets for the next 10 to 15 years. Experts also recommend that we focus our planning towards 2030, when a number of factors will combine to open up opportunities for new energy projects. Expert studies also confirmed what this government has known all along: there are opportunities - even in our relatively small energy market - for more competition, more consumer control, and more transparency.

Nous avons appris que les Néo-Écossais se préoccupent de l'avenir de la province en ce qui concerne l'énergie. Ils veulent des tarifs qui sont stables et prévisibles. Ils veulent plus de transparence et une plus grande obligation de rendre des comptes. Ils veulent être certains que nous mettrons l'accent sur l'environnement et sur les débouchés en matière de ressources énergétiques renouvelables. En fin de compte, les Néo-Écossais veulent faire partie d'une vision à long terme durable et rentable, une vision qui est avantageuse pour les contribuables d'aujourd'hui et qui protège notre environnement pour les générations à venir.

We learned that ultimately, Nova Scotians care about this province's energy future. Nova Scotians want to be part of a long-term, sustainable, and cost-effective path forward, one that benefits ratepayers today while protecting our environment for future generations. That is exactly what this government will deliver this Fall in our electricity plan. The plan will bring more stability and predictability to rates, and for the first time in Nova Scotia, we will perform performance standards for Nova Scotia Power.

Nova Scotians told us that Nova Scotia Power's performance should count for more when determining their profits, and we agree. Our electricity plan this Fall will address this concern. The plan will explore ways to increase connections with our neighbours, including looking at regional co-operation. Nova Scotia Power is already exploring opportunities with our neighbours in New Brunswick for co-operative dispatch. We are pleased to see this initiative move forward. This approach could save \$20 million a year, to be shared equally between ratepayers in both of our provinces.

In addition to exploring new options for co-operation, the plan will also outline how they will give consumers more control over how and when they use electricity. It will also explore ways to innovate, with a focus on managing our energy resources and getting more out of our current system.

The plan will also go into more detail about how government will support strategic economic development and opportunities for innovation in the energy sector. Tidal is a great example. We made great strides yesterday when we introduced an Act Respecting the Generation of Electricity from Marine Renewable-energy Resources. This piece of

legislation gives us a clear and responsible path forward for developing Nova Scotia's marine renewable-energy sector. We have an opportunity to become a centre of excellence in the tidal industry and this legislation is a key step in that process.

When we formed government in 2013, one of the promises we made to Nova Scotians was to break Nova Scotia Power's monopoly and to put the people of this province first. I am proud to say that we have kept that promise. In 2013, we introduced the Electricity Reform (2013) Act, which in addition to setting the stage for electricity review consultation, also paved the way to allow renewable energy producers to sell directly to consumers in this province, increasing competition and, for the first time, giving Nova Scotians a choice in where they buy their power. Of course, this process takes time and is market-driven, but by next Spring, we expect that consumers will start seeing some options in the marketplace.

Lorsque nous avons formé le gouvernement en 2013, nous avons promis aux Néo-Écossais que nous allions mettre fin au monopole de Nova Scotia Power et donner la priorité aux gens de la province. Je suis fier de dire que nous avons tenu notre promesse. Nous avons adopté en 2013 la Loi sur la réforme de l'électricité, une Loi qui permettra aux producteurs d'énergie renouvelable de vendre directement aux consommateurs de la province. D'ici le printemps prochain, les Néo-Écossais auront pour la première fois le choix d'acheter leur électricité là où ils veulent.

We know that Nova Scotians care about the future of this province, where we get our energy, how we use it, and the impact it has on future generations. This government is taking action to address these concerns in the best interests of all Nova Scotians.

I want to thank everyone who participated in the electricity review, including my colleagues across the floor, and as well as our dedicated staff at Energy for all their hard work. Your comments will help inform the plan we will release this Fall. In the meantime, I hope all my colleagues in the House will take the time to read the Electricity System Review and will see their comments reflected in the final document.

I have tabled a copy, Mr. Speaker, and have also made it available on our website at www.novascotia.ca/electricityfuture. Prior to wrapping up my comments, let me take this opportunity to personally thank, on behalf of all my colleagues, my colleague, the member for Dartmouth East, for the leadership that he has shown in making this a reality and the leadership that he showed during his time as Minister of Energy. Merci.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Minister of Energy for providing a copy of his speaking notes in advance.

Nova Scotians are tired of paying amongst the highest electricity rates in the country - oh, for a second I thought I was reading from his notes there, actually. The feedback for the government's Electricity System Review is clear on that. Nova Scotians are tired of paying the highest rates in the country. What is also clear is that Nova Scotians expect immediate action to reduce rates and stabilize them over the long term. Nova Scotians are tired of seeing their bills continue to rise year after year and in ways that make no sense to them.

I brought before this House an example of a woman whose electricity bill went from \$275 to \$962 from one bill to the next over the winter. It is situations like these where people begin to question the system we have in place and the checks and balances of that system. There are even groups of people who are beginning to congregate to discuss ways they can help each other contest power bills and discuss ways they can help each other express their frustrations with Nova Scotia Power. It's clear that we need to change the electricity system, and we need that change to come soon.

The government's election campaign focused a lot on energy rates, and so far we have seen little action. The government has said that legislation to change the province's electricity system will be introduced this Fall. Meanwhile, Nova Scotians wonder why it has taken two years since the government was elected to act. In fact, when the legislative changes are introduced, it's still not clear if or when we will see substantive change.

The PC caucus has been calling for the implementation of performance-based standards of service for some time. The concept is supported by this report and by the minister's comments today as well. It seems this is something we can agree on. Of course, it will be the implementation of those standards that will determine whether or not it is successful.

Implementation is key to the success of ideas. We hope that we will not have to wait years to see this plan properly implemented. The minister and the draft report have talked about increasing competition. During the campaign, the government talked about breaking Nova Scotia Power's monopoly. We will have to wait and see if that is successful or not. We will have to wait and see if that monopoly can be broken. We will have to wait and see what happens in the Spring, or we'll have to wait and see if Nova Scotia Power's control over the market remains.

What Nova Scotians want is lower power rates. I have concerns over the plan and whether it will shrink Nova Scotia Power's control over the market. I have concerns on whether it will lower rates, but I hope it does. I hope the plan does lower rates, because Nova Scotians want action to lower and stabilize power rates. They want a secure energy future in this province.

I can assure the minister we will be prepared to engage in this conversation and help him with anything along the way that helps us achieve that goal of lower power rates for Nova Scotians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his remarks. I'm glad to see that one of the many McNeil Government reviews has finally been concluded. I agree with the minister's statement that Nova Scotians do care about long-term, sustainable, and cost-effective energy. I'm sure we all heard about that and the lowering of power rates as we went around door to door during the 2013 election, and we continually hear that that is on the minds of Nova Scotians.

I was proud to be part of a previous government which brought in the Renewable Electricity Plan. This plan put Nova Scotia on the map for its renewable electricity generation goals. I am pleased that we are on our way to seeing those goals being met. I was proud to be part of the previous government, which fostered the Maritime Link Agreement that will see renewable energy from Muskrat Falls flow to Nova Scotia. This is a legacy of former Premier Darrell Dexter. He was passionate about it and he worked very hard on it, and he deserves the credit of that legacy.

However, it was also a project that the Liberal Government ridiculed. Now they are embracing it when they're in government, because they know that this is a project that will give us valuable renewable energies with stability over at least a 35-year period. It will also create many jobs. It will go a long way to helping renewable energy goals for our province.

I find it very interesting how the slick marketing words of this government can change from when they were in Opposition to now that they are in government. The words were always about breaking the monopoly but the reality is that the monopoly has been broken with legislation to allow for renewable businesses to be established in our province. However, there is absolutely no guarantee that this will lower the electricity prices and that is something that was campaigned on, breaking the monopoly would lower those prices. That is what Nova Scotians voted for and feel that this will be coming to them down the pipeline.

We will wait, as my colleague said, to see if that actually occurs because we do know that the renewable resources will need to utilize the Nova Scotia Power grid. The fact is that as part of that, because that is through the URB, there will be the same charges to use that particular grid. There needs to be reliability, an alternate source when you have renewable resources. That means Nova Scotia Power will be providing that backup power. If there is a formula or a plan to reduce the electricity prices, it will be interesting to see if that can actually be implemented.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to focus on renewable energy. It does need to remain a priority of this government. I am pleased that the government is looking at the importance of our energy needs over the long term which, as I mentioned, the previous Premier greatly focused on in terms of getting that project going under his auspices with the Muskrat Falls.

I look forward to reviewing the final report and I do hope that next year at this time, Mr. Speaker, that Nova Scotians will actually see a reduction in their electricity pricing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington on an introduction.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of people I want to acknowledge here today. In the west gallery we have no stranger to the House, she has been here many times, Joyce Nickerson. I just wanted to give her the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Another good friend of mine, I know he's standing up behind me for the minister's announcement in a few moments - Bill Newell, I want to acknowledge him for being here today. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1694

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

Whereas last night I had the honour to attend a tribute to Dr. J. Colin Dodds, president and vice-chancellor of Saint Mary's University, on his outstanding contributions to the field of post-secondary education, served as president for 15 years and more than 30 years in various leadership positions at the university; and

Whereas under Dr. Dodds' leadership Saint Mary's has become one of the most international campuses in Canada with students from more than 100 countries, growing substantially through important capital additions like the redevelopment of the Sobeys School of Business, the Atrium and the Language Centre; and

Whereas as a proud Santamarian and a past member of the SMU Alumni Council, I wish to offer my sincere thanks and congratulations to Colin who is an exceptional leader, a trusted adviser and a friend to many;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. J. Colin Dodds on guiding Saint Mary's University in many significant accomplishments in Nova Scotia, and wish him good health and continued success.

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.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1695

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

Whereas the recent judiciary meeting with Executive Council provided an opportunity for us to learn and have a better understanding of what our judges do; and

Whereas we are lucky to have a good relationship with the judiciary and are committed to working together to improve the justice system and delivery of court services in our province; and

Whereas the work of our judges, particularly the Access to Justice Committee, that I am proud to co-chair with Chief Justice J. Michael MacDonald, and the leadership they demonstrate be recognized by all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the judiciary for their expertise, commitment to delivering justice and for their valuable role in our communities.

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.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, before I read this resolution, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: It's my pleasure to introduce Donna Lugar and Paula Isnor and any others associated with education awareness around Lyme disease. They're in the west gallery and if they would rise please and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

I just wanted to add that they truly have been tireless advocates for Lyme disease awareness. They know this disease first-hand and they work very hard to make sure Nova Scotians know how to prevent it. I know they've had an influence on my family because when my three little granddaughters, all under 9, come in from the backyard their first comment is: Nana or Papa, can you check us over? And that's the first real big step, I know, in making sure we prevent Lyme disease.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1696

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

Whereas Nova Scotians who enjoy the outdoors need to take steps to protect themselves, their families, and their pets, from black-legged ticks that carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease; and

Whereas anyone with early signs of Lyme disease, such as a bull's-eye-shaped red rash and flu-like symptoms following a tick bite, should seek medical attention promptly; and

Whereas the best way to prevent Lyme disease is to raise awareness and practise preventive measures such as frequent tick checks, proper tick removal, and the use of tick repellent when engaging in outdoor activities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House help raise awareness by recognizing the month of May as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Nova Scotia.

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.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like permission to make some introductions, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. BERNARD: I would like to turn your attention to the east gallery and welcome our guests who are here in support of the amendments I'm about to introduce. These special guests are representing Community Child Welfare Boards, Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services, the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

So if you would please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.
(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 112 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990. The Children and Family Services Act. (Hon. Joanne Bernard)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, permission for an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. KOUSOULIS: If I could get the members' attention to the east gallery, today we are joined by the Grade 9 Social Studies class at Gorsebrook Junior High School, as well as their teachers, Basil and Ashley, and if I could ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MARRIE, DR. TOM: MED. COMMUN. - SERV. THANK

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words to honour Dr. Tom Marrie, who is retiring from his position as Dean of Medicine at Dalhousie University. Dr. Marrie served the university with great distinction over his 27 years as an educator, physician, researcher, and most recently as dean.

As a professor in the departments of Medicine and Microbiology, Dr. Tom Marrie established the Division of Infectious Diseases. During his five-year term as dean, he overhauled the medical undergraduate curriculum. His objective was simple: to ensure graduates are patient-focused and embody the qualities that people want in a doctor. He placed great emphasis on ensuring physicians are closely linked to medical research in order to apply new research to their practice and contribute new knowledge to the medical field for everyone's benefit. Dr. Marrie also oversaw the launch of Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, a satellite campus for the medical school.

As Dr. Tom Marrie retires, I want to thank him for his service to the medical community and wish him all the best in the next chapter of his life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACKENZIE, PHILIP: KINDNESS/COMPASSION - SALUTE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about New Glasgow resident Philip MacKenzie. He is an individual who has reached out to bring happiness to those injured by events beyond their control. Last year, Mr. MacKenzie collected 20 new guitars along with cases with the intent to give the instruments to children recovering from burn injuries. These instruments were presented to children attending the Atlantic Burn Camp.

Philip is presently raising money to purchase bikes that could be used at this camp. He has already collected 10 new bicycles and intends to pass along at least 20 of them to the children in August. We salute Philip MacKenzie for his kindness and compassion.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SURGERIES - CANCELLATION

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, almost three weeks ago, Nova Scotians were told about the sterilization issues at the Halifax Infirmary. Dozens of surgeries were immediately put on hold. The Premier and the Minister of Health and Wellness initially downplayed concerns about the cancelled surgeries and tried to reassure Nova Scotians that only minor elective procedures were affected. With the number of cancelled surgeries reaching almost 500, we're hearing that people have had heart surgery postponed. Elizabeth Collins, whose daughter Carolyn spoke about her frustration publicly this week, is waiting to have a cancerous tumour removed from her lung. These are not minor procedures.

Not only are almost 500 patients impacted by cancelled surgeries, but so are their families. My heart goes out to the hundreds of spouses and family members who have taken time off work and are away from home while they wait with their loved ones. I can't imagine how they felt yesterday when the minister told them they'll just have to keep waiting.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

DIAB, MONICA - ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud mother to say a few words about the academic success and achievements of my daughter Monica. On January 22nd, I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon at Dalhousie University where Monica was awarded the Academic All-Canadian distinction. This distinction is one of the highest honours a student athlete can receive. Recipients display an incredible amount of discipline and dedication in achieving excellence in academics and athletics.

Further to their high classroom and sport achievements, Academic All-Canadian students have to demonstrate leadership and community volunteer initiatives. As a member of the women's soccer team, this is Monica's second Academic All-Canadian award at Dalhousie, but her fifth overall, having received the award during three years at Saint Mary's University. I'm proud to say that Monica is also a Dean's List student and a recipient of the Maritime and Northeast Pipeline Legacy Scholarship and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Award.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to attend a reception on April 1st in the Great Hall at the Dalhousie University Club where the Sexton Scholars were honoured. Monica was named a Sexton Scholar for achieving an average above 85 per cent. I look forward to her convocation ceremony next month.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

CULLODEN: BATTLE - CELEBRATION

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, April 18th, a couple hundred people gathered at Knoydart to celebrate the Battle of Culloden. Six or seven generations ago, Angus and Hugh MacDonald and John MacPherson arrived in that area, having endured great strife in their native Scotland. All three of these men fought in the Battle of Culloden. It was a short but brutal battle, and it forced many Scots to come here and start over.

It's important for people to remember their roots and to continue to make their history known. For that reason, they continue to flock to Knoydart every year in increasing numbers to honour their forebears and their history.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: FISHING IND. - FUNDING INCREASES

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, it's rare that an Opposition MLA stands in their place and congratulates a Minister of the Crown. Today I want to publicly endorse and congratulate the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for his work to make \$8 million in additional funding available to the fishing industry.

The potential to double fish exports is very real, and a key factor will be having access to working capital. There are many opportunities for the fishing industry to capitalize on by having access to this funding. Working toward doubling fish exports with additional access to capital will bring people home and strengthen rural Nova Scotia and keep the fishing industry independent.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to publicly thank the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

PETERS, JAYNE: WRITING ENDEAVOURS - SUCCESS WISH

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Jayne Peters is a schoolteacher who has taught in Nova Scotia for over 20 years. She resides in Hants East with her husband and three children. Jayne is also a published author who gets ideas for her children's books from her life and the lives of those around her.

Her first book, *Messy Jessy*, inspired by her youngest daughter, is about loving yourself no matter what. The inspiration for her second book, *Whispering Wings*, came

from a picture she painted of a hand releasing five butterflies and from a Virtues Project workshop she attended, and is about the importance of virtues. Her third book, *Anything Can Happen in Mrs. Whynot's Room*, is about a student in Mrs. Whynot's classroom who has difficulty writing.

I am sure that any child would be drawn in by Jayne's beautiful and colourfully-illustrated books, and I wish her every success in her future writing endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

PICTOU CO. CRUISE COMM.: CRUISE SHIP SCHED. ANNOUNCEMENT

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pictou County Cruise Committee on their recent announcement that they will be hosting 10 small cruise ships from the Pearl Seas cruise ship line to the Port of Pictou during the 2015 season.

This announcement is the culmination of almost nine years of hard work by the committee, co-chaired by Michelle Young and GERALYN MacDONALD. They have gradually built on the experience of hosting one ship in 2013 and two in 2014. Four of the 10 stops will be overnight visits that will allow for an expanded itinerary, benefiting all of Pictou County and beyond. The Port of Pictou has been described as one of the four hidden gems among the cruise ships' ports of call in Atlantic Canada.

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

COM. SERV. - SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY: HEARTWOOD CTR. - THANK

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear yesterday that the Minister of Community Services has received youth feedback on the province's proposed sexual violence strategy. As many of us know, teens and young adults are more likely to be involved in sexual violence, both as perpetrators and victims. It's clear that more education is needed around the definition of consent and the role that substances like alcohol play in decision making.

While we have yet to see the sexual violence strategy which was promised for this Spring, I do look forward to seeing it in the very near future. I'd like to thank the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development for their work on this incredibly important file, and I hope that the voice of young people is present every step of the way.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LIGHTHOUSENOW PROGRESS BULLETIN: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT. Mr. Speaker, the LighthouseNOW Progress Bulletin is one of the last independent newspapers in Nova Scotia. In its various forms it has been serving communities in Lunenburg County for 139 years. In many ways it is the pride of Lunenburg County, providing people with information and community news that they can trust.

This past week, members of the newspaper's team were honoured at the Atlantic Community Newspaper Association's annual award ceremony. Angie Pearson, Kim Walters, Leena Ali, Beatrice Schuler, Stacey Colwell, and Barb Wentzel were all honoured with awards in various categories. Their individual successes reflect the success of the newspaper as a whole. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Angie, Kim, Leena, Beatrice, Stacey, and Barb on their success. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

DODDS, DR. J. COLIN: ACCOMPLISHMENTS - RECOGNIZE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the accomplishments of outgoing Saint Mary's University president Dr. J. Colin Dodds. Dr. Dodds oversaw an unprecedented era of growth at Saint Mary's University. Under his leadership, the university developed into one of the most international campuses in Canada. Saint Mary's is now a leader in international recruitment with students from more than 100 countries calling Saint Mary's - and therefore Nova Scotia - home.

Dr. Dodds' contributions as a community leader are numerous. He has been called on by various governments for his expertise. His philanthropic contributions now extend to the Colin and Carol Dodds Family Bursary Fund to help undergraduate students at Saint Mary's. That fund has already raised more than \$300,000.

To put it simply, Colin Dodds is an outstanding leader. Under his leadership Nova Scotia continues to be a world-class destination for higher education.

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

MCNEIL GOV'T.: ECON. DEV. CUTS - INFO. SHARE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government has cut \$17 million from economic development in our province. Last Friday the Minister of Business told *The Chronicle Herald* that "We know where the cuts have been made." He went on to say that his department is trying to mitigate the impact on companies and organizations affected by the cuts but that the savings are embedded in the budget, so that's not changing.

The minister would not provide *The Chronicle Herald* with the list and when I asked him about it yesterday in Question Period, he gave me a vague answer and said he would work on getting that information. Why does the minister have to work on getting that information when he admitted last week that he already had it?

If the decisions are final and aren't changing, as the minister has stated himself, why won't he tell anyone what they are? Why is the McNeil Government making \$17 million decisions but leaving taxpayers in the dark?

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

SYDNEY MINES JHS - WOW! READING CHALLENGE (2015)

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sydney Mines Junior High School as the champion of the Tartan division of the 2015 WOW! Reading Challenge. WOW! stands for Words of Wonder Reading Challenge. The challenge involves junior high and elementary schools competing to read as many pages as possible, over a select period of time.

RCMP Constable John Kennedy is the reading challenge coordinator and founded the police agency partnership with local libraries and acts as a bridge between the community libraries, public schools. This program is designed to promote and improve literacy as a means of crime prevention.

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to congratulate Sydney Mines Junior High for winning this reading challenge.

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

YOUNG, MICHAEL - VOL. YOUTH AWARD

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a young volunteer from my community of Eastern Passage. Michael Young is a Grade 9 student who has contributed countless volunteer hours. He helped coach young kids with the minor baseball league. He was so dedicated that he never missed a game or practice.

Michael was very helpful, especially to the kids who needed a little more help and positive reinforcement. Volunteers make communities stronger and a better place to live. Please join me in congratulating Michael on receiving his Volunteer Youth Award. Thank you.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HARRISON: In the west gallery I have two friends from my hometown community, Brookfield: Mr. Terry Henderson and Mr. Jimmy Feener. Those of you who have been involved in fastball over the years know who Terry is, I'm sure.

In the east gallery I want to introduce Roseanne Wright. If you would stand and accept the warm welcome of the House, please. (Applause)

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

REEL CAN.: SO. COL. ACAD. - FILM FEST.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: REEL CANADA is an organization which offers film festivals and resources for high schools through a program called Our Films in Our Schools. REEL CANADA assists teachers with lesson plans, games, quizzes and other resources in bringing the culture of Canadian films to their students.

In celebration of National Canadian Film Day on April 29th, REEL CANADA hosted 160-plus events across the country, including South Colchester Academy in Brookfield. Students from Grades 9 through 12 were treated to a day of screening films by Canadian artists, including such titles as The "F" Word and One Week and were given opportunity to meet filmmakers and actors.

Mr. Speaker, these film festivals deserve recognition for their contribution to introducing the next generation to career possibilities within the creative economy. I'm certain it was a day to remember for the students participating at South Colchester Academy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

YOUNG PEOPLE - FUNDING: PROV. RATING - N.S. STANDING

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, many people, including the NDP caucus, have been telling the McNeil Government for over a year that their policies and decisions are leaving young people out in the cold. The Premier hasn't listened to us, but now a national organization has confirmed this to be true.

Generation Squeeze is a national group that advocates for Canadians in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. This Spring, professionals with Generation Squeeze like Dr. Paul Kershaw, a policy professor at UBC, analyzed every provincial budget this year to determine what the impact of each was on this younger demographic. The results are in and the findings are troubling, but not surprising. To quote Dr. Kershaw, "... Nova Scotia spends less on

younger citizens than any other province,” a disconcerting distinction to say the least and one that the McNeil Government should be ashamed of.

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

**DEMONE, BRIAN - SACKVILLE HEIGHTS JR. HS:
TEACHER/ATHLETIC DIRECTOR - ACTIVITIES**

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, Brian DeMone is an outstanding physical education teacher and athletic director of Sackville Heights Junior High School. Every day he brings his positive energy and enthusiasm to his program. Last week, Brian was awarded the Education Week Award for supporting student development through service learning, community projects, and co-operative education, and for encouraging students to be active in their schools and communities.

Brian works tirelessly to connect the physical education program to opportunities in the community. He is starting an archery club, he has purchased fun and interesting PE equipment such as slacklining, and he opens the gym every Thursday night for students and their families to come and enjoy organized activities. Brian organizes school trips to Martock and to the skating oval, and he brings in guests to teach students kickboxing, dance, and yoga. He is always thinking of new and exciting ways to improve his students and their activities within their schools and their communities. He is a true educator. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West on an introduction.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the members' attention to your gallery this afternoon, where we are joined by a man who is certainly no stranger to this House, having spent 28 years here as the member for Hants West: Mr. Ron Russell. I think he probably held every office in government, as well as your Chair - three times as Speaker in this House. It's a great honour to have Ron here this afternoon. Would we all give him a warm welcome to the House of Assembly? (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North on an introduction.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, first of all I would just like to say thank you for having my constituents in your gallery. In the Speaker's Gallery, I'd like to introduce Oral Mansfield, formerly of Bridgetown and now of Kentville, and Sandra Corbin of Kentville. I'd like to ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

ROSEWAY ER - CLOSURES: HEALTH AUTH. - AGREEMENT

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I guess it's true that persistence does pay off. I can't even count how many times I've raised concerns in this House about the frequent closures of the Roseway ER. Actually, I can - it has been at least nine times so far this session, not to mention all the times I raised it in previous sessions. Finally, on Monday of this week, the new health authority admitted there was an issue. They confirmed what I already knew and what my constituency already knew: closures at the Roseway ER are up by 400 per cent this year.

I'm glad the health authority has outlined some ways they are going to address the closures and try to reduce them, including hiring three more nurses. I think there is still more to be done, but this is a start. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**KINGS MINOR BASKETBALL GIRLS TEAM:
D-4 PROVINCIALS - BRONZE MEDAL**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Kings Minor Basketball Association's bantam girls' basketball team for winning the bronze medal at the D-4 provincials in front of a hometown crowd on April 11th. The bronze-medal game MVP was Olivia Andrews, the hustle award went to Molly McMullen, and Olivia Crooks was named the tournament all-star. Darrell Crooks, assistant coach, said that the win was a team effort, with "all players at some point in the tournament winning a game MVP or hustle award."

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to congratulate Olivia Andrews, Marin MacDonald, Grace Bernasky, Grace Filmore, Emma Smith, Grace Hall, Erin Cornelius, Olivia Crooks, Shyanne Cumming, Molly McMullan, and their coaches, parents, and supporters for their impressive bronze medal win on their home court. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CORBIN, SANDRA - SURGERY WAIT TIMES

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Sandra Corbin is an educational assistant with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board at Glooscap Elementary School. She has been unable to work since November and will have to wait up to 18 months for two knee replacement surgeries. She loves her job and wants to get back to work as soon as possible. Because she may be off work for over two years before being able to return, she believes her job is in jeopardy.

Nova Scotia is failing to meet national targets for wait times and is failing Nova Scotians like Sandra. Today I call on this government to make meaningful measures to reduce wait times, and allow Nova Scotians like Sandra to live pain-free and return to the jobs that they love.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid on an introduction.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the members to the west gallery where we have two guests: Jessica Inkpen of Halifax and her partner, Carl. Jessica was instrumental in informing us when the government created Nova Scotia's first Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. If they could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

**KING-DARBY, SUE: COMMUNITY COUNTS
- ELIMINATION CONCERNS**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Sue King-Darby is the chairperson of the Colchester Anti-Poverty Network. She is concerned about the McNeil Government's decision to eliminate the Community Counts website, which housed important information on community profiles and other local statistics.

Sue says many organizations in her network relied on the site's information for planning poverty awareness and education events. Sue worries that without this valuable resource, we and the other non-profit organizations will be at a loss as to where to find this kind of information quickly and efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government is causing significant harm to non-profit organizations in our province. They are slashing funding and eliminating important resources like Community Counts. When will this government learn that poverty, mental health, physical activity for children, and support for people with disabilities are things that we, as a society, cannot turn our backs on?

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

LEBLANC, JANIQUE: CAN. GAMES - SILVER MEDAL

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Fall River's Janique LeBlanc on winning the silver medal at the Canada Games. Janique is the lead of Team Mary Fay and curls out of the Chester rink. The team came home with the silver medal after a heartbreaking 6 to 5 extra-end loss in the Canada Games gold medal match to Ontario.

The team was undefeated at 5 and 0 in the round robin, and won the semi-final to be matched with the undefeated Ontario team for the gold medal game.

Janique and her team had an amazing time at the Games and have high hopes for competing in the upcoming Junior Nationals. Congratulations, Janique, on winning the silver medal, and good luck to your team. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

JACKSON, ERICA: 4-H CAN. YOUTH ADVISORY COMM. - APPT.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, 4-H is an international organization focused on inspiring, educating, and developing youth into community leaders. With a motto of “Learn to do by Doing,” 4-H offers a hands-on approach to learning in a safe, inclusive, and fun environment.

There is a misconception, however, that 4-H is only for children and youth in rural communities with an agricultural background. Erica Jackson of Upper Stewiacke hopes to dispel this myth in her new two-year term appointment to the Youth Advisory Committee with 4-H Canada. Ms. Jackson has joined the marketing and communications team and will be highlighting global happenings in agriculture in a biweekly blog.

I would like to congratulate Erica Jackson on her appointment to the 4-H Canada Youth Advisory Committee and wish her all the best in this exciting experience.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, April 22nd to April 29th marked National Dance Week in Canada, and every year Dance Nova Scotia celebrates by . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for members' statements has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: HYDRAULIC FRACTURING - BAN

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, last year when the Liberals banned hydraulic fracturing, they did it without even knowing what it

was. Documents obtained by the PC caucus under the freedom of information Act show that the Department of Energy staff frantically spent last December travelling the continent trying to find a definition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier, why did he ban this new way of creating jobs when his own department doesn't even know what he has done?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I want to thank the good people at Energy who work on behalf of all of us, Mr. Speaker, the exciting opportunities off the coast of Nova Scotia. We have seen major investments - BP and Shell - and those are all positive things to the province.

As the honourable member would know, the commission went around about fracking without providing any long-term solution on how we deal with the fracking waste in this province. As he knows, as all members of this House should, we have fracking waste existing in this province today that we can't get rid of. We think it's prudent on behalf of government, before we venture down that road of creating more of an environmental issue in this province, that we know how to deal with it.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this government is continuing to move forward to work with the private sector, to consult with Nova Scotians, and I want to remind the honourable member that in this province there is a duty to consult with the First Nations and that has not happened to date.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, instead of just thanking the people who want to create jobs and opportunities in this province, why not give them the tools to actually go and create new jobs, particularly in rural areas? The Premier has listed off a number of challenges: of course you're supposed to consult with First Nations and of course we have to find a way to deal with the waste water, but where that government sees reasons to say no to new jobs, we see challenges to overcome so Nova Scotia can become a more prosperous place. That is the difference between them and us.

Mr. Speaker, the Energy Department's staff went to Alberta, B.C., New York State, and many other places. All they had to do was ask Phil Knoll of Halifax what he thought, and he would have said that a ban makes no sense - I'll table that. As the Premier of a province so desperate for jobs, how can he possibly justify creating a ban on new ways to create jobs not even knowing what the ban actually is?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to tell him about the positive things we're seeing in this province in the Energy Department. The offshore activity that's taking place, \$2 billion is being invested in this province by two companies, and that's good news for the people of this Province of Nova Scotia. We're seeing positive signs around LNG, both at Goldboro and Bear Head. We're seeing foreign countries wanting to invest in this province and that's

good news. We're seeing the resource sector all across rural Nova Scotia being engaged and seeing the opportunities to create good jobs in this province.

What our government has said, Mr. Speaker, is we will take the appropriate time and the time required to ensure that we protect the environment and we know how to deal with the fracking waste in this province if we're to proceed. What we further said, before we proceed, we believe that issue should be brought back to the floor of the Legislature.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is right about one thing: this province is full of opportunities but what it has is a government that bans some of the new ways of creating jobs instead of going about the hard work of finding a way to make it happen. For all this opportunity the fact remains that 18,400 rural Nova Scotians lost their jobs in the last four years. They want to see a government that finds a way forward, not putting roadblocks in their path. How can the people of Nova Scotia - those 18,400 - trust this government to promote jobs when they messed up the jobs in the film industry and they are banning a new one in onshore gas?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank those in Screen Nova Scotia who came to work with our government to find a solution that works for taxpayers as well as for the industry to ensure those jobs continue to grow. I want to thank BP and Shell for continuing to believe in this province. As world oil prices drop, they continue to know where they should invest and that is here off the coast of Nova Scotia. I also want to thank those who are investing in Bear Head, in Goldboro, investing in LNG plants here in Nova Scotia. Those are all positive signs, not to mention we're seeing an investment by Cline in Glace Bay - those are positive signs, good jobs in rural Nova Scotia. If the honourable member doesn't believe in supporting rural communities, stand up and say so instead of standing up and giving the political rhetoric he has been doing for the last 18 years.

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

WORTH, DARLENE: SURGERY - GOV'T. ACTION

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Darlene Worth was supposed to have critical stomach and throat surgery, including a hernia repair on April 22nd. For more than a year Darlene has been suffering in pain waiting for this surgery, and in the last six months she has been restricted to a fluids-only diet. The day before her surgery date she was told her procedure was cancelled, and that it could be more than six months before it's rescheduled.

My question to the Premier is, what is his government going to do to get people like Darlene the surgery she really needs to return to a healthy life as quickly as possible?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's completely unacceptable - not only that her procedure has been postponed but the fact that she has had to wait that length of time in this province to deal with it. We have wait times in this province that are unacceptable. It's why we've initiated this budget, to invest and move toward a national strategy, but there's a lot of work to be done.

Unfortunately, with the incident that has taken place more recently at our hospital here in Halifax around the sterilization of equipment, it has caused a further great burden on families across this province. It is completely unacceptable. That's why the Minister of Health and Wellness is moving as quickly and efficiently and safely as possible to ensure that we return to meeting the same number of surgeries we've been doing in the past and then deal with making sure that the backlog is looked after.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for his answer. When the problem first went public, the minister said the surgeries were elective. I hope the public doesn't have the impression that they're not serious surgeries. They are very serious surgeries.

Yesterday we learned that the new equipment the government is purchasing won't be here for at least five or six weeks. That means even more surgeries will be cancelled. I want to ask the Premier, how is the government going to deal with ongoing cancellations for these much-needed surgeries?

THE PREMIER: I'll ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to respond.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite - a former Health and Wellness Minister, who knows this issue very well - for making it her first question of the day here during Question Period.

Every surgery, yes, we may categorize as elective, but they are indeed serious surgeries that impact on not just the patients but also families. In going forward now, we have ordered the new equipment. It will take some weeks. We are at 75 per cent capacity of scheduled surgeries today. Yes, many have been postponed, and the plan now is to move surgeries to other sites across the province. Those that have been postponed are, if you wish, triaged and looked at each and every morning as to whether or not they should be moved up into the surgical capacity of that particular day.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for his response. Today is April 30th. It's 20 days after the public first learned that surgeries would be cancelled, and it was only half an hour before Question Period that we had the first briefing of the new CEO of the health authority on this very serious matter.

I want to ask the Premier if he will commit to this House and to the people of the province that we will have regular and timely briefings as this problem persists in our health care system.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank Ms. Knox for the work that she has been doing, and I thank the minister for the work. I also want to thank those Nova Scotians who have been impacted by this situation for their patience and their support as we move forward to ensuring that we get our health care facilities up and operating to the capacity where they should be, that we deal not only with the cancellations that have taken place but with the wait-lists overall.

In response to the member's question, I want to say yes.

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

**PREM. - QEII: STERILIZATION MACHINES
- REPLACEMENT DELAY EXPLAIN**

HON. JAMIE BALLIE: My question is to the Premier. Over the past 10 days, hundreds of surgeries at the QEII have been cancelled. Now, 10 days later, the government has discovered that the sterilization machines are 25 to 35 years old, and at the end of their useful life.

When equipment reaches the end of its useful life, there is usually a plan in place to replace it in a timely way. I would like to ask the Premier, why was there no plan in place to replace this equipment in a timely way?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, and the minister has alluded to, the age of that equipment is known not only by this government but by successive governments when it comes to delivery of services and equipment in the province. Equipment had been operating properly; the problem showed up and was dealt with immediately. We all know that as much as we want those surgeries to happen on time, we want to make sure that they are happening in a safe, sterile environment.

They responded that way. They looked to find out whether or not this piece of equipment could have been repaired, after they found out what the problem was. There was a decision made that that equipment should be replaced and are now in the process of doing so.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's going to take five or six weeks before the replacement equipment is delivered. That equipment will cost \$100,000 each for five new machines. When there's no plan in place to replace equipment in a timely way, the

government is clearly being penny-wise and pound foolish. This is not the only example, but now real surgeries are lost.

I'd like to ask the Premier, how many more surgeries are expected to be cancelled or delayed because there was no plan in place to replace this equipment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell you that the Department of Health and Wellness and the new health authority are working as quickly as possible to ensure that the disruptions that have taken place are mitigated, and that we move forward and we can have those surgeries rescheduled.

The minister just recently spoke, we're looking for capacity within the system across the province to make sure that positive things - but one thing for certain, Mr. Speaker, no matter what this side of the House had been able to do, they would have been complaining on the other side - and if we had money aside, they would have said we were spending too much money or preparing for a disaster.

The fact of the matter is that I am very proud of the way the minister, the new health authority, and Nova Scotians, have responded, understanding this challenge will be looked after and we'll move forward not only dealing with the backlog that has been created by this problem, but the backlog that has existed for quite some time.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: EATING DISORDER CLINICS - FUNDING CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, Jessica Inkpen, who is with us here in the gallery today, has been in recovery since 2011 after suffering from anorexia for about 15 years. Jessica is very concerned about the McNeil Government's cut to Eating Disorder Nova Scotia and the Eating Disorder Clinic at the IWK.

Last week the minister said he would review how these cuts are impacting services at the IWK. So I'd like to ask the minister, has the minister reviewed this issue yet and, if so, will he be restoring support for people affected by eating disorders?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that important question he has brought to the floor of the Legislature today. This week I reviewed the program at the IWK because there was a 0.5 staff reduction. What is taking place now is that we are moving the trauma-informed care out across Nova Scotia and doing more in the community work, and especially at our regional sites.

We know that's going to, again, improve the quality of care for those citizens who suffer from a very terrible disease. We will certainly review the help support groups that help maintain the treatments after they do go home.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the investment has to be made to ensure that Nova Scotians, many of them young women in Nova Scotia, get the help they need - and it's not just two days a week.

Jessica says early intervention for people with eating disorders is very important. She has seen how community organizations like Eating Disorder Nova Scotia have been impacted and how important it is as a stepping stone, leading people to medical attention and recovery. She also highlighted a recent report from the Butterfly Foundation which notes optional treatment interventions deliver "a 5:1 benefit cost ratio" for government investment.

Given how important it is, early intervention with proper care, Mr. Speaker, how can the minister justify eliminating support for people with eating disorders?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that we recognize the value of the work done by Dr. Jana Davidson from B.C. Sick Children Hospital and that we needed to have stronger trauma-informed care across the province. We are investing \$1.1 million to advance the work of the IWK right across Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Society, their organization is being funded at almost 80 per cent, and we will review that particular grant during this fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SURGERY WAIT TIMES - EMPLOYMENT EFFECTS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Sandra Corbin is here in the gallery with us today. She loves her job. Six months ago she was put off work while she waits for two knee replacement surgeries. She is 12 to 18 months away from receiving her much-needed surgeries.

Sandra has worked as an educational assistant for 29 years and does not want to be missing work; this was not her choice. By the time she receives her surgeries, she will have been off work for nearly two and a half years, and Sandra worries that her job may not be held that long.

My question for the minister is, has the minister approached his Cabinet colleague, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, to discuss solutions for people like Sandra, who are off work by no choice of their own and fear losing their jobs through the very long wait times?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, there are really two questions there; one relating to the orthopaedic wait times, as well as someone who is off work for a considerable period of time and her place, and certainly her career, hanging in the balance.

First of all, in terms of the orthopaedic work - we did an additional 400 procedures last year and we will add another 400 this year. The orthopaedic community have given us a great plan going forward; it's just that a decade of getting behind has simply put us in a very bad spot, where we are today.

MR. LOHR: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. Unfortunately Sandra's situation is one that many Nova Scotians find themselves in as they wait months and years for surgeries. The minister needs to realize that these surgical wait-lists impact more than a person's health - it impacts their livelihood, their well-being, and even our provincial economy. These Nova Scotians pay taxes and fund our health care system, and it is unfair that something out of their control, like waiting for surgery, could take their livelihood.

I realize the minister started to address this, but my question for the minister is, will the minister commit to examining this issue and developing a program, so people like Sandra are confident their careers will not be lost due to long wait times for surgeries?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, yes, when we're talking about Sandra's career and her desire to continue to work it's a very important statement for her. I know, as a former school administrator, there are always extenuating circumstances around illness. I know I worked for a board - and I believe the same one the Sandra works for - they are very accommodating. We certainly hope that takes place.

We have a strong orthopaedic plan in place. We'll add a foot and ankle specialist in the coming year, and we know that we'll be doing extra surgeries. We just have to keep on that pace to make sure that the needs of Nova Scotians are met.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

NAT. RES. - FUEL TAX REBATE: MINING ASSOC. (N.S.) - EFFECT

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Yesterday a news release from the Mining Association of Nova Scotia said a survey of industry members found that they are 98 per cent less optimistic about the future of their industry as a result of this budget. I'll table that.

My question to the minister is, will the minister admit that this is the result of the government failing to live up to its written promise to extend the fuel tax rebate to the industry?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, actually what we're seeing from the mining industry, or companies that want to invest in this province, that want to create good jobs in rural Nova Scotia - we are looking at the Donkin Mine that when it comes online will double Nova Scotia's production in minerals; we're looking at Avalon Resources looking at re-establishing a tin mine in Yarmouth and all kinds of wonderful opportunities across this province.

We will continue to work with that industry and provide the great opportunities that exist here in this province for them.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that the mining industry feels neglected after the decision not to extend the fuel tax rebate to the industry in this budget. The same survey found that 80 per cent of respondents found the overall impact on industry was negative. Nova Scotia's mining and quarrying industry lost 800 jobs in the past six years.

My question to the minister is, beyond the review of the Mineral Resources Act, what is the minister's plan to grow this industry?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this industry is growing itself here in the Province of Nova Scotia. We have, for the first time in 25 years, looked at the legislative framework that governs that industry. The one thing that I've heard from the companies interested in doing business here is they want regulatory certainty, and that is precisely what we are giving them.

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

BUS.: UNION/NON-UNION EMPLOYEES - FLEXIBILITY

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Business. Yesterday the Minister of Business told reporters that employees within his new department will not belong to a union because they need to be flexible and need to be able to respond to the needs of the department. I will table that.

My question is, can the minister tell us exactly how unionized employees within the Departments of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs are less flexible and less able to respond to the needs of those departments because they do belong to a union?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I think what is important to note is that we absolutely respect the role and responsibilities of bargaining unit employees within Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs. It's very

clear under our government that they know their role. We have an objective of ensuring that they are focused on their role and as a matter of fact, the morale in those two departments is a significant change and it is because of our respect for those who work within the bargaining unit.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. It's clear that employees being hired into the new Department of Business will be doing very similar work compared to their counterparts in all other government departments. My question is, according to the Civil Service Collective Bargaining Act, what is the rationale for excluding all positions in the new Department of Business from being unionized?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding is that this is a policy-based unit, not unlike the Office of Priorities and Planning, and for that reason the employees are excluded. Thank you.

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

COM. SERV. - CHILD: AGE DEFINITION - CHANGE REVIEW

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Today the minister announced her intention to change the definition of a child to include those 16 to 18 years old so they won't fall through the cracks. I was present at the bill briefing yesterday and really liked what I heard. The minister assured us that she was really going to concentrate on this bill and to make it ironclad. Yesterday the department informed us that there would be further consultation throughout the summer. My question is, what is the wisdom behind waiting between now and Fall to discuss it further?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. There have been 15 years of different consultations and eight ministerial reports over the last 15 years and we really wanted to make sure the consultations were genuine, sincere, looking at all the best practices that other stakeholders can bring to the table and to work with our partners within the Mi'kmaq Family Services Association, to look at the child welfare system within our indigenous population in Nova Scotia.

We didn't want to rush it through. We wanted to be pragmatic with that and that was really the genesis of why we decided to have a summer of consultation.

MR. HARRISON: We certainly all want this legislation to go through just as soon as possible, there is no question about that. But, with further consultation, it opens up a door that maybe further changes will have to be made. My question is, can the minister assure the House that the changes that she introduced today are going to be ironclad?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, there are actually over 100 amendments to this bill. The specific ones that were talked about today are ones that are long overdue. We've had many stakeholders within the family services system in Nova Scotia demand them including foster families, child welfare boards, the Ombudsman's office. We just want to make sure that all voices are heard. It will come back in the Fall and I am confident that it will pass as the strong bill that it is today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

LAE - CCA: COURSE TESTING - DETAILS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Recently, a number of currently-working individuals, many from the Convergys call centre which will be closing its doors for good in August, leaving 300 people out of work, went through an application process with Futureworx in hopes to begin the CCA course. A written test and interview were conducted and many had to take the day off without pay when the odds were actually against them from the beginning - the odds being that they were employed and too qualified.

Why would the minister's department, which funds this program, allow interviews to be conducted when these individuals don't meet the criteria to begin with?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the actual specifics of this particular case, but I would be happy to get back to the member with further information on that. Thank you.

MS. MACFARLANE: With an aging population in Nova Scotia, CCAs are in high demand, and the CCA course through Futureworx in Pictou County only accepts 20 students. Would the minister please commit today to review this program's interviewing process and also consider increasing the funds to the program so that those that desire to become a CCA can do so and work in Nova Scotia?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to look into that particular issue for the member. Thank you.

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

PREM.: CBC NATL. PRODUCTION CTR. - RETENTION ENSURE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the film and television sector has thrived in Nova Scotia in large part because of the Film Tax Credit. Our vibrant production community is why Halifax was selected as one of three national English-language production centres in Canada for the CBC, along with Toronto and Vancouver. If the

national production centre relocates to another province, it would take many jobs and many positive economic spinoffs with it.

My question for the Premier is, what has the government done to ensure that the CBC national production centre does not leave Halifax as a result of changes to the Film Tax Credit?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, there are a lot of productions that happen inside of this province that do not take advantage of the Film Tax Credit; she ought to know that. What we have seen from the industry more recently is they've come to the table to work with government to find a solution that works for taxpayers and works for the industry. We're very positive about the optimistic way they came to the table.

We're very pleased with the solution that not only will secure the film industry here, but will broaden the benefit to Nova Scotians because we're moving from a labour tax credit of 50 to 65 per cent to one of about 25 per cent that is a broad-based Nova Scotia investment not only in labour, but all of the other aspects of a production. That's good news for Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, I draw the Premier's attention to the 2008 socio-economic impact study that I tabled that talks about why Halifax remained a national production centre chosen by CBC - because of our strong, strong production studios and the films that were being made in this area. CBC has operated its television production studio out of Halifax since 1952. It's produced many of Canada's iconic TV shows, like Singalong Jubilee and what have you.

I want to ask the Premier, what is the government going to do to ensure that the CBC national production centre remains in Halifax now that the Film Tax Credit has been altered?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I too want to draw her attention to the report she tabled. Again, I want to tell her that all of the productions that are alluded to in that report were not there, did not take advantage, and were not able to take advantage of the tax credit she so passionately talks about in this House.

The reality of it is, we can sit here and dispute numbers all we want. The fact of the matter is that Screen Nova Scotia - the industry - has come to the table and sat down with government to find a solution that works for taxpayers and works for the sector. We're seeing a broader benefit not just for labour in the film industry, but broad-based support. That's a good thing when we recognize the entire Nova Scotia content of films, not just 50 to 65 per cent of labour costs.

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

TIR: FERRY FARES - COST RECOVERY

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, last weekend I attended two meetings concerning the increase in fares charged on Nova Scotia ferries. One was in Neil's Harbour and other was in Little Narrows. These increases in fees were supposed to be made to help with the recovery and return on the government's investment. Single fare rides went up \$1.50. My question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is, how much money does the minister expect to recover with these increase in fares?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: The total number is in about the range of north of \$700,000 - I am going to say it's about \$725,000 per annum on the increases that have been spread across the seven ferry services we operate here in the province.

MR. ORRELL: The numbers I heard were that the recovery part was only just over a million dollars as a \$5 fare so with raising \$1.50 it seems like that's a large number. My question, if the ridership goes down and the so-called recovery of these fees is not met, what will be the department's next move? Will it further increase the rides or will it put more money into the transportation budget to repair the roads?

MR. MACLELLAN: Certainly we have projections of what the ferry fees will mean for the revenues that are brought in but I'll tell you, we are expecting a pretty significant shift. When you look at a 10-pack, which was predominantly the method of tickets used by many Nova Scotians and the tourists who come here in the summer months to utilize the ferries, eight of every 10 of those trips were subsidized directly, Mr. Speaker. One pass was \$5.50 and a 10-pass was \$13.50; that is a subsidy in that particular item that makes absolutely no sense. We had to find an adjustment.

So we made adjustments to a more reasonable level in terms of what the cost recovery is. We think we'll see a migration - particularly for those residents who live in those regions - to the annual pass. We are going to look at a number of options to make that transition easier but at the end of the day this is a decision that had to be made based on cost versus revenue and we will continue to talk to stakeholders about how we make it better.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: TEACHERS' SERVICES - MIN. ACTION PLAN

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Schools are expected to do more and do it differently, for example taking on tasks that were normally or previously looked after by government

agencies and departments like Community Services, Health and Wellness, and Justice. My question is, will the minister's action plan address these concerns?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I want to say to all members of the House that when we did our minister's panel and we heard from over 3,000 teachers, one of their main concerns was the variety of services that they were expected to provide to support the students in their class and it had grown way beyond academic. It had grown into domestic concerns, mental health issues, personal problems and issues that bring themselves to the classroom and play themselves out there.

Our action plan is certainly designed to provide professional development and training and support for teachers so they can better respond to those many, many concerns, and very valid concerns, that our young people are now bringing to the classroom.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, we have teachers who will say it is unprofessional to complain, question, or criticize. Recent editorial pieces appear to suggest that this feeling does exist within the teaching profession. My question to the minister is, have these complaints reached the minister's department and if so, what advice does the minister have for these teachers?

MS. CASEY: I must say Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary if we do have, as the member says - and I'm not questioning what the member is saying - but if we do have teachers who do not feel that they can express their opinion that the door is always open. I can tell every teacher in this province my door is always open, I will listen to those teachers, and I will try to help them.

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

TIR - C.B. RAIL MEETING: INFO. RELEASE - PLAN

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. There is a public meeting about the future of Cape Breton rail lines scheduled for tomorrow in Sydney. In an article in the *Cape Breton Post*, according to Dave Rae, a Dean of Shannon School of Business at Cape Breton University, ". . . not much information has trickled out of Nova Scotia Transportation Minister . . ." In today's editorial, titled Future of Rail, the *Cape Breton Post* staff writes, "Friday's meeting has the potential to be vague and unproductive. It also has the potential to be the opposite." I'll table those documents.

My question is, what is the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's plan to ensure that the people at Friday's meeting receive clear information about his department on this issue?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, Dean David Rae from the Shannon School of Business developed a committee - basically a community society to talk about what the future of rail is. Among other parts of his mandate for this particular group, the focus is on if there were a community rail option, what would that look like, where would investment come from, et cetera?

Our group, the minister's advisory committee on rail, is looking at the bones of the system in terms of assets, liabilities, intermodal transportation, those types of things. Our committee, myself, we've been entirely open. We've answered every media call on every component. I talk to Dean Rae directly.

Any information they need will be provided for tomorrow's meeting. My deputy minister, Paul LaFleche, will be there, and he will give them absolutely every shred of data, information, and direction that we have. Thank you very much.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Cape Breton rail line is a basic building block of the Island's future economic development. Yesterday in Question Period, the minister said, "This isn't about the long-term subsidy . . . this is about building a business case for the people of Sydney, the people of Cape Breton."

Mr. Speaker, my question is, how much of a subsidy is the minister willing to offer the rail line as the people of Cape Breton build their business case to keep this vital transportation link?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this is not about a long-term subsidy. This is about the future of Cape Breton and the people of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia and the economy.

What we've said from the beginning is that we would work with partners - all levels of government, which are at the table at our advisory committee, and the stakeholders, particularly those private sector operators who utilize the line - every shred of information we can find. All data, all supports, Mr. Speaker.

What we want to do from the beginning - this is a bigger piece. This is about the future of Cape Breton. It's about the economy and its development. The port is going to be a significant part of that. That's why this rail conversation is important.

As we said, this is about sustainability and stability from a private sector operation. We'll continue to work to that endeavour. We want to save the rail line, Mr. Speaker, but we want it to be able to stand on its own two feet and make sure that it's the private sector driving that operation. Thank you very much.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: AT-HOME CANCER TREATMENTS - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, last session I had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness about oral medications for chemotherapy for those who are eligible. He informed me at that time that the department was looking into it and he would be meeting with stakeholders like CanCertainty and others early in the new year.

The minister said, “. . . we will have that timeline and that cost available for all Nova Scotians to see early in the New Year.” My question to the minister is, this measure was not included in the budget that was presented to us, and we have not received any information as of yet by the minister. Will the minister provide an update on whether his department will allow at-home cancer treatments for those who can receive them?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, at the present time, we have reached out to ministers across the country to work first with the existing federal government. We know there's a lead in Ontario with Dr. Hoskins speaking to all the federal Parties about the development of a national Pharmacare program. With an election pending, it seems that Parties are putting some meat on the bones around a national Pharmacare program, which would impact our oral cancer treatments.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the minister communicated his support for this option a number of times in this House, recognizing the hardship faced by many Nova Scotians when they receive that cancer diagnosis. Potential savings from at-home cancer medications would be a great benefit to our health care system, and the money would be redirected to front-line care. Most importantly, we could ease the pressure on families who have loved ones who may be travelling back and forth here to Halifax, in many cases, or in hospital for long periods of time to receive that treatment.

I know it's a long-term game when you're talking about a national Pharmacare program, so I'm hoping that the minister might have some data on how to make this happen in the short term. Do you have some data on that or not, Mr. Minister?

MR. GLAVINE: I thank the member opposite for the question. Again, the former Health and Wellness Minister understands that oral cancer treatments are not included in the Canada Health Act; therefore, provinces have to pick up the cost. What I can say is that currently all those who are getting oral cancer treatments at home in Nova Scotia are funded in a number of different ways. The province currently puts in about \$11 million or \$12 million to that, and we know there are other oral cancer treatments that we will put on the formulary and that Nova Scotians will benefit from.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

NAT. RES. - SPRUCE BUDWORM: N.S. FORESTS - PROTECTION

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. In Cape Breton in the 1970s and 1980s - and Mr. Speaker, I know we wouldn't remember that - 1.2 million hectares of woodland were destroyed by the spruce budworm. Unfortunately, 3.2 million hectares of woodland have been affected by the spruce budworm in Quebec in recent months; I will table that. A spokesman for the Department of Natural Resources states the spruce budworm is working its way toward us. My question to the minister is, what is the department doing to protect Nova Scotia forests from the spruce budworm?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that question. The spruce budworm is at its point in the lifecycle where it will come back to Nova Scotia. Our department has been engaged in preparations for that event for some time now. We currently have the advantage of seeing the activities that are going on in New Brunswick and Quebec where they are dealing with an outbreak of the spruce budworm. We are working closely with our partners to prepare and learn from the best practices that are out there.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister and I agree that we're not going to put a welcome sign up for the budworm in Nova Scotia, for sure. The budworm has been found just 25 kilometres outside of the New Brunswick border. Only Cape Breton forests were affected last time when there was a significant outbreak of spruce budworm in Nova Scotia. There are fears this time the pest could branch out from Cape Breton. My question is, will the minister provide a timeline to give woodlot owners confidence that the department has a plan to protect their lands?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we've been working directly with the industry and private woodlot owners on this particular file to keep them up to speed. In terms of timeline, we're probably about two years away from a return of the spruce budworm to Nova Scotia. Our department is actively engaged in all pursuits to prepare for that and to ensure that the damage that comes - because there will be some damage. That is undeniable and we cannot escape that, but we will be prepared to mitigate that damage to the best of our ability.

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

EECD: EAST. PASSAGE SCH. PROPOSAL - DETAILS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in 2012, the province announced funding for a new high school for Eastern Passage so that students would no longer have to travel to Cole Harbour. I will table that. But last week, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development suggested that the school may not go forward, telling CBC that if

a school board says it's not a priority for them, then we'll have to sit down and take a look at that. I will also table that.

My question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is this: what can she tell parents in Eastern Passage who are concerned that they will lose their new school?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the people in Eastern Passage, the same as I told everybody when I did my interviews, that a new school was announced for Eastern Passage prior to us coming into government. When we formed government in October 2013, we said that we would honour the commitments that had been made by the previous government and we intend to do that.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable minister for her response. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has said that it was a political decision for the previous government to commit to a new school. But at the time of the announcement from the *Chronicle Herald* story I just tabled, Chris Peters, an Eastern Passage parent, said, "Our kids won't have to wait in the school bus lineup at 6:30 [a.m.] . . ."

Since approximately 500 students are currently bused to Cole Harbour each day, what assurance can the minister actually give us that they will receive a school of their own?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I just did.

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

TIR: NOVA STAR - FUNDING INCREASES

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of TIR. Today, Nova Scotians learned that the *Nova Star* ferry has accessed nearly half of the \$13 million committed by government for this year in just four months. In a press release, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal expressed concerns the *Nova Star* may not meet its financial goals and he may have to move to a "plan B".

My question for the minister is, is it possible that four months in, Nova Scotians will have to add to the \$13 million already committed to *Nova Star* to keep the service going this season?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. What we announced today was an adjustment from an RFP - which would be the traditional request for proposals - to an alternative procurement model that gives us flexibility, that doesn't restrict us to timelines, and that gives our department and our government the

opportunity to dive deep into the issue, to look at the Yarmouth ferry from the business model with operations, marketing, the vessel - those types of things.

What I can tell the honourable member, the House, and all Nova Scotians is, we've made the commitment for this year; \$13 million is on the table for *Nova Star*. Every indication from their officials is that things are looking good. There has been a recovery in the market. Ridership and bookings are up. The demographic identified through the marketing endeavours in the northeastern United States has been working. We'll take their word for it, but at the end of the day, we want to have the flexibility as the government to ensure the most important thing - that there's continuous service that's stable for the people of Nova Scotia. We'll get there. Thank you very much.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a very important transportation link to that end of the province. We agree that there was an ill-conceived notion by a former government to do away with the service to begin with.

The challenges with the *Nova Star* have been long-standing and expensive. The minister himself said, ". . . we've spent a lot of money so far, and we fully expect the company to meet their financial goals." I will table that. At the same time, he indicated that he intends to move to a non-competitive procurement policy as a possibility. I guess my question would be, what happened? Is the RFP not ready to go? Should Nova Scotians be bracing themselves for another *Nova Star* emergency infusion of cash?

MR. MACLELLAN: No, that's not the case at all. What we looked at was, with a traditional RFP, you have a very rigid set of parameters. There are 30 days to file the RFP, to receive bids and submissions from all across the province, the country, and the globe.

At the end of the day, we need control of this operation. We've learned a lot over the last number of years. We're understanding the business model. We know where the market is. We understand what it needs for the operational side, for the marketing side, and of course to increase the ridership. We're going to understand from experts, in the community in Yarmouth and on an international level, what we need, what's the right fit. We're not going to close that and restrict that by any means.

We're responsible for this file and we're going to do a good job. We're going to ensure, for the people of Yarmouth and the people of Nova Scotia, that this operation is sustainable and viable for the long term. We're going to continue to do that. The control is in our hands and we're glad to take that on for the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - VALLEY REG. HOSP.:
DIALYSIS/HOSPICE - CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week in estimates, we learned that the planned dialysis and hospice at Valley Regional Hospital would be housed in separate buildings. Construction season is now underway. The community expected this announcement in 2014, frankly. My question for the minister is, when will the shovels hit the ground on the new hospice at Valley Regional?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I want to inform the member opposite that yes, this is a project long overdue. There has been great community commitment for the project. We essentially had to uncouple it from the hospital itself in terms of having it joined. I think the concept that we have arrived at now is actually the original concept that the committee and the people of the Valley started out with. It will be before Treasury Board within the next few days . . .

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

The honourable Acting Leader of The New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, could I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to draw the attention of the members of the House to a guest in our west gallery who is here today, who I made reference to during Question Period, and her name is Darlene Worth. I would like members to give her a warm welcome to our Legislature. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

[2:50 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[3:02 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 89 - Boat Harbour Act.

Bill No. 91 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

Bill No. 95 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

Bill No. 104 - Milford Haven Fire Protection Commissioners Act.

Bill No. 106 - Colchester Regional Development Agency Act.

without amendments, and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: 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. 97.

Bill No. 97 - Quality-improvement Information Protection Act.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 97 now be read a third time and do pass.

The Department of Health and Wellness is implementing a provincial patient safety incident reporting system. This will enable a more modern and strategic approach to system-wide provincial evaluation planning and, ultimately, an overall improvement to patient safety.

Under the new patient-centric model of health care, if one health care facility in one region is producing positive patient outcomes we want to be able to quantify that data and share those lessons across the entire provincial system. This is one of the benefits of a united single provincial health authority plus the IWK. Mr. Speaker, under existing legislation, once data is transferred outside the control of a health authority that data is no longer legally safeguarded from litigation and public scrutiny.

Existing legal protections only apply to quality reviews done in a health authority. Mr. Speaker, research shows that a critical aspect of a safety culture is the ability to report patient safety incidents in a supportive environment. Information collected from health authorities by the Department of Health and Wellness will be aggregate data that has personal identifiers removed. Let me be clear, this does not reduce or impede the flow or access to data or information as it currently stands - this only extends the current protections to include the Department of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Speaker, the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act is the key to unlocking meaningful provincial data analysis that will help achieve positive results for all Nova Scotians. With that, I thank you for the time.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this bill for few minutes on third reading today. If there's a bill in front of this House that will improve the safety and quality of patient data, it's something that's good for the province, it's good for the medical and health care system.

Mr. Speaker, we had a communication system back a number of years ago when I worked in the health care field that we could input data into a data bank but we couldn't transfer it to any other parts of the province. It was good in the hospitals in Cape Breton but it wasn't available to hospitals in Halifax so if we had information that needed to be transferred from anywhere in Cape Breton to the QEII hospital where somebody may need care and access to information, it wasn't available. I hope this system will allow that to happen. I hope the protection of this information is there; it will improve safety, it will improve reporting. I hope that's what takes place with this bill and we'll see how it works out. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I want to thank my colleague for his comments on this piece of legislation. I now move third reading of Bill No. 97.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 97. 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. 98.

Bill No. 98 - Chartered Professional Accountants Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my honourable colleague, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, I move third reading of Bill No. 98.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 98. 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. 75.

Bill No. 75 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 75 be read for a second time.

Today I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the amendments to the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. These amendments are intended to address the needed changes to subdivision exemption provisions contained in two Statutes. They will improve the manner in which the subdivision exemptions are interpreted and documented in the land registration system and will provide some authority to resolve subdivision problems in certain circumstances. In addition, the changes will improve the consistency, interpretation and application of the legislation and to address land registration requirements under the Land Registration Act.

Mr. Speaker, I expect that the enactment of these amendments will reduce the incidence of errors in the province's land registry and remove unneeded obstacles for property owners when land is being conveyed. If passed, the changes will also increase certainty for property owners and help municipalities to ensure compliance with subdivision requirements.

Mr. Speaker, there are four specific changes to the Municipal Government Act contained in the bill before you. The first relates to the subdivision of land by watercourse. The change will clarify that a watercourse does not subdivide a property unless it is deemed to create a natural boundary. If enacted this will ensure MGA will be consistent with the Land Registration Act and with current practice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to advise you that at Law Amendments Committee we will propose that these provisions regarding water course not go forward at this time in the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. We've been consulting with Halifax and the consultation will continue to make sure that the HRM Charter amendments are well-suited to the needs of both the province and the municipality.

Mr. Speaker, the remaining measures are reflected in the amendments to the Municipal Government Act and in parallel provisions in the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. The first of these will deal with deemed or de facto consolidations of land. Existing provisions permit the consolidation of adjoining parcels of land that were commonly owned and used together prior to 1987. With the amendment, land owners will no longer have to create a consolidated property description. It will also require that lots be migrated to the land registry before they are consolidated.

Another measure addresses the requirements for documentation when a landowner is using an exemption for municipal subdivision of approval to subdivide land. The amendment will replace the current vague and ambiguous provision concerning the evidence required to prove an exemption from the requirement for subdivision approval.

In its place will be a provision that clarifies the necessity to record or register a document in the Registry of Deeds to create a subdivision under an exemption subject to several clear criteria.

The final provision will allow the Registrar General of Land Titles to correct subdivision problems in some circumstances. It will give property owners and municipalities a remedy when errors occur in the land registration system. With this change the Registrar General of Land Titles will be enabled to validate a subdivision under the two Statutes, if it involves partials that are registered under the Land Registration Act and it would not be practical to otherwise rectify, repeal, or nullify the subdivision.

Mr. Speaker, all the measures I've outlined are fairly technical in nature but together they will add clarity to the existing rules and make it easier for property owners to transact their lands. There will be no financial impact on the province or municipalities as a result of these amendments. At the same time, they will reduce the risk of provincial liability by improving the integrity of the land registry system. With that I'll conclude my remarks and look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his comments. This bill is absolutely very technical in its nature and I'm still actually looking into it and having caucus review it with me. It is our hope that these changes are totally for the benefit of Nova Scotians and that they truly do remove all obstacles to either buying or selling of property and that it increases certainty for property owners when they make investment in land or in a home.

I understand that the landowners are not required to use these exemptions and are permitted to use the municipal subdivision approval process to subdivide or consolidate their properties but I'm still a little unclear about that.

I do hope that the minister will speak to this and explain a little bit why the two processes are required instead of one clear-cut process. We certainly will listen carefully in the Committee on Law Amendments to see if all parties affected by these changes are supportive, and I look forward to speaking to the minister on this bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: I appreciate the comments of my colleague. As I indicated in my comments some of the details are very technical so what I will do is arrange a meeting with my colleague and one of the members on staff to go into some of the finer technical details to respond to my colleague's questions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 75 and I want to thank my colleague for her comments.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 75. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 108.

Bill No. 108 - Financial Measures (2015) Act.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place for as long as my voice will hold up to speak to this particular Financial Measures (2015) Bill. I think most people in this Chamber recognize that (Interruption) I have quite a few lozenges; they don't seem to be doing the trick.

People in the Chamber recognize that when the budget is introduced into our Legislature, and it makes its way through with the procedures we have, that generally accompanying that legislation is this piece of legislation, The Financial Measures Bill. It is an omnibus bill, which means that it will make changes in a number of different other pieces of legislation in order for the budget to have effect.

So, contained in the Financial Measures (2015) Bill in front of us today are primarily four areas of policy that accompanies the budget. One area is to give effect to the 1,400 fees that have been increased, some of them quite substantially. These are things like vehicle registration fees, motor vehicle fees, ambulance fees and fees for getting death certificates and birth certificates, and probably fees for getting liquor licences. As I said, there are 1,400 of them. The budget that the government introduced increased all of these fees.

I'm not going to dwell too long on that aspect of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill except to say that I find it interesting that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board would bring this forward when she was so critical of previous governments of both political stripes on this side of the House for increasing fees without documenting the actual administrative cost increase that is part of each fee that goes up. I have been in this Chamber and I've had the opportunity to increase these fees myself on one occasion and then the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was over here and she was most critical of the

increasing of fees without documenting that the administrative costs associated with each one of those fees was going up by as much as the fee was increasing.

I would just like to point out that the advice or the criticism she had for others, she hasn't applied to herself. She has not provided the documentation, the analysis that would demonstrate that the increases in the fees are tied to the administrative costs of these fee increases. It's one of those things that happens. I think it happened to my former colleague, Graham Steele when he was the Minister of Finance; I think he increased fees and he had been quite critical when he was in Opposition. I had never had that same criticism.

When I was in Opposition I recognized that administrative costs can go up but I also think that if you are a strong proponent of something then you should maintain that position whether you're in Opposition or whether you're in government. Not everybody subscribes to those ideas, I guess.

The other part of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill which I'm not going to spend much time on is the part that makes certain changes with respect to the justice of the peace centre hours, that will allow for the Domestic Violence Intervention Act to allow Provincial Court judges and Family Court judges to issue emergency protection orders in addition to justices of the peace and some other provisions. In fact, this is a piece in the Financial Measures (2015) Bill that I and my caucus actually support. We think probably this is the best thing - it's probably the only good thing about the Financial Measures (2015) Bill that's in front of us. It is something that we could support wholeheartedly if we didn't have these other dastardly parts in the bill.

There are two elements of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill that are very, very troubling. One of the elements of this bill that I think is very troubling to me is - somebody called the government's approach to the former Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism as having blown up the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Some people might find it odd that I would stand up and talk about my concerns about rural development, but I'm a proud Nova Scotian who was born and raised in rural Nova Scotia. My mom still lives in Antigonish County. (Interruption) Unfortunately, she's not represented by the member for Antigonish; she's in the Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie part of the county. To put a plug in for the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie, there was some asphalt laid in front of my mother's home not so long ago (Interruptions) And the member for Glace Bay. Thank you very much for that.

I have family throughout rural Nova Scotia. Because of my roots in rural Nova Scotia, I am very concerned about our rural communities and the future of rural Nova Scotia. I don't necessarily see things the way some members of the government see the rural economy and rural Nova Scotia. I am profoundly saddened as I see the erosion of services to rural Nova Scotia in our health care centres and in our other public institutions. We have seen the closing of Justice Centres. We have seen the loss of tourism visitor

information centres. We have seen a significant change in the way some of our provincial parks will be operated. We're seeing residents who live in areas where they have to cross a body of water to go to work, to get to health care appointments, to go to school, to visit family and friends - we're seeing them face increased transportation costs if a ferry is involved. There are so many measures that this government has taken that will have a real significant and damaging impact on the rural communities and people who live in rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, it's as if the government has given up, and that troubles me. I hope that's not the case, but it looks like it is the case, and it troubles me very much. As someone who comes from the rural communities and who loves and appreciates rural Nova Scotia, I think we have a province that should not be divided into communities that become more marginalized and communities that are bolstered.

The approach the government has taken - and with the ending, the elimination of a department of government that was very dedicated to the rural development part of their mandate - I am profoundly concerned.

If we look at the Ivany report, it makes a very strong case for the importance of a growing and vibrant Halifax to the entire province. But it also makes a case for the importance of a vibrant and healthy rural economy. I don't know that people really understand - people who live here in the urban centre, which I've lived in for quite a long time now, I'm very happy living here, I love this city. I am always very mindful that so much of the prosperity of this province rests on the primary industries outside of metro - the forests, the oceans, the agricultural farmlands of our province, the mines. These resources, the sustainable resources in our province, offer us enormous potential. We need to protect these resources, invest in them. But they require a workforce, and a workforce requires a community, and then communities need services. They need schools, and they need health care services, and they need good transportation systems.

When I look at the elimination of the rural development part of the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and see all the other measures that this government has rolled out that reduce employment in the rural communities and reduce services and reduce reasons for people to stay in the rural communities, I worry very much about that and what the future will hold, and that perhaps the government has given up. I guess we'll only know as time unfolds whether or not that is the case.

I know I am not alone in worrying about this, Mr. Speaker. I know that municipal government leaders are worried about this, and I know that civil society - the volunteers in the fire departments and the clergy and all the volunteers in the various religious denominations around the province - are worried. I know that health care workers are very worried about where this government is headed with respect to the consolidation of so much in Halifax, the consolidation of the new health authority in Halifax - and that doesn't

just mean that people end up sitting around a board table making decisions in Halifax, it could mean that services get consolidated, health care services.

Look at the government's response to the physicians, the obstetrics across the rural community. This was a government that had a contract, a legal and binding contract, with physicians and they ignored it, and the physicians had to kick up a stink. Doctors don't really like to have to do that. Physicians prefer to do their jobs, to focus on patients, to meet the needs of the people they're caring for. You have to push physicians pretty much up against a wall to get them to say no, we need to make this visible to the public - people in the public need to know what's going on and what's at stake.

With the obstetricians what's at stake is profound, really, in terms of services to women and families in our rural communities. Yes, family doctors can deliver babies but only if there are obstetrical services in the area. Will their medical insurance protect them? And in high-risk pregnancies, you need the specialization.

We have midwifery services in two different areas of our province. We have it in the Antigonish-Guysborough-Strait area and we have it on the South Shore. Those midwives are supported by obstetrical services. If we lose obstetrics and obstetricians, people will have to travel. Young families are not prepared to travel for hours for services; that is not the culture of young families or of young people.

If we want to attract and retain young families in our rural areas, we have to have a solid plan for the provision of good services, good education, good health care, good transportation and other services, recreational services that people will be looking for.

I'm very concerned about the way this government has approached rural development. It has disappeared now from the lexicon; there's nobody responsible. We have a Department of Business, and so I don't disagree that we need to do more to encourage private sector growth and development but we have to understand the context, the reality of our province, and we have rural communities that are struggling, that are hurting.

I look at the community I grew up in. After Halloween my mother and I always have a phone conversation and we compare how many kids I've had in the Hydrostone in the north end of Halifax and how many kids she's had. I've watched the numbers dwindle - she's really excited if she gets four or five children coming on Halloween. This is the challenge for this government; it's the challenge for all of us - and we should not give up.

I think my colleague, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's, indicated that if you combined the number of full-time and part-time jobs that have been lost since this government came to power, it's close to 22,000 jobs, full-time and part-time, and most of those come out of the rural economy. So I've heard nothing from any of the government members, nothing from the Finance and Treasury Board Minister, and there's nothing in

the budget to give me reassurance that this is a priority and this is something that we will see significant initiatives and movement around.

The final part of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill that I want to talk about - and this has an application for the rural economy as well - are the changes that have been made to the Film Tax Credit in our province. Now, much has been said already in this Chamber about the Film Tax Credit and what it meant to the province, to the growth of that industry. There are probably a lot of things that could have been said that we haven't said yet, and we'll never have time to say. But I am very concerned about the way the Film Tax Credit has been gutted essentially, profoundly changed by this government.

First of all, let's talk about the process. We had an election where we had a Premier, who at the time wasn't Premier but who, as the Leader of his Party, made a five-year commitment to the industry that if you elect me government I will extend the Film Tax Credit for five years and provide stability for the industry. People in the industry bought into that - I know, because I've talked to a lot of them - and they are very disappointed that the Premier has not kept that commitment. There's no way that the Premier or any member of his Cabinet could claim that they have - they simply haven't, full stop. It's not open for debate, the facts are the facts.

Then we had the Broten tax review, the McNeil tax review which was something that the Premier promised that he would do in government, that there would be a tax review. You know, that tax review in fact talked about the Film Tax Credit - it had a little section in the report that said, take the five-year extension of the Film Tax Credit that the government had committed to, use that five years as a period to work with the industry to sunset the Film Tax Credit, to develop a new business model for the industry and to work with the industry and support them in transitioning to a new model.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it might have been a sensible plan. That probably would have been a good way to go and it might have gotten a lot of support - I think we might even have supported it here in the NDP caucus, because it seems like a reasonable way. You don't suddenly pull the rug out from under an industry that employs 2,700 people and has an impact of more than \$130 million on the province and has really been a significant boost to many communities, including the rural communities, communities like the Town of Chester.

We've heard about the incredible impact that Haven has had in that town, and the people who are talking about that impact aren't the people in the film industry. They are the small businesses. They are people like the Premier before he came to this place. They are small, self-employed individuals who employ maybe one or two people in a small business. They are the people who the Premier says are the backbone of the economy. How could you pull the rug out from under those people by dramatically changing the business plan for this industry just overnight?

I think it's really important that we acknowledge that we don't know the changes the government will be making as this moves forward. We really don't know what kind of impact that is going to have. It will remain to be seen. I've seen so many different kinds of assessments of what the impact of this is going to be. I've seen people who have worked in the industry for years say that the impact is going to be that only one or two really big productions are going to get all the money that is available, and that this reflects the government's intention to just focus on large, flashy opportunities with very large, established businesses, and a lot of the little production companies will suffer dramatically and they will disappear.

I sure hope that's not the case, Mr. Speaker, because if that happens, we'll also lose a lot of very young, creative people in our province, and that will contribute to the demographic challenges we have and the problems we have.

There was that report in 2008, which I tabled last week, which was done by an arm's-length group of economists for Film Nova Scotia. It showed that the Film Tax Credit had so many other benefits to the province. The Film Tax Credit resulted in immigration into the province, people coming here to work in the film industry and staying. Just through the time that there has been controversy about the changes the government has made to the Film Tax Credit, I've met people from all over the world who have moved to Nova Scotia to work in this industry.

Today I asked the Premier about the CBC. CBC Television in Halifax has the distinction of being designated one of three national centres for CBC productions. The presence and the growth of the film industry were the primary consideration when those decisions were taken. So that leaves Halifax, Toronto, and Vancouver having been designated by the CBC as national centres for production.

We have a proud tradition of production out of our region. I think Don Messer was probably the first show produced here, and then Singalong Jubilee would be another one. Look at This Hour Has 22 Minutes - it's a 23-year production out of Nova Scotia, and we're now in danger of losing a production like that.

It would be so catastrophic to our province if CBC Halifax was no longer designated a national production centre as a result of changes to the Film Tax Credit and the presence of this really robust and talented group of craftspeople. I toured the new CBC building out on Mumford Road last week. It's a phenomenal sight, I have to say. Just a beautiful, state-of-the-art layout.

We all know that CBC has its own challenges these days with the cuts that it has had to absorb as a result of changes to its budget from the federal government. I can't imagine if that is compounded by the impact of a shrinking production community and productions here in our province. That's no laughing matter. The possibility of this is no laughing matter. People need to take this very seriously and I suggest they read the report

- the arm's-length, third-party socio-economic assessment and impact report. This isn't me making things up. This is in that report.

There are so many things that are troubling about how the changes were done and what their impact might be, but I think one of the pieces of information that has really troubled me is the spin that the government has put on this whole issue. The spin that they reached a deal with the industry, as if there was a negotiation underway. What you had was, in reality, a government that failed to consult, broke a promise, brought in measures that would decimate an industry, and an industry that went into overdrive - panic mode - and spent a huge amount of human capital trying to educate the Finance and Treasury Board Department, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister, and the Premier on the impact these measures were actually going to have.

There was no negotiation. There was a kind of education going on. To the extent that they were successful in getting the ear of the government, I congratulate those groups. They did a phenomenal job in getting the government's attention. I feel very concerned, I guess, about some of the underlying messages that were given by the government and members of the government about the motivation of this industry and the problems that were part of how the government spun the industry, talking about the Film Tax Credit as a subsidy that nobody else got.

Well you know what? The MOU between the government and universities is an MOU that nobody else has. We have all kinds of different economic activity, public and private, and the tools that government have to support various sectors are determined by the features of those sectors. One size does not fit all.

This is a sector that has its own unique features and set of characteristics, a sector that needs to be supported for a whole variety of reasons. Some of the things that were said about this sector were very troubling.

Mr. Speaker, I can feel my voice starting to tell me that it's going to have a bit of a problem shortly so before I start choking, I'm going to bring my comments to a conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, the Financial Measures (2015) Bill has these components in it that we are very concerned about. I think the Film Tax Credit is probably the most egregious in some ways because it is an assault on a vibrant part of our economy. Beyond the economic impact of this particular industry, it is also the soul of our community in many respects. I mean I think the things that we, as Nova Scotians - I saw something that I think the government or some group had done a survey on Nova Scotians' attitudes toward the province and what have you, and big surprise - Nova Scotians overwhelmingly loved being Nova Scotians. No surprise there, there are so many amazing things to love about this province and I think our culture and our identity are certainly a big part of that.

The film industry is an industry that has some parts which reflect our own stories. Look at *The Book of Negroes*. Do you know that that was the most-watched CBC program since I don't know when, like going back to the 1960s? There hasn't been a series shown on CBC that has had that viewing audience for over 30 years or more. That production was largely made in Nova Scotia and is a Nova Scotian story.

Mr. Speaker, I will take my place now, with those few remarks, expressing just for myself, on behalf of myself - no one else at this stage - my deep disappointment in the budget and in the Financial Measures (2015) Bill. I only wish that my voice could have held out a bit longer, to talk about all the social groups that have been sidelined by this government and its budget - not necessarily part of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill but nevertheless, needing to be put on the record. Thank you.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Let me just begin by thanking the previous speaker for her remarks and I'm sure on behalf of everybody, wishing her well as she recovers from the malady that she apparently has. Although her voice is a little off today, Mr. Speaker, she certainly made her points clear here in the Legislature this afternoon and I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and say a few words on the Financial Measures (2015) Bill which, I think, all members now know gives effect, or at least legal effect to many of the budget provisions that have been before this House since early April.

I think it's important to put this Financial Measures (2015) Bill and the budget generally in context, Mr. Speaker, in the context of our times. Nova Scotia is at a very difficult place in its history. I think all members agree on that. Certainly in the months leading up to the budget Nova Scotians were told, repeatedly, about how difficult the government's financial position was, how much sacrifice they would be asked to make, and how hard it is to be in government today.

The greater hardship, the one that we really should be recognizing, is the hardship faced by too many of our fellow Nova Scotians of all ages, but particularly young Nova Scotians just starting out, hoping to live and work in our province where jobs are so scarce, particularly in rural areas where the opportunity to get a good a job and earn a decent income and build a career is harder than it has been in a very long time.

Just to put that statement in context, when you look at the job numbers, Statistics Canada is very clear - the labour force of Nova Scotia has shrunk dramatically in the last four years. In the Annapolis Valley, for example, 3,700 people have left the labour force altogether, and I think we know where most of them are. They're out West. Or, they have given up hope for a job and they've retired or taken themselves out of the job market - 3,700 people. I'm sure that's more than New Minas, probably around the same as the Town

of Kentville in size; they are gone from the labour force in the Annapolis Valley just in the last four years.

Cape Breton, the labour force there - and by the way, Mr. Speaker, these are the most recent results covering March 31, 2011, to March 31, 2015 - in Cape Breton 5,500 Nova Scotians have left the labour force. That, I'm sure, is like losing the Town of New Waterford, Glace Bay, and more. We know where they are - again, out West, or have given up hope. Northern Nova Scotia, the North Shore, the Northumberland part of our province from Cumberland County right across to Antigonish, 5,700 people left the labour force there and, again, we know where they are. In southern Nova Scotia, the South Shore, the number is 3,500 who have left the labour force. You add that all up and that is a loss of 18,400 people who should be working or looking for work with some hope here in Nova Scotia today who have left the labour market in the last four years. Only Halifax is up. In fairness to Halifax, Halifax has gained 6,500 jobs. And that is a good thing.

When you look over all this in the context of our times, that our labour force is shrinking in rural areas and the government is now on its second budget, and I think Nova Scotians who have been told to brace for change, correctly, we're ready for change, but I truly believe that now, for many Nova Scotians they are asking a very good question about the budget and the terms of the Financial Measures (2015) Bill and that is, in this time where jobs are so short, where people are giving up hope by the thousands, where's the vision for the future, where is the hope for prosperity, and where do I fit in as a Nova Scotian into a greater plan to make things better?

And this budget does not answer that question. Yes, it trods down a very familiar path of many budgets before that Nova Scotians have seen come and go. It raises their fees and their taxes, increases the cost of living or doing business in the province like has always been the case - 1,400 fees and taxes, in this case; some by a few per cent, some by over 60 per cent. There is no vision or plan in raising the fees and taxes that Nova Scotians pay; in fact, that's the opposite. Yes, there have been some cuts to services or grants to our community groups. I will talk more about this in a moment, but for the record, those cuts may be small in dollar terms relatively speaking, but they have a big social impact.

Where is the vision in raising our fees and taxes and cutting back on some grants to community groups? There is no hope in a budget that focuses on those things alone. Where is the jobs plan? Where is the sign that instead of raising the rates of tax or the fees all the time, the tax base might be allowed to grow? It's missing. In the face of a shrinking labour force, the number one thing a government should be focused on is ways to kick-start our economy and create new jobs, or at least put the conditions in place to create new jobs.

Yes, the government should be tight with its spending to help have a sustainable and balanced budget, but I think Nova Scotians know that on its own, that is no way to run

a province. It has to be coupled with ways of growing the top line of government by increasing the tax base itself. Where is the plan for that?

Faced with this challenge of looking for new ways to create jobs and opportunities and wealth, as we know, the government actually looked at one of the new ways, which is onshore gas development and hydraulic fracturing, and banned it. The government has made its choice and they can continue to defend it, but in the context of the dire need to try new ways of growing our economy and creating jobs, Nova Scotians are asking, why would you actually stop one of the new ways?

I know we covered this earlier in Question Period, but I think we saw a very good contrast of views on how to do that. The Premier, leading the government, says we banned it because you need to consult with First Nations, and you need to know what you're going to do with the fracking waste water, and you need to make sure communities are there, and you need to make sure that the regulations are there. Mr. Speaker, we all know that. We all agree that those things need to be addressed. We all are respectful of the need for consultation with First Nations people. We're all certain that we have to make sure that we have strong regulations in place that protect our environment.

But faced with that same set of facts, the government sees excuses for doing nothing, excuses for banning a new way of creating jobs - not even wanting to try. I believe the NDP has the same view, to be fair. But for us, yes, those are challenges, but they are challenges to be overcome so that the opportunity to create a whole new onshore industry is provided to Nova Scotians, particularly in rural areas, where the jobs will be and where the royalties could be collected and where they can be invested back in those communities and where they can be used to help balance the provincial budget by growing the top line of the equation, not just cutting at the bottom. That is a plan.

I know that it might seem odd to draw a direct comparison between the government's actions on onshore gas development and their actions with our film industry, but the concept is exactly the same. Here we have a \$115 million piece of our economy employing 2,700 people across the province, rural and urban, and the government actually, blindingly, kicked the legs out from under them. In the context of the need for jobs, in the context of the need to grow the top line of the province and give people an opportunity to build their own future here and pay taxes here, the government found a way to mess that up. Well that's no vision; it's the opposite of vision.

I know, and I hope all members now know, from talking to the thousands of people who came here to Province House, how offended people who work in the film industry were when they heard the government tell them that 99 per cent of them don't pay tax. Every single one of them pay tax, and proudly. In fact, I think a lot of people who were here that day, when 3,000 people showed up at our door here at the Legislature, they were really struck by what a young crowd it was. What a vibrant, dynamic - and I will add, polite - crowd that it was.

There were people with baby carriages or strollers, young children in face paint waving their signs, trying to support their industry and many of them were even apologetic for being here because they'd say, we've actually never protested before; we've never been here before; we didn't imagine we'd ever be doing this, but our livelihoods are now on the line. The very people, young families with jobs or their own business, working here, buying houses here, taking out mortgages here, having children here, paying their taxes here, the very people that Nova Scotia needs more of.

That is why the government's actions to gut the film industry and the government's decision to ban onshore gas development put together are such a sad record. Yes, they can focus on cutting a grant to the Mental Health Association or a grant to the eating disorder service groups. They can look at cutting grants to many of our community groups that do important things, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, they can focus on that if they want, but it is no way to build a great province. Take the same energy and the same effort and put it into actually finding new sources of opportunity and we will have a much better result - that is where we are so different.

I had a good laugh the other day when the Minister of Energy tried to characterize our support for onshore gas development as the Jed Clampett approach. It was a funny line and I think many of us had a good laugh, but it was very telling. Yes, Jed Clampett shot his rifle into the shale rock in his home community, fracturing that rock, and up came bubbling crude. That's actually not what we're advocating, but you get the picture.

It's hard to believe actually that is something that the Minister of Energy would advocate, but the Minister of Energy neglected to mention that Jed Clampett was a man who lived in a rural area, who became very wealthy and he built a big mansion; he even had a cement pond. What's wrong with that? I don't know what the government has against people from rural areas actually making a few bucks, but that's what this ban does.

There would be no Jed Clampett-type success stories in Nova Scotia and if you think this is just a rural issue, I will point out that the Clampetts moved to Beverley Hills. They became the biggest customers of the First Bank of Beverley Hills and I believe Mr. Drysdale was their banker; he was a city person, but he did very well. Even Miss Hathaway got a raise when the Clampetts moved to their town - a funny way of saying a point that I believe is important. The restoration of growth and opportunity in rural Nova Scotia is not just a rural Nova Scotia story. It is an all-of-Nova Scotia story, because what has been true in the past is absolutely true now and will always be true in the future.

The wealth of this province, particularly the natural resource wealth, comes from our rural areas. Mining, fishing, drilling for gas offshore and onshore, forestry, and manufacturing are a rural Nova Scotia wealth-creation story that benefits Halifax. It helps pay for the office towers and universities and hospitals of the capital city and this Legislature itself, Mr. Speaker. People often like to point out that rural Nova Scotia needs

Halifax. That might be in some ways, but do you know what? Halifax needs a vibrant and prosperous rural Nova Scotia, too, and that's what got lost.

Mr. Speaker, Jed Clampett and his family worked in the film and television production business, obviously, and there's another connection between the way this government looks at opportunities to create jobs. They'll never make a show like that or any other in Nova Scotia, if the government has its way, unchallenged. That has become very clear.

There was talk earlier in this House about the government's promise to the mining industry to rebate their fuel tax - which is done now, as you know, in fishing and other things - that the only fuel tax that would be paid by the mining industry would be fuel burned driving on our roads, which goes to pay for them - which is fair, like everybody else. But the fuel they burn in the actual generation of jobs and wealth in mining, much like fishing, should have that rebate.

They have broken that promise. It's becoming a theme. Even a promise in writing doesn't hold them back from breaking promises. Even if it was written into their election platform with tick boxes by the year, they would do it. That doesn't seem to hold them back.

The point has been made about broken promises. I won't dwell on it. You know how much I would hate to dwell on the topic of Liberal Government broken promises. More importantly, it ties into the government's interest or ability to create the winning conditions for jobs or not.

You see that in other areas they have either messed up jobs or they've banned them. In this Financial Measures (2015) Bill, in this budget, the mining incentive grant was actually cut. The savings? A grand total of \$150,000. This should sound familiar: a government that promises an industry to support them and strengthen the supports for them both breaks that promise and then cuts them. The same as film, the same in mining.

There are great opportunities out there, Mr. Speaker, including in mining. It's a very competitive industry. The companies that are engaged in exploration and development and extraction have to decide every day where in the world they are going to deploy to get their best return. Nova Scotia has now taken a step backward in that competition to attract that investment in those jobs here to our province.

It is inconceivable that a government would look at the film industry and the 2,700 jobs that go with it, the opportunities in onshore gas development and the 1,000 jobs that go with it, and the mining industry and the great potential there that goes with it, and put them all behind the eight ball.

Mr. Speaker, I dare say that the Canadian Mental Health Association would have their grant to do the work they do for people in home communities who have mental illness or addiction issues if this government had been serious about finding ways to create jobs, to create the condition for jobs, and actually put in place the supports to allow industry to grow and not be banned or to shrink. A much better way of going about balancing the budget is right out there to be had. It's right there but they are not reaching for it. Instead they would rather tell the Canadian National Institute for the Blind that they have to cut back.

If the government truly didn't have any sense or vision of where they wanted to take the province in the past year - the budget makes clear that they don't - then they were handed a blueprint, a road map. It was handed to them a year ago February when the One Nova Scotia report was issued by the commission, the Ivany report, with its 19 recommendations for how to turn around our province. We can only imagine what kind of budget we might have seen today, if the government were serious about those 19 recommendations and took them to heart or if they had been enacted in law in this Legislature so that a budget had to reflect them as we have constantly proposed. We can only imagine how different this Financial Measures (2015) Bill might look.

Just think about it. The Ivany report says we have to be serious about our demographic challenge, about growing the population of the province, about looking at ways to keep young people here and bring some new young people here. Would a government that was serious about meeting that goal cut the film industry? No. They might have the Ivany report up on a bookshelf somewhere in the Premier's Office or the Department of Finance and Treasury Board; they clearly did not bring it down when they were putting the budget together. It sat there because no one could ever explain how cutting the film industry, cutting back on the mining incentives, banning hydraulic fracturing onshore could ever be squared with the need identified in the Ivany report to grow the population of the province, particularly for young people.

The Ivany report had some pretty clear goals about workforce participation, particularly with underrepresented groups, to bring the African Nova Scotian population workforce up to the provincial average, to bring the Aboriginal population workforce up to the provincial average. You know I have met with representatives of both groups - they are there, and have been for a long time, with recommendations about how to do that. They want a full participation in the economic and social life of our province.

Or young people to bring the youth unemployment rate in Nova Scotia down to the national average. Those are important Ivany goals.

What kind of budget would make the social cuts that this one has made, would cut off the economic opportunities that this one has cut off if it were serious about achieving those Ivany goals? We would have a very different budget today, if they had just looked at those before they drafted this one.

Immigration, same thing. Immigration is a big part of how we're going to turn this province around, bringing in people from around the world who want to join us in building a more prosperous future, in using the natural resources around us to build wealth and opportunity and jobs. Great experience maybe in their home country already or just looking at Nova Scotia from the outside and seeing it for what it is, something we sometimes lose sight of, a beautiful province endowed with amazing resources that go unutilized.

Think about it. Here we have a province stuck out in the Atlantic Ocean with a European free trade agreement in its hand; with one of the best natural forestry resources in the world in our Acadian forest; with some of the best fisheries in the world, including our lobster fishery; with great resources offshore, which we've only started to develop after many years of getting off the ground; with equally great onshore resources under our feet, including 69 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, there to be used in a responsible way, with other mining resources, a great ground fishery, with universities that pump out smart graduates ready to take on the world, with a community college system that is world-class. We see all that and visitors to Nova Scotia see all that, and yet we're convinced that we're poor and we're broke.

This province is not poor. It is not broke, no matter how many times the Premier tells us. This is a rich province. The books of the province may be out of balance and that does have to be addressed, but holy moly, what if we actually tried to balance those books by taking a look at the great resources that we have around us and, in a responsible and sustainable way, bring them into production?

AN HON. MEMBER: Holy moly.

MR. BAILLIE: Yes, I said holy moly. It's not something I say very often, but it seemed appropriate for the time. That's a little religion here today. Mr. Speaker, sorry for getting so worked up. I'm a Progressive Conservative - for me, that's worked up. It's just a very important point.

The Ivany report talks about doubling our exports, and not for no reason. They know very clearly that the way you bring in cash, wealth, and opportunity, is by selling your stuff not to each other, but to others. What are some of our greatest exports? Natural gas, lobsters, and on it goes - tires, manufacturing.

What are some of our most depressing exports? Young, talented Nova Scotians. It is hard to imagine how a government that has the Ivany report in its hands could put together a budget like this, could ban the development of those resources, could kick the legs out from under one of our youngest and most dynamic and creative industries, driving people away when the flow absolutely has to go the opposite way.

By the way, I'm pretty sure that anyone who looks at the film industry would say there is an export industry. There is an export industry. The Acting Leader of the NDP

talked about The Book of Negroes. I don't know how many countries that production is shown in; I believe it's over 100. Imagine the royalties and export dollars that flow back to Nova Scotia from that one production alone.

All of this really makes one wonder, what are the priorities of this government? If they're not going to actually kick-start the economy and find ways to support growing industries and get them to grow more and employ more people, what are their priorities?

Well, we know one group that got a tax break in this budget: our biggest banks, of all things. Of all things buried in the assumptions and schedules to the budget, there is a line that says that the government is going to cap the Large Corporations Tax paid by financial institutions at \$10 million - a tax break for our biggest banks. We can't afford to support the film industry or give a few thousand dollars to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, but we're going to give a break to our biggest banks. What kind of priority is that? (Interruptions)

I can understand why they're agitated. I wouldn't want to have to defend that either. Who was supposed to sacrifice to balance the budget? Everybody but the big banks? It doesn't make any sense. The Premier says, well, it's not going to cost anything. Well, then it's not a tax break. Which is it?

I can tell you that faced with a choice between supporting young, dynamic, creative Nova Scotians in the film industry and taxing the big banks - to me, that's easy: leave that tax in place.

The irony, Mr. Speaker, the budget says we're capping the tax that big banks pay to encourage their growth - well, capping the support to the film industry to stop theirs is not lost on us in Opposition, and I believe not lost on the 2,700 people who work in the film industry, or the many, many Nova Scotians who are looking at this and scratching their heads at what the government has done.

Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly small and growing companies in Nova Scotia are not a priority of the government, within the film industry or otherwise. The national government actually is cutting the tax on small business - that's a good thing, we want them to grow.

I asked the Premier if he could assure Nova Scotia small businesses that he's not going to claw that tax break back; he didn't answer the question. To me, that should have been an easy question. The answer should be no, of course not, we support our small businesses. That would have been great; in fact, I truly expected that was going to be the answer when I asked him, are you going to claw back the tax break that Ottawa is giving our small businesses? But instead, he didn't answer, so they are left wondering.

Mr. Speaker, if ever rural Nova Scotia needed a helping hand to get back on its feet, it is now. But instead, who gets cut the most? Rural Nova Scotia. Seven of the 12 rural

courthouses will close, and 13 of the 18 land registry offices will close. The tolls on ferries in rural areas will go up, way up, increasing the cost of getting to and from work, to or from the grocery store, and to and from a doctor's appointment for many, many rural Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, rather than finding ways to encourage growth and opportunity in rural areas so that these kinds of services can be sustainable, which makes these communities sustainable, the government is making their job and their life harder. I can tell you - I'll give you an example - in Wentworth there is a school, the Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School, and the people in Wentworth are working very hard to save that school. Enrolment is not even declining; in fact, the projections are that enrolment will go up.

It's not a half-empty school at all; in fact, it's just a small school. There is exactly a grand total of one classroom that is not occupied out of the whole school. But the school board there is planning to close it. The government says, try the hub school model. Well, Mr. Speaker, the hub school model may work in a community where the school is half empty or more, but not when there's a school with one vacant classroom and a growing enrolment.

The school board tells the community of Wentworth, by the way, if you do want to save your school, you've got to use this hub model, and the revenue we expect you to generate per year is \$244,000, from a 12-by-12 room, Mr. Speaker. If they could even rent that room out, it would have by far the highest rent in the entire world - Midtown Manhattan, West End London, they don't charge rents anywhere near what that Wentworth school is supposed to generate from that one school.

My point in raising this, Mr. Speaker, is that here is a community trying to grow and has a school at the centre of their community life that the school board is going to take away, making it harder to attract young families, making it harder to create new jobs and opportunity in that area, the opposite of what they want for their community and what we here in this Legislature should also want for that community.

I will say right now that I know first-hand that in the last election the Leader of the Liberal Party came to Wentworth and signed a letter promising to review that school closure, and yet silence from the government side. Now they have a chance to take a stand and take action between cutting and cutting in our rural areas or keeping their promise and working on ways of stabilizing them so it wouldn't even make sense to close the school, or the courthouse, or the land registry office, or the co-op - which I know is not a government building - but every time a service like that is removed from a community, it sets it back even farther.

Now the government says, oh no, no, we're serious about rural Nova Scotia jobs, it's why we have a new Department of Business. We've eliminated the Department of

Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and we have a new Department of Business. Mr. Speaker, changing the name of the department is not going to help.

Hopefully something good will come of this. I can tell you I just got back from the South Shore last week, and this was a big issue. One gentleman, who obviously watches things very closely, says, I'm really disappointed they got rid of the "Rural Development" part of the department title. At least we knew where to go. Why couldn't they add it to the Business title?

I don't get caught up in titles, but I can tell you that he wants it to be known as the Department of Business and Rural Economic Destruction - because when he looks at the actual actions that the government takes, that's how he feels. It's not even about whatever name they give to that department anymore. It's about many other things.

Even in the Department of Health and Wellness - with a very difficult challenge, I acknowledge, of providing health services across our province - we expect that they'll make good decisions that ensure that those services are there for people regardless of where they live. How can we ever get serious about regenerating jobs and opportunities for families in rural areas if basic health care is not there for them? We saw a very well-spoken gynecologist/obstetrician from Amherst, Dr. Robin MacQuarrie, come to this House because the government unilaterally changed the fee structure for her malpractice insurance. That might sound like a technical thing, but the bottom line effect is that gynecologists cannot afford to practise in rural areas.

I hear the Minister of Health and Wellness laughing, but they've quit in Sydney, they've quit in Truro, they've quit in Yarmouth. If the Minister of Health and Wellness finds it funny, then he will have to explain that to the women of rural Nova Scotia who expect to have at least accessible basic obstetrical services. In Cumberland County, Dr. MacQuarrie is doing her best, but when her malpractice insurance goes from a few thousand dollars a year to \$45,000 a year in one year, that's just not fair. So we'll take up how funny this is with the Minister of Health and Wellness when we get another opportunity, but I can assure you, it is not funny.

A long way of saying that when you look at rural Nova Scotia and the challenges it faces, you can say, well, the jobs are gone, the population is declining, the enrolments in the schools are down, the roads are wearing away, and the buildings are getting older, so we might as well cut - that is the government's approach. Or you can look at all of those same things in rural Nova Scotia - the jobs are down and all the rest, but also see all the opportunity that is there - onshore, offshore, minerals, gas, amazing films that literally travel the world once they're produced here - and say, how do we get more of that? Isn't that really what the Ivany report was telling us? Find ways to do more of that. Then maybe the schools are more secure and the courthouses are more secure and the roads get better because people are coming back.

I remember - this is when it really made sense. I remember meeting with Brad Wall, the Premier of Saskatchewan, when the fracking debate was really getting going in this House. I said, Premier Wall, while I have you - you have onshore gas and hydraulic fracturing in Saskatchewan. In fact, we've done some research; you have 30,000 wells drilled in Saskatchewan. Tell me, have there been any side effects?

He said, oh yes, there have been lots of side effects. Let me tell you about them. Our jobs are coming back. People are moving back into rural areas and small towns with work. Our schools are getting repopulated. Our tax revenue and royalty revenue is going up. We can afford to pave a few more roads. The budget is balanced and there is hope again in those rural areas. Those are the side effects.

That's what we want for Nova Scotia. That same opportunity, that same growth, that same drive. Isn't that a better way of looking at the challenges we face than this death by a thousand cuts that we see today? I think so. Maybe the government doesn't think so, but I certainly think so.

There has been a lot of talk, of course, about the film industry in the last month or more, which the Premier portrays as a disagreement about numbers and formulas - whether a tax is refundable or non-refundable, whether they add \$150 million of economic growth to the province or \$120 million or some other number.

Well, it's really not about the numbers. The debate on the film industry, for me, was very clearly a province of Nova Scotians, whether they work in the film industry or not, who saw the bigger picture, that it's not really what the tax formula is; it's about those jobs and those families who have already said, we want to be here and build a whole new industry in Nova Scotia. We actually want to pay taxes in this province.

That's what the film industry people have been saying loud and clear. We've started a production company here, or we've started a catering company, or we've started a carpentry firm to do set dressings, and on and on it goes. They have bought homes and taken out mortgages and had children and made a living basically by promoting the beauty of Nova Scotia at home and around the world. Not even one smokestack needed for those jobs. Never mind for a moment the obvious spinoff benefits of having our province on TV screens and movie screens around the globe, which is an incalculable benefit to this province, but the direct effect of that infusion of creativity and optimism and investment in the future - that's what Nova Scotians saw when the film industry put up their hand and said, wait a minute, we're done if the government continues with its plans.

They may have rallied here in downtown Halifax at the Legislature that day a few weeks ago, but I can tell you - and I think this point is now becoming clear - this is a rural Nova Scotia story as much as a Halifax story. Whether you're in Hubbards, or Chester, or Shelburne, or Truro, or Louisbourg, Cape Breton, or Pictou County, you are in a place that has a growing film industry. Whether you're a TV star, or a makeup artist, or an electrician,

or a caterer, or a carpenter, you're in the movie business in one of the places in the world that has an awful lot to give. Why would you cap that? Why would you say we can't afford that? That's what we need more of.

It's inconceivable that a government would blindly - and admittedly blindly, by the way, because they've been asked, did you look at the benefits? Did you look at the economic impact? Did you look at the jobs? The answer was actually no. No, we didn't. Well, if we're ever going to get to a truly balanced budget, we rely on the government to look at the costs and the benefits of the decisions that they make, and yet that didn't happen.

In fact, it came out earlier this week that the government had an economic impact study done for Film Nova Scotia - it was in 2008, so it's seven years ago - that showed, very clearly, a \$150,500,000 economic impact of the film industry and 2,797 direct jobs. That's a good thing, not something that should be capped. Yes, they relied on a tax credit to finance their operations and to create that much wealth - a tax credit that was based exactly on the labour side, on jobs.

I heard the Premier say that the only kinds of assistance to business he would ever agree to are the kinds that are tied directly to jobs. You know what? I think that's a good policy. That was last week. This week, he says, well now we've brought it out to lots of other things, so it's not just about jobs. Well, that is a complete flip-flop. You know, it's too bad, because for people in the film industry or any other industry that just want to know what the policy of the Government of the Nova Scotia is when it comes to job creation, they are more confused than ever.

Those are numbers I know, and we are talking about a budget of course, but when you look at the social impact beyond those numbers of the film industry on the prosperity of our province, on the obvious immigration potential that it has, on the positive environmental impact as a clean industry, it's inconceivable that would be the place the government would choose to cut back. Or even on the quality of life of the province, on that pride of community. Go to Shelburne, go to Hubbards, and talk to the people there about how proud they are of the worldwide productions that are made right there. That's what got missed. Now, because it got missed in this House, we had to, in Opposition, bring forward all of these examples, all of these stories for the government to see to make the point that these are real people and real families and real jobs.

The damage is done. We can look in the hundreds of millions to see how much damage has been done to our economy, but to make the point, we brought the story of Magic Rock Productions here to this House - a small Nova Scotia company that's doing big things worldwide in the film business. They are known for productions like Lizzie Borden, which many Nova Scotians are very proud that that story was told here in Nova Scotia. Lizzie Borden employed 200 people, 160 of them from Nova Scotia. That would never happen under the changes that the government had planned.

Mr. Speaker, we know from talking to them directly that they had an \$8 million contract to do a new production this summer with Jim Henson Productions. I like Jim Henson Productions - that's who made The Muppet Show, one of the great shows of all time; it's right up there with The West Wing, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that is gone. That's lost. That will never come back. And Chester, which happened to be the place where that production was going to be made, is poorer as a result. It's not all about the glitzy TV shows, by the way, there are world-class documentaries made right here in Nova Scotia. Arcadia Entertainment is an example that we brought to this House. They have TV series, documentaries that show weekly on the Discovery Channel, on National Geographic TV, on the History Channel and on it goes, literally seen around the world.

Now they do record or shoot around the world but all the post-production work is done right here in Halifax. I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker: over Easter I was flipping through the TV channels and on the National Geographic Channel there was an Easter special about what happened to the disciples after the Crucifixion. I actually watched it for a few minutes, it was kind of interesting. I'm sure others saw it here. How many Nova Scotians know that that was made right here in Halifax and shown in 127 countries around the world this Easter and generated millions of dollars in jobs, in opportunity and royalties that all flow back here and then are spread out into our local economy? That is what we need more of, not to cap it or to have less of.

That is why I feel so strongly about where this government has gone wrong because it's the young, up and coming Nova Scotians who will feel that loss the most. They are not the only ones, of course, and that's not even the only example. The tuition adjustment at our universities, the one-time market adjustment is going to place our universities - one of the great ways we have for people to take a leap forward in their own personal development - now we see the first university out of the gate with a 20 per cent increase in tuition. That will put university education out of reach for more young Nova Scotians who just want to make their way in the world and be all they can be here at home.

How is that a step forward, Mr. Speaker? It's a big step backwards. A one-time market adjustment means increases like the 20 per cent increase at CBU and we'll see what the other universities do. It's such a shame because the governments of the last at least two administrations kept those tuitions capped to try and bring our tuition at least down to the national average so that young Nova Scotians could have access to our universities. Now more will be denied access because they can't afford it and that is a real shame.

For anyone out there who thinks well, there are bursaries and so on, well there's a \$3.2 million cut to the Nova Scotia University Student Bursary program, Mr. Speaker, to go along with that 20 per cent increase in tuitions.

When we say yes, they put together a budget and all the numbers added up and so on, this is where our problem lies: no vision, no plan, no look at how we can actually grow the top line instead of making these kinds of cuts, which are focused at our youngest Nova Scotians who, like the ones that were here from the film industry, just want a chance to get ahead in their own home province, Mr. Speaker.

Now they are not the only ones who have been faced with a life that's a little more difficult. There's the story for our young people but our senior citizens certainly didn't fare any better because they also now face challenges that are greater than before.

Grants to some of our seniors groups are cut by 25 per cent; long-term care facilities, the procurement budget that pays for furniture and equipment and so on, cut by \$3 million. I know that minister will say, well, we're hoping that we'll buy better, but that means that 103 of our long-term care facilities are going to have to cut back on even the basics of furniture and operating costs.

We all want our seniors to have their best chance to age in place, to be at home, and we fully support that. Making long-term care facilities harder to get into and less attractive to be in might seem like a bizarre way to encourage more home care, but the home care fees went up. Where are seniors supposed to turn when they start to get to the point where they need help to get by?

I will say that one of the things that bothers me the most is that at a time when we are faced with an aging population, with too many people who suffer from mental illness, cutting grants to places like the Alzheimer's Society couldn't be more outrageous.

Home care facilities are worse off. I hope that they get all they deserve. Our seniors deserve to know that all Parties, government or not, will make sure that they can age in place - and afford to age in place, instead of having their home care fees go up - that they can age with dignity with the advanced care they need when they go into a long-term care facility, instead of seeing the furniture budget cut, and that for those who suffer from one of the great challenges of our time, from mental illness or Alzheimer's, they don't only face cuts there as well. That's what the budget and bill that are before us today foresee for the senior population of Nova Scotia.

I believe that I have about two and a half hours left, so I will begin my wind down. The Clerk was very kind to give me a little note to tell me how much time I have left. (Interruptions) Maybe I didn't read it exactly the right way.

To put it all together, at a time when Nova Scotians are crying out for vision and leadership and a plan to grow things and not always shrink, they got this budget, which has none of those things in it. It relies on the same old ways of tax increases and fee increases and little cuts that make a big difference to the social fabric of our province.

They have nothing to say about jobs other than they prefer not to have to provide tax credits to the film industry. They have the Ivany report on this shelf over here - they didn't even open it when they put the budget together, because surely they would've seen that they are now going in the opposite direction.

Let me just end with this. For all the talk about how broke we are and how poor we are, this is a rich province. It's rich in people, and it's rich in resources. Those people deserve the opportunity to make a living using, in a responsible way, the resources that we have around us, and they are surely disappointed to be denied that opportunity in this budget by this government. Thank you.

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to get up and speak to Bill No. 108, the Financial Measures (2015) Act. There's so much that has been said already about this bill, and there's so much to think about when we're talking about this bill. When I think about what's going on with our financial situation in the Province of Nova Scotia, I think of what it's like at home trying to survive with a family, and growing families. Somebody once asked me, why did you get involved in politics? I said I had three reasons: my daughter Sandra, my daughter Jessica, and my son Daniel - and we've added to those reasons; we have six grandchildren now.

I think all of us here are looking for the same thing, a quality of life that we knew as young Nova Scotians growing up, so that indeed it will be good for them to stay and live here. But we face many challenges and we were hoping some would be addressed in the Financial Measures (2015) Bill, in the budget of the Province of Nova Scotia. We started out before the budget was even introduced - we had 1,400 increases in fees and services in the Province of Nova Scotia.

There are those on the government side of the House who argue, well, we're just trying to recover the costs for providing services and we're only doing what needs to be done. But if you're a private trucker who has been trying to make a living for his family and you've seen your licensing fees go up 15 per cent over the course of the last seven years, it's hard to convince you that indeed that's a necessary thing to do. If you live in a place like Little Narrows or Tancook Island and they tell you we're not making any money on these roads so we have to put up your ferry costs so that we have some cost recovery. At the same time you have to wonder how that makes any sense.

To see increases like we've seen in places like Little Narrows and Englishtown, I am at a loss for explaining that to the people in those areas, to the point where on the weekend I was invited by councillors in Victoria County to visit two areas, Neils Harbour and Little Narrows. There were good turnouts of the people there in those communities who were wondering if their provincial government had forgotten about them because of the costs that have been added to their already struggling lifestyle in rural Nova Scotia.

People in Neils Harbour were concerned about the fact that the ferry that was to supply them service hasn't really done anything since January of this year. So they added an extra travel around the head of St. Anns Bay to get to places for groceries, to visit family, and get some of their medical services, not all - there is a hospital in Neils Harbour that does provide service for people north of Englishtown.

That night we went to a Sunday evening meeting in Little Narrows and, you know, at that meeting it was standing room only in the hall. People had come out wondering what they were going to do. In a news report earlier today that I read, the Minister for TIR said they're going to look at making it a little cheaper for passes or maybe they're going to be able to pay on a quarterly basis for a yearly pass, but the rates are going up and there's nothing they can do about it. I find that hard to believe, that there's nothing we can do about it.

We build new bridges for people to cross; we don't put a toll on them and we say that the reason we do that is because it is part of their transportation system. Well, the ferry is their bridge; it is part of their transportation system; it's what they use to get back and forth. It's strange how something like a ferry pass can create such a difference. This government that likes to talk about openness and transparency, they were selling the passes for \$13.50 and they went up to - I'm sorry, that's wrong. They were selling them for \$13.50 and they went up to \$35.

You know, Madam Speaker, prior to the announcement about the user fees going up, you could go down to the ferry and buy 10 passes or 12 passes or whatever number you wanted. The day the announcement was made about the cost increase, when you approached and wanted to buy passes, they were limited to two passes per person.

This is a government that says they are open to the people but yet the rules seem to change whenever the mood swings. There were many seniors who thought okay, if it is going up I had better get some extra passes because I need to be able to go across on the ferry to get to church. I need to be able to go across on the ferry to get to a drugstore. I need to be able to go across on the ferry to sometimes buy my groceries. Yet that's all, they decided at the flip of a switch that indeed, you could only buy two of these passes, a pass that increased by 159 per cent, Madam Speaker.

Now there are those who will say, well, you could go around the long way, but those roads aren't really fit to drive on. There is an industry in Little Narrows, an industry that employs many people from places like Whycocomagh and Baddeck and Inverness, who travel across the ferry daily to get to their job at the mine. Now it costs more money for them to go to work.

The questions they were asking were very simple. You know we pay gas tax, we pay licensing fees and the ferry is our bridge to get across. So why do we have to pay so much more than that? The ferry track numbers are going down at Englishtown and at Little

Narrows, and part of that is because they keep creeping the fees up and people decide - I'm not going to pay that. I will take the long way around even though it's harder on me and it's harder on my vehicle. But you know sometimes you have to try to make a point.

Part of the point is how hard it is for rural Nova Scotians to survive in their communities and stay there. That's one of the things that we're looking at as people in this House of Assembly. The challenge in front of any government, regardless of its political stripe, is to make sure that the quality of life for the people who live in this province, who are so proud to call it home, have a good quality of life.

Rural communities are having challenges day after day, week after week, month after month. In the constituency that I have the privilege to represent, Madam Speaker, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, we are serviced by 16 volunteer fire departments. In the total CBRM there are 32 and we have 16 of them. You know they have a challenge every day. Their challenge is to make sure they have enough people to fight a fire, if such a thing happens. Their challenge is to make sure they can keep the doors open on their hall because their insurance is more, their electricity is more, their fuel costs are more, but they are determined to be able to stay in their communities and maintain a certain quality of life.

The problems that we are talking about don't just happen in my constituency, they are happening right across this province. Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada's labour force shrinkage from March 2011 to March 2015, in the Annapolis Valley region there were 3,700 less in the labour force - 3,700 people in the Annapolis Valley are not working there anymore.

In the Cape Breton region, my home stomping grounds, Madam Speaker, there are 5,500 fewer people in the labour force now than there had been before - 5,500 people. Now a lot of them are getting on a plane and flying out West to work in an area in the oil fields. To help stabilize their own home income, they have to travel and they move away from their family to do that. Some of them travel for two weeks, they're home for a week, and they're gone again. They say, well, you know, they're making good money out there and it's a good way to help survive.

But you know, every time they get on the plane, they're leaving loved ones behind and that creates a new type of challenge. If they're married and they have a family, usually they're younger, so the families are doing with one parent rather than two. When the mom or the dad who's staying home has to deal with medical issues, it's harder because there's nobody there for support.

The whole idea of going west to make money is so they can have a quality life here in Nova Scotia. We have an opportunity when we talk about how we make the economy better. What do we do to grow the economy in Nova Scotia and make it last and make it heartier than it is today? There are limited options. Our communities at home grew up with

a strong fishing industry and a strong forestry. We had coal. We had steel. Right now, we have no steel industry.

There is potential for growth in a new Donkin mine. Yes, I did say Donkin, but you know what? The geography of where it's located doesn't really matter. What matters are the jobs that could be associated to that, the jobs that hopefully will be there for people in the Island. It has a whole bunch of ramifications that I will touch on a little later about what it can do for other things in this province.

People are travelling away to work in the oil patch, and yet when we look at trying to find a way to create new economies here and create new ways of making money, one of them could be hydraulic fracking. There was a report done on that. Dr. Wheeler, the president of CBU, did a report. In that report, he said we should be looking into it. We should be moving ahead slowly, but we should be looking into it. The former Minister of Energy - not the current Minister of Energy, but the former Minister of Energy decided that we were going to put a ban in place on fracking before we really knew all the facts.

I would hope the current minister will look at that whole situation and think about where he came from - Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. I'm sure he knows that we need to grow our economy. That was one of the reasons he was there. We have to find new ideas and ways to increase jobs in the Province of Nova Scotia and increase our economy.

When we look at the budget that came forward and we look at some of the job numbers that I mentioned to you earlier, I want to go back to the labour force shrinkage from March 2011 to March 2015 in what we call the North Shore region of the Province of Nova Scotia. We saw a shrinkage of 5,700 people. That's even more than lost in Cape Breton. In the southern region, there are 3,500 less in the labour force. The only area that saw any growth to the labour force was the Metro Halifax area, and they saw that grow by more than 6,200 people. You don't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer or an accountant to figure out that people are moving out of rural Nova Scotia and moving into the city, hoping to be able to provide some kind of good quality living for their family.

You know, it's not just the labour force that's shrinking. The same report from Statistics Canada for the same period of time talks about the fact that in the Annapolis Valley area, there are actually 2,000 less jobs for people to apply for, to try and make their living at. In the North Shore region, there are 5,300 less jobs that people can vie for to stay in their community. In the southern region, there are 2,700 less jobs.

There is a little bright spot here - I guess you could call it a bright spot - because in the Cape Breton region, there are about 200 jobs less than in those other areas that we just mentioned. But I think the reason for that is we already lost the coal mines long before 2011; we lost the steel plant before 2011. Those major employers were out of the job

market and gone, so they wouldn't be taken into those numbers in that period that we're accounting for.

I talked a little bit about the ferries and what's taking place and how indeed the impact on the rural communities is. The Little Narrows ferry - I just want to go back there for a second. There were three small companies who have to cross the Little Narrows ferry on a daily basis - their employees do, their equipment does. Did you know that those three little companies issued 63 T4 slips last year? 63 T4 slips. But their costs for moving trucks and buying passes and for licensing fees ran into around \$85,000 a year going into the coffers of the provincial government, big portions of that - \$7,000 to \$8,000 a year - going towards ferry passes for them to have their employees come back and forth.

When we read the Ivany report, there is something very telling in it: the title. Mr. Ivany and all of those members of the commission - very learned people who again have the best interests of the Province of Nova Scotia at heart - named the report *Now or Never*. I don't think that meant that we have to go out and do a whole lot of reports. It probably means that we should dust off the reports that have been on the shelves, look at those reports, and see what's going on. But I hope with all my heart that this government didn't decide to take the "never" part of that. I hope that they haven't decided that we can't make a difference.

You know, there's whole lot of potential coming up, but I still worry about the fact that this government seems to think that cutting rural services and centralizing different types of services are good for the people that we're asked to serve. There are several organizations that will see their grants reduced by 23 per cent. That's health grants under the community grants for mental health and addictions. That program alone was reduced from \$1 million to \$600,000. They included support for organizations for people with AIDS, but now that's going to be cut. People with eating disorders were getting services, and I think it's fair to say, Madam Speaker, when you have organizations like that with volunteers, they are actually helping the government to save money because they're not spending big dollars in wages but they are trying to help people who have challenges.

People with schizophrenia and Alzheimer's have seen their budgets reduced as well. You know, according to the information that we have obtained, immigrants are suffering from having a percentage of their grants reduced. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community in rural areas have seen their dollars reduced. But I think one of the ones that scares me the most about the cuts is Hope Blooms, an organization for young people at risk. Our future, and yet we decide not to invest in them. Instead, we decide to cut them.

Another area that we've seen some cuts in is the Aboriginal mental health support programs. Before the boundary changes, Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of representing Eskasoni, the largest First Nations community this side of Montreal. I had the opportunity to work with the chief and the council and other members of that community

battling with challenges that they had in that community, not unlike other communities, but their young people had challenges before them, and yet now we're deciding to cut back on the mental health supports that we were giving them.

When you think about where government has to go, and it doesn't matter what political stripes, there are very hard issues that have to be dealt with. But when you start taking away from groups like those with Alzheimer's or eating disorders or mental health challenges, I think that sends the wrong message for everybody in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, earlier today the Minister of Community Services introduced a bill and I want to thank her for that; I think it's one that was long overdue. I know there are a number of people from around the province who are excited about what is going on there. I think it's a great thing when we in this House can get together and get behind a bill that does make a difference in people's lives. For that I really want to take this opportunity to thank the minister for doing that.

But there are other things that have happened within the grants that were delivered by the Community Services Department. I know whoever the ministers are, they get advice from the people who work in their offices who have been there much longer than they have, but at the end of the day, the final person who makes the decisions is the minister and that's exactly where I was going with that. There's no question about that in mind that at the end of the day, the minister is in charge and the minister is responsible but the information is supplied by people who work in the department.

You know we have nine community organizations that are seeing a reduction in their grants. The minister may have very good reasons for that, but for the average person on the outside looking in, it is very difficult for them to understand how you can say that we are cutting a grant to the Canadian Mental Health Association Nova Scotia Division. (Interruption) I can hear the minister over there supplying me some of the information, and I appreciate where she's at, but I think one of the things that she did with her bill today was she actually said we're going wait until the Fall sitting before we do the second reading so we can do consultation. Maybe government should've gone out and did the same kind of thing so that people understood, when they were making a cut to these organizations, what was going on.

I'm looking forward to the time that the minister gets up to speak on this very bill, Bill No. 108, and to explain those types of things. You know, Feed Nova Scotia . . .

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: The program stopped. You can't fund something that's not there.

MR. MACLEOD: You see, I have to be honest with you, Madam Speaker. I'm really enjoying this. I'm really enjoying this, because I'm actually getting more information now than we get in Question Period. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the honourable members to please address their comments through the Chair. The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You don't know how good it is to feel that here, at 5:30 in the afternoon, the government is actually finally starting to listen. (Interruptions) I said nice things about the Minister of Community Services. Now if I had to talk about the former Minister of Energy, it might take a lot longer to find something nice to say. But, we'll move on.

We're going to move on to other areas that I think bring some information to this House. I talked a little bit about the Wheeler report earlier and what it had to say and how that advice was not heeded by the former minister. I come from an area which is considered to be the number one Island in North America - number three in the world. That means that tourism is a big part of what we do. It is a big part of what we need to make happen.

We have the community of Louisbourg in my constituency. The community of Louisbourg is one of those communities that are struggling to survive, but we have a real advantage. We have the Fortress of Louisbourg there. We have a reason for people to want to come here. It's a natural reason for people to want to come to Louisbourg. Yet if you go to the village of Louisbourg or the town of Louisbourg - it's not a town anymore because it was caught up in an amalgamation, and it's not a village because it never went that way, and now it never will be a village because of the new law that's being passed.

But in Louisbourg, there is a community group trying to find a way to revitalize that community. Today, if you were to go to Louisbourg, you wouldn't be able to get a tank of gas in that area. There's no place inside the old town boundaries where you can actually buy a tank of gas. If you were to drive down the main street of Louisbourg, you would see a number of businesses up for sale because they are struggling to stay.

The people of Louisbourg have decided that they are going to try to make a difference. I want to thank the Minister of Energy - the former Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism - for meeting with some of those people this week here at the House to listen to what their plans are, to help offer some advice as which way we could probably go forward, to see if we can make a difference and help turn that community around - and that's what we're supposed to do here. At the end of the day we're going to argue back and forth and we're going to have disagreements - I see that the member for Dartmouth East would like to make an introduction, Madam Speaker, so I would like to release the floor to him at this time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Mira-Sydney-Louisbourg, most of Cape Breton - I'm never going to get the names right - for giving me a minute here just to make an introduction. In our east gallery we have a group of students and their leaders from the Thrive! education after-school program. I just have the names of the leaders: Krystyn Slauenwhite, Wendy Birt, Nichole Haverstock, and Ek Jeong. If you would all stand and receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: I would add my welcome to the House and would ask the members to please be on their best behaviour, considering our audience tonight. (Laughter)

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

MR. MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I guess it's too late for that request, but I ought to say my welcome as well to the young people in the gallery, because I think it's so important for them to have an opportunity to visit this, the oldest Legislature in the country and to see how the system works. Today may be not the finest way, but the system does work and the members of this House, regardless of where they happen to sit, are here because they all believe there is a thing that they can do to help Nova Scotians thrive - and I will never, ever disagree about that. Our problem is sometimes we just have different routes to get to where we think we need to be.

Let's get back to talking a little bit about Louisbourg and what's taking place there - or what's not taking place there, I think, is more important. We looked at the Ivany report, how he wanted to see us double our tourism intake and we have such natural beauty in this Province of Nova Scotia, whether it's Peggy's Cove or whether it's the Fourchu Light in Yarmouth or whether it's the Cabot Trail. But we need to do things to enhance that and there really wasn't a whole lot in this budget to make that happen in my opinion.

I mentioned earlier about the Donkin mine. People are saying that burning coal is not good for the environment, and I know the Minister of Environment wouldn't be reluctant to argue with me on that, but the reality is whatever takes place in the Province of Nova Scotia for the next 20 to 25 years, coal-fired generation is going to be a part of that. And if coal-fired generation is going to be part of that, it would only make sense for us to be finding that coal right here in our own province, rather than bringing it in from somewhere else.

Some would say to you, well what are the advantages of having coal from Nova Scotia? I could think of a few right off the top of my head - one of them is when you buy coal on the open market right now you're buying it in U.S. dollars, so the Province of Nova Scotia is at a distinct disadvantage because our dollar is worth about 80 cents on the American dollar.

The other thing that would be important to realize is that you would have a Nova Scotia company dealing with a Nova Scotia company. They would be dealing back and forth, not by email or teleconferencing, but they can actually sit down in a room and discuss where they are and what they're doing. For us in the Cape Breton area, the Donkin mine has a good-quality, huge amount of coal, and in another life, another life before I had the privilege of coming to this House of Assembly, I actually worked in a lab for the coal mines and I did the analysis on the coal that was being dug at that time in the mine at Donkin, and it turned out that it was a very good-quality thermal coal. There were some challenges but overall the seam was big, the supply was large and it was right here in our own community.

Most of the coal-fired generation in the Province of Nova Scotia is done on Cape Breton Island. When you are looking at transportation of this coal, it's less in transportation costs. The other thing about the coal that's very interesting, from my perspective anyway, it's probably the old working in that area, but this coal is anywhere from 15 to 2,500 BTUs better burning quality than what we are bringing in from overseas. That, with the cheaper costs and less transportation and the fact that it burns more efficiently would actually, hopefully, help to stabilize the power rates in the Province of Nova Scotia.

The other advantage, a huge advantage, is that we could actually see some people go to work in their home community and not get on that plane that I talked about earlier today and leave their families behind so they could make a living.

This Donkin mine project seems to be moving in the right direction. As we speak they are there dewatering the mine, getting the water out of the pits so they will be able to do more testing on the coal and start developing the mine. That is a good thing and it's going to provide jobs and it's going to make some things happen.

That leads me to another part of a challenge and it was one of those times that this House again worked together. It came to be the discussion on the railroad in Cape Breton Island and the people who were operating that railroad, people from out of province and actually out of country, were talking about closing it down. It wasn't efficient; they weren't making money and the members of this House got together, they worked together and they found a solution to help make sure that things didn't happen as fast as the company was trying to.

The solution was really quite simple and it made good sense I think, but the solution was: we passed a bill where they weren't able to come in and just shut down the line, tear up the rails and leave the environmental considerations to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia to clean up. What happened? Members from all sides of the House stood here, supported the bill, and it was passed.

Tomorrow in Sydney at dinnertime there is a meeting of community-minded people who are trying to find ways, again, of saving the rail line, helping to make it a more economical project so it can stay working. The company that operates it has no interest in

keeping it going. They see the rails as money on the ground that they want to tear up, sell it for scrap or use it in their other operations and they're not really concerned about the future of Cape Breton Island, and that's a shame.

We have a good potential future in Cape Breton whether it is the development of the port in Sydney, the development of the Donkin mine – all these things would only be made realistic with a rail in place; if it were ever torn up, it would take away the opportunities that exist. I believe when the Donkin mine goes into operation, there's the ability and possibility of selling coal to places like Trenton and Belledune and certainly Point Tupper and we could use the rail line to move that so that would all help create jobs, stabilize the economy and make things better.

One of the biggest challenges for any of us who are members of constituencies that are rural in nature is roads. Roads are something that a lot of people in rural Nova Scotia - and you would understand what I speak of Madam Speaker - say the only service they get is roads. We don't have sewers or water or garbage collection - well, we have garbage collection and a streetlight. I think that's what they tell me at home: we've got a streetlight, we get garbage collection, but we've got bad roads. There's a way we can help improve the economy by putting people to work.

AN HON. MEMBER: My roads are bad.

MR. MACLEOD: A lot of roads in this Province of Nova Scotia are bad. I hear a couple of members from the other side saying the same thing. It doesn't matter where you live. Nobody has a monopoly on the bad roads. It's a hard issue to deal with, and the costs keep on increasing, but the other side of that is it could be an economic driver in a community by fixing roads and creating jobs through construction.

The government will say, well, it's expensive to do that, and it is - but isn't it more expensive if people don't have jobs, haven't got the ability to buy groceries and service their family's debt? If they end up on community services, isn't that a bigger expense on the Province of Nova Scotia? I know it's a fine act to try to balance where we are and how we move forward.

The member opposite just mentioned that she has some pretty bad roads in her constituency. Last night I hit a hole here in the city, and I thought it was going to take two days and a buoy to get me back out of it, because it was that deep. So there is no monopoly on the bad roads. They're all over the place.

I talk about a lot of little things that aren't major lines in the budget, but they're major lines in the everyday lives of people who I have an opportunity to represent. Young people going to university - is there a better investment we can make as a province than in education? Making sure that the young people of our province get a good education, a good start? Now at CBU this week we've seen tuition hikes of up to 20 per cent over the course

of their business plan, and it's just making it harder and harder for young people to stay here, to be educated here, and of course, to set down their roots.

There are other challenges within our system as well, Madam Speaker. In Dalhousie the Province of Nova Scotia has one of the best medical schools, and yet it's hard for Nova Scotians to get into that very institution. Should we not be saying to them that if you come to school here, if you say that you're going to stay here for a number of years in your community, we'll do what we can?

We've got a situation in our constituency where we have somebody who wants to do his residency there because his family is there, his home is there, his children are there - and the system won't allow him to have his residency in Cape Breton Island. That's where he wants to work, live, and grow his family.

We've had a lot of excitement around here about the Film Tax Credit. Many, many moons ago I had the opportunity to work on a film set. I was in the background. I wasn't in front of the camera. It was an interesting time for me, because I actually saw what it did for our community, the money that it generated in a short period of time, but the jobs it had created were there. I know the government will also say, well, you know, we've come to a deal with the people in the film industry - and there is a deal, but when you listen to some of them, there are still some major concerns. It was an industry that brought millions of dollars into our economy, and for some reason this government decided in this budget to put that in jeopardy.

There have been a number of cases that we can point to where the government will bring forward a bill, then there will be a lot of noise raised by the community, and then they revisit the bill and say, well, maybe we did something wrong. Again, to the credit of the Minister of Community Services, she brought her bill here, but she's going to go out and do the consultation before it goes any further. It didn't happen with the tobacco bill. It didn't happen with the Film Tax Credit. Maybe they should have listened to the Minister of Community Services and gotten some good direction there.

The whole challenge of this budget is really the effect it has on the rural communities. One of the biggest concerns that I have is the approach taken by the department when it comes to long-term care and some of the things that have happened in long-term care. It is amazing that we've seen the kinds of changes that we have; 103 of the 143 facilities are not getting a cost-of-living increase. I know from personal experience that it costs more and more every day to operate a home, a facility, or a business. These cost-of-living increases are things that are needed to make sure that these individuals get quality care. The procurement allocation for long-term care facilities has been cut in half.

Most of the people - the huge majority of people - who are in long-term care are the seniors who built the Province of Nova Scotia, the ones who gave us the quality of life that we take and love so passionately.

They've even changed the procedure on the wait-lists. One has to wonder, why would you do that? Why would you change a system that has been in place? Really, when you look at it - and again I know that I will be corrected on this - but when you look at it, if somebody refuses to take a bed in a long-term care facility, they are off the list. Then they have to reapply; then they have to be reassessed. You can't help but wonder how much more paperwork that is creating and how efficient that really is - other than the fact that when you look at the numbers, now there are going to be less there because we already threw some people off.

Treating our seniors with a little more respect - I mean, we keep on hearing about how the strategy is to make sure seniors can stay in their homes longer. That's not a bad strategy. I hope I'm one of those who stays there right to the bitter end. But you know, now, because we say we're not ready to go into a long-term bed, we're being penalized and saying okay, you're off the list; you've got to start all over again. You think we'd be happy when people say no, I don't need long-term care at this point.

Then the ones who can't get in, the ones who have been waiting in hospital beds, the ones who have been waiting at home who do need to get in, in rural Nova Scotia, there's a real challenge in getting home care support. There have been public musings about going out and trying to find a different way of delivering home care support. I understand that, but I've asked time and time again in here, what are the standards of home care support that the seniors in the Province of Nova Scotia can expect and deserve? Regardless of who is delivering the service, it is our job here in this House to make sure that the standard of service is no less than what they are getting now and that it be delivered by people who are qualified to do that. To be qualified to do that means that they need to be paid a fair wage. They need to get the money for their jobs to make sure that they can keep their education standards up.

The seniors who are looking for this care, these aren't home care workers to them. These aren't strangers. These are people who are coming into their homes, that they are welcoming into their homes, who want them to be sure that indeed they are getting the kind of care they need. They get to trust their home care worker. But in rural Nova Scotia and rural Cape Breton, that becomes more and more of a challenge.

Home care, seniors, education, creating a new economy - all of those things are things that we should be addressing in the Financial Measures (2015) Bill and in the budget, and most of what we saw were cuts - cuts to services that do make a difference in rural Nova Scotia. Yes, I understand that rural Nova Scotia is shrinking, but it's shrinking because of some of the policies that governments have put in place.

I've had a number of people approach me on this - we see the province is shutting 13 of its 18 land registry offices. The people who rely on them - the surveyors who rely on those offices and the real estate agents and all of those people - are small business people in the Province of Nova Scotia who look to have those services so they can do a better job

for their clients. Their own government is saying to them, no, I don't think; we're going to close that down.

There's this argument from government: well, you know you can go online and you can get that service. There are a lot of people who (Interruptions) Excuse me, Madam Speaker, I just got caught up in a rabbit track here.

There are a lot of people who rely on the services that are supplied at these small offices that don't have the Internet, that don't go on a computer, that don't understand the process of doing that. One of the things they look towards is that service being provided at a reasonable distance from their community. If you're taking that many offices and shutting them down, then again, it is not fair to believe that that service is going to be readily available - 13 out of 18 offices across the province.

The other thing that goes with that - what happens to those jobs? What happens to the people who are in those jobs? Rural Nova Scotia jobs - good-paying jobs with benefits are being taken out of the economy of small communities. We've seen a number of people being affected by changes in how they do business at the park in Whycomagh. Is that the tip of the iceberg? Is the next one the parks in other parts of Nova Scotia, like Battery Park in St. Peter's? So we have to wonder, what about those jobs?

And the other thing - we talked about tourism and how in the report by Ivany, they said we need to double the numbers. Can you imagine going into a park in Whycomagh, getting into your space, and then going over to - as the member for Queens-Shelburne likes to say - an R2-D2 and asking him, where is the best restaurant to eat around here? Where can I get gas? Where can I get propane for my barbecue? Well, that machine is not going to be able to tell them just where it is they can go and what they can get. But then again, even more importantly than all of that is those jobs being removed from a rural community.

Madam Speaker, I know that I've been all over the map when I've talked about the FMA and the budget and the implications that it has on so many different people - and there are so many more of the bigger items - but for a lot of the people that I have the honour of representing, it's the small things that affect them, the day-to-day things that affect them and make them wonder where it's all going to end.

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board is looking at moving forward with their schools and they're looking at closing a number of them. Just on Saturday past I met with a group from Louisbourg, again that small community that I told you that was trying to revamp themselves, now they're in fear that they're going to lose their school and the school is a major part of the community, of the community's life. It's an active school. The parent-teacher association there works hard at making sure that the kids get a good-quality education. There have been a number of champions that came out of that school and went on and did very well in other learning institutions. They have sports programs; they have

after-school programs; all of those things become much more difficult in rural schools when you have to start relying on busing for transportation.

Madam Speaker, the whole budget, the FMA and the fact that we are cutting grants to different organizations, that we are cutting services to senior citizens, that we are cutting schools and openings in schools, that we're cutting jobs in different areas, it would make it very difficult for one to actually be able to support this budget.

There are so many other things that we could talk about but I think I'm starting to wind down. I want to thank you and all the members of the House for giving me this opportunity to say a few words, and thank you for the time.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: What I would like to focus on in my speech this evening is I would like to focus on the people of Nova Scotia, because we say that we represent the people who have voted us in as MLAs. Madam Speaker, when I review the budget that has been presented by this government, I honestly do not see where it is representing the hard-working people of Nova Scotia who each and every day worry about where they're going to get the next paycheque or that their paycheque is not enough to cover the expenses that they're experiencing.

Madam Speaker, the fact of having had the opportunity and honour to be a former Cabinet Minister, I do realize and appreciate the difficulties of the many needs that come at you as a Cabinet Minister and the challenges and the worry that you have in terms of trying to provide services for everybody, because there are so many needs.

Over the years when decisions have been made and you're stuck in the corner with those decisions because they may not have been a good decision, but community groups or people are receiving the funding around that and that makes a big difference for them. The part that I feel is missing in this whole budget process is focusing on people and realizing and understanding that those are the very people who put us in this privileged position. Those are the very people who we will go back to and we will knock on their doors and we will ask them to support us again.

Those are the very people who we took the time, when we wanted to be elected, to say we were listening to them and that they would talk to us about their concerns provincially, their concerns for their community, what they're experiencing in their life, whether it was a story about a family member who is disabled, or whether it was a story telling you at the doorsteps about their senior parents who are looking for long-term care beds. I'm sure that at that time a lot of people who were at the doors were listening and said, oh yes, we plan to do something about that; yes, we realize that it could be a better job being done.

I think this is why people get so discouraged with the political process and with the political world, because they hear one thing and then very often it does not come to be what they have talked to you about.

I realize, as I said, it's very difficult in the position to be able to look at a budget and try to cover all the areas that you must, but I think it's about priorities, Madam Speaker, and each political Party has different philosophies in terms of what their priorities are. However, the odd thing is that when it comes to election time, the priority for all Parties seems to be the people. That's what we tell people: you are our priority, and if you vote me in, I will be sure to work hard for you to be able to address the issues that you have in your community or personally. We make those commitments to people.

I think it's very discouraging when obviously commitments were previously made and not fulfilled - not ones that were maybe I can try to fulfill them, but ones that were point-blank promoted as commitments as a particular Party. Then what happens after that is the people are disappointed and dismayed and feel betrayed.

One of the populations - I want to go through and talk about the people in Nova Scotia who have put us here and expect us to do the best job that we can in representing them and providing them with the services they deserve. That's our senior population. I've talked about our senior population a number of times in the House, and had the honour to be the Minister of Seniors during our government's mandate.

With our government, we were very focused on the senior population. We were focused on people and understanding a decision that would be made at our Cabinet Table, how that would actually trickle down on the streets - how the person in their lives, how will that affect that person or that particular population by making this type of decision versus making another decision? Those are the lenses I can guarantee you that we look through.

You don't always make the right decision. I do know that. We are human beings, so there are times when perhaps all the information was not available or we thought we knew what the ramifications were, and then we find out later that there are other things that are factors that may not have been taken into consideration.

The senior population, of course, deserves our support, our care, and our respect. The one thing that I do know from the senior population in Nova Scotia is that they have grown up in a very different generation. It must be pretty mind-boggling for seniors in today's world, with all the technology and all the changes that have taken place over the years. They have given so much to our society. That's why it's very important that it's realistic when we talk about seniors and the support that we're going to offer seniors in our budget, and that we do look at all the factors that are involved in the decisions we are making.

I've often heard from those seniors who I've spent many hours with - one of the sayings is, you're only as good as your word, and your word is only as good as your actions. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I think this is where Premier McNeil has fallen short with the budget and with respect to decision making.

There were many words that were said pre-election that made people think or understand that one thing was going to be provided or they would be supported in this area, and it was totally different when the Premier became Premier. Some of those were commitments that took a lot of effort to make, they were not just an on-the-fly commitment where you got caught up in the moment with a camera in front of your face or a microphone; they were actually consciously planned out. Those commitments, how you can make them a year and a half ago and be that serious about them and then become government and not fulfill those commitments, it's very difficult to understand that.

One of the areas that I'm very passionate about, with respect to seniors, is our long-term care facilities. For me, one of the projects that the NDP made an announcement and was supporting was the rebuild of the Shoreham Village senior citizens' home in Chester, a 90-bed facility. It's a complex that also has several apartment units that are attached to that, and there are some newer apartments, there are some older apartments with some support through Community Services, and the senior citizens' home itself is the nursing component of the complex. That facility is very old; it was originally built so that those who would stay there would have their own bedroom, and it wasn't very long after it was built that people were put in rooms together, to share - very small rooms, in fact.

I know the staff there and they are so dedicated; they work very hard to be able to provide the care to the seniors and their family members when they come to visit and they do the very best they can. The difficult part is the fact that during the election in 2013, very clearly the Liberal Party said a number of times in my constituency that they would certainly make the commitment that they would fulfill any capital commitments, promises or projects, that the NDP had announced.

It was not just words, there were even publications sent around, and recently in the House I talked about the candidate for Chester-St. Margaret's, representing the Liberals, on his Facebook page, talking about Shoreham Village and the NDP announcement and criticizing the NDP that the rebuild was going to be a rebuild of just 90 beds, which already exist. But there was no expansion to that rebuild, when the rebuild was going to be, that the discussions were going to start in 2014 and the rebuild was not actually even going to take place until 2017-18, but in fact the plan was to have the rebuild completed by 2016.

The process around that rebuild was to make sure that the community was involved in whether they wanted to rebuild on that particular site because there were some issues over the years. The very upsetting part is that on that same Facebook message it says that the McNeil Liberals, if voted in, were keeping all the promises of capital projects that the NDP had announced. Even today in our House, we had the Minister of Education and Early

Childhood Development make a statement about keeping the commitment to build a new school in the Eastern Passage area, and she proudly said it was because her government was keeping the commitment of capital projects.

I don't know what happened when it came to the seniors in our province, that the project promised to those seniors living in the Chester area, at Shoreham Village, now is not going to take place under this government and under this budget. I think that is a terrible shame, and families and seniors are so disappointed because of the conditions they have to live in. They do the best they can there in terms of staff and the CEO but they've had a continuous amount of problems with water. They've had a continuous amount of problems with mould. The senior apartments - you probably would put labels on the doors saying they were slum apartments.

If you visually saw the units and what the staff have to go through - the seniors are living in a facility that is too small for the number of people there and then lo and behold, we learn during Budget Estimates that the budget has been cut in half for any equipment for the facility budget and the response back is that there's a foundation available. Not all senior citizens' homes have foundations and those that do exist are usually working. Chester does have a foundation but they've worked very hard to raise money in a small community for a palliative care room. We wouldn't have that palliative care room because the government isn't putting money in it. They wouldn't have it if it weren't for that foundation.

I don't think it's fair for any government to expect a foundation to put the money forward that are the tax dollars that those seniors paid for years, and are still paying to the government, and then when they're in their final years of their life, they cannot have a suitable place to live out the rest of their life because of the fact the tax dollars are not going back in, after a promise was made. That's what I think is the most bothersome. If there wasn't such a direct commitment to that community, you might be able to dance around it a little bit but when there was an absolute direct commitment - that is such a shame.

We've seen that on other issues in this budget. I don't have to talk for very long again on the Film Tax Credit because that's another one. All you have to do is go on YouTube and you can see all over the Internet an actual video. It's not made up. It's not a character playing our Premier, it is actually our Premier, in his own words, on a video, making an announcement of his Party's support for the film industry, the creative industry. Of course, that's what everybody believed.

We all know the story. I don't have to give the end of the storyline, and I know for sure one thing that this story does not end with is a happily ever after. That's certainly not going to be the end of this particular story with the Film Tax Credit.

When we look at what's in this budget, as I said, promises that were made very clearly have been broken. We are looking at home care system and there is a drive to

privatization even though we know that this has been tried in other areas. In fact, it was tried in Ontario and the Auditor General put a stop to it because it does not work. That's what makes you question - how are these decisions being made when the information is already available? It's not like we're starting from scratch and that we can say we didn't know. Obviously we do know because there are examples throughout Canada where these things have not worked.

The privatization of home care is one of those. They do not work because it's not the small, private home care business that gets to flourish when we privatize. That might be a different story because I know the home care system now, because they have so many challenges in terms of getting workers, especially the weekend hours, they have contracted out to small private organizations or businesses that offer a similar service.

With privatization on a province-wide basis - and you open the doors for that - what happens is that you get the big-box businesses coming in. What they do is they push down the salary range for those home care workers and they start to charge extra to our seniors for care that should be part of the overall home care program.

Every one of us here is going to be a senior. If you are lucky, you are going to live long enough to be a senior, or you have parents who are seniors. But I'll tell you, when it comes to the time in your life that your parents need that care - because that has happened to me in the last six months - I will tell you that you will respect and love those home care workers and what they offer to your family and what they do.

In the real world, there's no 24/7 home care. People think that, oh, I can get home care. Well, it's only during spots of time - an hour here, a couple of hours there. You still have to fill in the gaps as a family member and you have to figure out how to do that, especially when you are a small family and you don't have the extra hands available to help you.

What is your other choice? The other choice is, if your parents want to go to a home or even if they don't want to go to a home, that's a crisis in your life when that happens and you've got to deal with that. Everyone in here will be dealing with it at some point in time. I hope that when that experience happens, they will sit and think about the changes that they are making that we're trying to tell them not to do because it did not work in other provinces. People will have to deal with that at some point in time.

We don't want to see it go that route. I know some of the home care workers who I have talked to say they are going to quit. Well, we're having a hard enough time now to encourage people to go into home care working. It's not an easy job, believe me. They have to do everything.

So why would we create chaos in the home care area when we're talking about - and the minister stands in this House and says over and over - how important it is to create

programs and supports to allow our seniors to live in their homes as long as possible. Well, we're saying that, but like I said in my introduction, there are no actions to those words. The fact is that if we're going to create a crisis in the home care profession and allow big-box companies to come in, charge our seniors extra who do not have the money to pay - that's why they have home care.

If you are a senior who is very wealthy, you may have the money to pay for 24/7 care - that is extraordinarily expensive - but the majority of our seniors do not have those resources. Therefore, what are we doing to those seniors? Where are they going to get the extra money when they have a big-box company saying, okay, do you want meal preparation? That's an extra \$5.95, thank you. Oh, you want me to sweep the floor? That's another \$10 added onto your daily bill. That is what has happened in Ontario and, therefore, the Auditor General actually stepped in and stopped it. I encourage those on the government side to really think about it very, very carefully before they move in that direction.

It is important that when we say words and we take the action that we include those who are making decisions about - that they are part of that decision-making process. It's amazing that one of the pre-election promises was about being open and transparent. Well, just advertising things on a website doesn't mean you are open and transparent. What "open and transparent" means is actually sitting down with those who are going to be affected by the decisions that we make.

Those who are in government carry a lot of power, especially when they have a majority. What has to be remembered is you do not abuse that authority because you know that you can pass whatever you want to present in this House and you don't need to support anything that the Opposition is presenting. I truly hope that there is an awareness of what that power can do to people's lives and not disregard it as a decision made on paper and it would look good in our budget if we make this decision, or we'll let corporations or businesses take over. We cannot forget the people who put us here.

The other aspect that many of the members will deal with sometime in their life, if they have a senior parent, will be the decision of if their parents need more care. It's very difficult. People do not want to leave their homes that they've lived in for years. Seniors want to be home with their family, and it's very difficult for anybody to have to make that decision to transition their parents into a senior care facility.

With respect to the changes to how that's going to take place now, I do not think there was a lot of thought put into that. If you have a patient or a person who may not be ready for the home, but if they have a disease that progresses quickly - which you don't know, no one knows - and suddenly they need to be in a home, but that was after they refused to go in, what happens next? Where do they go? Especially if they've chosen a home that would be close to where they live? Normally it's a 100-kilometre range.

That's when people who've been married for 50 or 60 years get separated. That's not right. That's just not right. Once again, it goes back to making decisions and realizing that those decisions are for people - people that we have had the privilege that supported us to be here.

There are other areas in the budget that are disturbing. When you look at the youth and the university students - we've heard from them. They also feel very betrayed, because leading up to the election there was a lot of hoopla about the support that they would receive, and now they're in a situation where a cap has been taken off their tuition, and there will be a free-for-all for universities. Look at what's happening in Cape Breton. How can we do that to our youth after we said that we would support them?

I know it's difficult, that there's not enough money to go around to everybody, but I think one factor with the budget is remembering people first, and trying to balance those decisions based on people. You can't give people everything they want or the needs they have, but you can certainly have the lens of people when you're making decisions, and not turning around to the youth of our province and saying, now we're not going to provide you with what we thought we were going to provide - and then you offer a smaller amount and make out that it's the most wonderful program of the year, when they're the ones telling you it isn't.

I think what happens is government becomes complacent and thinks, well, everybody's complaining, so I don't need to listen to them, it doesn't really matter. They complain anyway, they want it all. But people who advocate for youth or seniors are trying to make a point that there's such a great need there.

Therefore I think that our youth are in a very precarious position in this province now, because of the situation with the Film Tax Credit. That's a youth-driven industry, and a lot of those youth are already planning to go because we've lost our competitive edge. There's no question. It'll be interesting to see over the next number of years just how many projects we've lost. I can stand in the House and talk about that, because my constituency lost a \$12 million project because of the rash decision without lots of research. Do you know how that affects the people in small, rural Nova Scotia, that the job opportunities are very, very low?

Over the last five years with Haven being there, there was always an excitement in the summertime, and there were plenty of jobs available. People were renting out their homes to the staff, and the support services people coming into the community to work on Haven. The whole community was vibrant and excited.

The government continually references the Ivany report, but I don't know what Ivany report they read because the fact is, the Ivany report talks about keeping our youth. It talks about taking what we have and expanding on it, not trying to create something new

that may not even be there but what we already have and that certainly is in the creative industry, the creative sector.

It is very difficult to figure out why a decision of that magnitude was made without consultation. It seems like the government is in a big rush to make decisions and consult later and that's not what the platform said.

When you look at jobs, all of a sudden - I can remember, Madam Speaker, and I know some of the backbenchers were not here so they don't have that knowledge base, but I can remember when the Liberal Party was on the Opposition side and was yelling about having job targets and why aren't you creating jobs and you're not creating enough. I can tell you, we did not lose 2,200 jobs in one year, so I believe this whole theory of, "we're going to step back and we're going to let the industry, the business, create the jobs," is just a real good way to put your hands up and say we're not going to be responsible. That's all, that's it. That's a message of, "we're not going to be responsible, it's up to others to do that."

Yet at the same time, Madam Speaker, decisions are being made on one hand saying it's up to rural Nova Scotia - the Premier basically said that in the House - it's up to rural Nova Scotia to look after themselves. They don't need the support. He even said his wife didn't need the support and she runs a business. Rural Nova Scotia, in his eyes, does not need the support, whatsoever, of government.

Yet, this same government comes in and brings in legislation that takes their right away and imposes the government's decisions that a village can no longer become a town; whether the community people want that or not, they cannot become a town. My question is - what is it? What is the government's position? Because when it's convenient to say no, no that's not our business to be in, it's none of our business to be in business, but yet at the same time we have these bills that are coming forward that infringe on the rights of people of Nova Scotia, like the one with respect that villages can no longer become towns.

It is no different than the bill we talked about today, Bill No. 100, where you're taking the rights away from faculty in universities and staff people, staff people who generally make between \$20,000 and \$50,000 a year, and just trying to package it under calling it accountability legislation when in fact what it does is take away the rights of those who work in the universities, except for those who are in the president's position and those who are in hierarchy of the universities.

If there is going to be accountability legislation, Madam Speaker, the legislation should be around the presidents and those who are making \$400,000 and \$600,000 a year. We heard today about how presidents and the hierarchy decide to build a building and build a facility, and then it's the university students who are the ones, if it fails, who are responsible to pay for it. That does not make any sense.

I also have to look at the fact that those people who we're talking about are unionized and there is an obvious plan to try to destroy unions in the Province of Nova Scotia. What are unions for? Unions are there to protect workers, to make sure that the workers have rights. Has anyone worked in a place where they felt they had absolutely no rights? People want to go to work, they spend most of their life at work, and if they feel that there is nobody there to protect them, that's very sad. A basic right in our society is to have the ability to have a union represent us, if we wish, and it's a collective agreement amongst workers to have a union.

I remember the Premier standing in this House when he was the Leader of the Official Opposition and, once again, using any word possible to make it look like he was supportive of unions - once again, making a conscious effort to give that message to people who are involved in unions. There was even advertisement, once again, consciously making a decision, and then getting in the position of power and taking that position and doing the total opposite of what you told those people you would do.

No wonder, like I said, people feel that politics is a farce. That's what creates that kind of attitude from Nova Scotians - when they get treated like that. We have the nurses' unions that were basically under attack, we have the health care system under attack, we have the film and creative industry under attack - which mainly is made up of unionized people - and now we have our universities under attack. I would say that there is a conscious effort to try to wipe out people's right to be represented in this province by unions.

It's sad and unfortunate. This is something I can have printed and presented. This is called the NSGEU Five Point Quality Public Service Protection Plan for Nova Scotia. When you have a chance to read it, I would encourage every member in this House to read it, because there are five points in here that talk about how the now-Premier would support unions and there would be consultation before any type of privatization in our province or any major changes. It's here on paper with the Premier's signature and the date of September 20, 2013. I'm not making this up. It's got his signature.

MADAM SPEAKER: I'm going to ask the honourable member to please table that document.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I will ask one of the Pages to. I would be delighted if the government members would read that and see their Premier's signature on it and the date. I would be delighted. That's the real thing. That's what I'm talking about in terms of making a conscious effort to tell people one thing, and even put it on paper, and turn around and do the opposite. There's a long list of that.

Also, I hear the chirping from the member for Yarmouth. I can remember him on this side that everything in the world should be done. You should be able to cover this, you should be able to do this, you should be able to do that - a whole long list of those things. It's really different when they get on the other side. I am telling you one thing: when you

have something in writing, the people of Nova Scotia have every opportunity and right to see that document and see the signature on that document.

There's so much more that I could actually talk about in terms of this government, from fees that we have - and I brought that up in the House with respect to the great people of Big and Little Tancook Islands with their fees increasing by 60 per cent. It's the only means of transportation that they have to get to the mainland to go to school and go to work. (Interruptions) Madam Speaker, may I? Thank you.

The member opposite is chirping about one issue that took place with respect to the HST when we were in government. In fact, it was this government that came in and repealed the legislation that was to turn the HST back to 13 per cent. When the real information is out there, then it's true. We were in this Legislature when that bill came through. That was repealed, there was legislation (Interruption) when we left, before that election there was legislation to roll back the HST, and it is government that ripped that up and took it away from Nova Scotians. (Interruptions) That shows you how much they care about people - that shows you. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, order. The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't really have to say much more because I'll tell you who is going to say it in a couple of years, it's the very people I was talking about here tonight - seniors, youth, people in the creative film industry, workers, rural Nova Scotians, university students, there's a long list. It's about the people and that's what this budget is not about - it's not about people. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the members who are being supportive here this evening. (Interruption)

Madam Speaker, they're calling for some Gaelic, maybe there will be some in the next hour.

I'd like to start - the first thing I thought about with this piece of legislation and with the budget is: how does it affect my own area? I think probably all of us have thought about that because that's what's relevant to people back home.

Madam Speaker, there were a lot of things in the budget that people are upset about in Inverness County. Some have gone so far as to say that it has been an attack on rural Nova Scotia. Those are their words, not mine, at least not at this moment - I'm quoting them. I think people in the rural parts of the province have been feeling and seeing their areas decline, and they always feel like something else is leaving the community.

There were decisions made with this legislation that affected more of those things, probably some of the most visible would be the courthouses, but many other things as well. I think about something that is an issue that we heard about not too long ago, and we talk about how rural parts of the province are becoming depopulated, people are leaving. Well some, Madam Speaker, and I know just the other day there were six OB/GYNs who resigned.

I think about the future population of the province, just to have a child, living in rural Inverness County, right now expectant moms have to travel to Antigonish, which is far away enough as it is but I do know, I was actually talking to the Mayor of Antigonish just the other day and he was telling me about another OB/GYN who is going to be leaving. If there are no OB/GYNs in Antigonish, Madam Speaker, people in my area are going to have to travel further. Having a child is a very serious matter. We certainly know that it wasn't that far in the distant past that mothers and their children could die in childbirth; there are a lot of risks.

I don't raise that to cause alarm for young, expectant moms but I don't think we can sit back and be silent about it either. I thought about talking about it a little more back home, and without wanting to cause alarm, I've avoided speaking a lot about it thus far, but it's an important issue. If we expect young families to settle in rural areas of the province, they have to be able to have the services of OB/GYNs because for their own safety, for their own peace of mind, they need to be somewhat close to the professional medical help they need when they are going to have a child. I think about rural Inverness County, many places in the county are at least an hour away from Antigonish; many are more than that. If the Antigonish hospital no longer has that option of having an OB/GYN there, the next stop is New Glasgow. Now we're looking at perhaps an hour and half to two hours, minimum, for some people in Inverness County to have that service.

I know the government has talked about trying to fix this. I'm disappointed to see that the issue is even in front of us because, as I said before, I don't like to raise alarm for people who may be expecting a child, to cause them stress but these are matters that should be in the hand of government, should be in the hand of the Health and Wellness Department, and they shouldn't even have to come to the floor of the Legislature, it shouldn't have to be an issue being reported on in the media because they're very serious and I would think that the government would be ensuring that people in the management of our health care system are regularly speaking with these medical professionals and understanding what they're going through.

I spoke to one who is not an OB/GYN, but she has delivered babies and she told me that the cost of her insurance to do that requires her to make two deliveries each month. She may only be making two deliveries each month so she would have to ask herself the question - her heart is obviously in the right place, that's why she's a physician, that's why she's making those deliveries, but when you think about how highly skilled her position is and how important and how responsible she has to be in delivering a baby, the fact that she

might not even get paid for it is a big issue. Especially if it's a young physician who doesn't have to be here, who can work elsewhere and make a better living because we all know if you're a young physician you're probably carrying around a lot of debt. It takes many, many years of expensive education to become a medical professional.

It concerns me. When I spoke to her and I asked her, does anybody ever check in with you? Does anybody ever check in to make sure that things are going okay, that you're running a practice, but are there issues, are you facing challenges, can we help you? The answer was no. That was disappointing because if nobody is checking in, we talk about the importance of physician recruitment, what about retaining?

We see that with business. I know the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is no more also with this legislation, but one of the goals of the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has been, not only recruitment of new enterprise but also retaining enterprise that is here. I don't believe that the government is focused enough on these young physicians who are coming out and starting practices, especially in rural areas, where there's a lot of challenges, where they're expected to do a lot of things. I don't feel the government is doing a good job of staying connected to those people and making sure that we retain them.

They are a very important part of rural life, and I'm going to give you an example. We had a physician in Inverness who retired a couple of years back, Dr. Bernie MacLean. Dr. Bernie delivered 4,000 babies over the course of his career. He was a general practitioner. Yes, he delivered me I believe. He was my family doctor. Dr. Bernie, when you think about that, in a rural area, somebody in an urban area, 4,000 babies, well, I suppose that's possible if you're in Toronto or somewhere like that, but he's in Inverness. The population probably peaked at one time, maybe close to 30,000, the peak of population, so he basically delivered one in every six or seven people if you do the math on that, which is amazing. When he retired he had so many clients that they needed two and a half physicians to pick up his caseload.

That highlights the importance of ensuring the government in its budget and in its focus in health care is ensuring that young physicians feel rewarded, feel that they're having success, feel that they're earning a competitive living and ensure that they feel they're making some progress on paying down the debt that they've accumulated in gaining their education, to ensure that they're there for us when we need them here in the province. So I think that's very important and a significant issue right now.

I want to speak a bit about provincial parks. The government has made a decision in Whycocomagh to reduce the employees from 11 down to four. There are many people disappointed, not the least of whom those who work there. The minister was kind enough to have a meeting with me and a couple of members from the community: the head of the Whycocomagh Development Commission, Jim Austin, and Burton MacIntyre, who is a frequent user of the park and is very well-known throughout Inverness County.

The points we tried to raise - there is a gap, there's no question in the cost to run the park and the amount of money that's being brought in. I think probably the best point I could raise is, if this park is expected to generate more revenue, you can't really charge more per night at the park, but you can try to drive more business. I think that can be best driven by improving the customer experience, which I think is most likely to happen through personal contact, through having somebody there that's going to tell the visitors about events that are happening and things they can do to keep them entertained, to lengthen their stay. Also, if people have a nice stay there, they are probably going to come back again. That's what could help to drive revenue.

I know the government has instead made a decision to move ahead with kiosks and they have acknowledged - I haven't seen a firm number, but I have seen people throw around a figure of perhaps a 25 per cent revenue reduction at the parks with the use of kiosks because there inevitably will be people who won't pay, so there's lost revenue there that could be maintained if they kept the employees working there. There is also a potential revenue stream of taking reservations at the park itself. Right now they are being made through a 1-800 number, which is landing people at a call centre in Ontario, to take reservations that way.

We were trying to come up with some ideas to make the case for these people; these are their jobs. I've met with them on a number of occasions and there's a lot on the line for them. I know one person who works there who has, I believe, five, maybe six children. Her husband is working out West and the question comes up, should we stay here? If she's no longer going to have that employment and he's travelling back and forth out West all the time, the questions start to arise, I'm sure around the family table, should we be all together and if they're going to be all together, they're going to be out West. If we lose her, if we lose her children, there are five fewer for the school. If we lose five students, we start to lose a teaching position and so on and so on.

So it's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, when we hear people feeling like the budget has been an attack on rural Nova Scotia. They are seeing these things right before their eyes.

I think about other ideas for the park - through attrition, over time, positions can be reduced while having less impact on people. I know in the case of the park - and I'm not going to get too much into specifics, but I know there are a couple who are probably close to retirement. That would help to bring the numbers down a bit, to help close the gap on the operating shortfall of that park in Whycomagh. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, these are real ideas that we put forward in an effort to try to convince the government to have another look at this.

Another thing was that we could stagger the workweeks for the people working at the park to ensure that they are still getting some employment but helping to reduce the cost to government, the cost of the employment. So all that to be said, the park in

Whycocomagh is something people there are very proud of. It's a significant community asset.

I think about the waterfront centre that was built with some government money, yes, but primarily with the sweat equity of people in the community. They have a beautiful facility. I encourage anybody, if they are ever travelling through Whycocomagh, it's right on the highway, and as you're travelling through it's on the water side - of course, since it's a waterfront centre. They have a nice space there. It's the old Legion. They've fixed it up. They have a beautiful deck around the facility. You can even dock boats nearby, and they are having a lot of success there. People are very proud of that.

Part of the benefit of the waterfront centre to the park was that it's another attraction if they have events there for people who are at the park. It connects people down to the restaurants in the community of Whycocomagh; it connects people down to the water, where there are activities where people can spend time and enjoy themselves and have experiences that may keep them around a little bit longer. That's good for the businesses in the community - businesses that wrote letters in support of the park, whether they were restaurants or accommodations or even a hardware store in Whycocomagh.

Mr. Speaker, that was something in this budget that I was disappointed to see. We heard about it a few weeks before the budget actually came down. It is something that is not playing well in Inverness County. I know people continue to write letters to government about that, asking them to have another look at the Whycocomagh park to see if something can be done so that the people who are going to be losing their jobs there can keep working, but also to add value to the park to close the gap of the shortfall in the operating of the park that exists.

Another thing that is very significant in my area is roads. Every day we get calls about roads, sometimes about the same road. Recently I tabled a couple of petitions - one for the Deepdale Road, which runs in back of Inverness. On touring this road a couple of years back, I asked an official from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, what can we do for this road? We get calls about it all the time, and there's obviously something wrong here, because we're getting an inordinate number of calls about this road, so what do we need to do?

I see the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is hiding over there, but I know he's just acknowledging, and I appreciate that he's listening. The official said, really - and I can't say my own name in here - member for Inverness, this road needs to be reconstructed. Well, I said, how much is that going to cost? Why don't we just start planning for this? He said, very roughly, probably somewhere in the order of about \$300,000.

Mr. Speaker, that would pretty much consume the RIM budget for northern Inverness County right in one shot. We really wouldn't have a cent for any other road. We

wouldn't be able to fill any other potholes. We wouldn't be able to cut any other brush along roads where it is growing in, especially on turns, where it becomes a safety issue in terms of visibility. We wouldn't be able to do any patching on paved roads. We wouldn't be able to improve ditching to stop the water that's on some roads that's collecting on the roads and causing erosion and causing damage that's causing more expensive problems to happen down the road - no pun intended. It's pretty dry.

Roads are so important, and the Deepdale Road is one. The Banks Road in Inverness needs to be repaved, I have to give a little dig to the municipality here - there is a lot of work on that road in terms of water lines crossing the road. There are a lot of joint marks across the road now from that activity. It was a decent road at one time, but now it's in really bad shape. That needs to be repaved. I think there are about 80 homes on that road and probably 150 people driving that road regularly, every day. That's a road that needs to get paved and that's one I had a call on the other day.

We had a call on the Big Intervale Road in Margaree; that needs attention. The Big Harbour Island Road in the Marble Mountain area - and the Marble Mountain Road is another road that hasn't been paved in so long. It doesn't have the traffic count to meet targets for repaving, but we even looked at the maintenance budget for that. Could we use the maintenance budget for that to start paving over a number of years to get it paved? The budget, though, is so small that, once again, if we use that, there is nothing left for anything else for the year.

We're put in a bad position. The only way to solve it, I believe - and I think the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal would agree - the government has to give that minister more money in his department so that he can do more of this work. I think about how people do question how money is spent in government, but I certainly know that money spent on roads is never questioned in my area. From the calls I get, I think we should be spending more money on roads.

There are all kinds of roads I should mention. I tabled another petition in here the other day for the Belle Côte Beach Road, which is presently at the Department of Natural Resources awaiting transfer to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal so that Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal can then start budgeting to make some improvements on that road. There were a number of people who signed that petition, so we hope that the government will transfer that Belle Côte Beach Road from Natural Resources to Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal so that can start to happen. Nothing can happen until that does happen.

If we're not budgeting enough money for these roads, we're not going to be able to get them fixed. That's what I keep telling people at home: the people working at Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal are doing the best they can. They aren't equipped with enough money to buy materials and equipment to get the work done that needs to be done. That is a major issue.

I want to talk a bit about twinning of highways in the province. No one would argue the benefit of safety of twinning highways, but I also think in the back of my mind, every time we twin a highway, every time we add a new bridge structure, that means there is a greater chance that there's a bridge in my area that's not going to get replaced the next time a flood washes through. For people in Inverness County who live in those areas, who use those bridges on a daily basis, that is a big issue. That's something that we will hear about in the Legislature. I have no doubt there will be petitions tabled in here about that. These are things we need to be thinking about.

I was hearing suggestions on the radio this morning about using more Jersey barriers and rumble strips. I'm not a huge fan of them myself. I do kind of like them in the wintertime because if the road is snow-covered, you know where you are if you start to drive over them. There are measures for safety that can be used. At the end of the day, I'd love to see the highway twinned from Antigonish to the causeway; that would make my drive a little shorter every week. There are sections that are being done now that are going to make a big difference, which is good in terms of the drive time and for safety. I do think about that - the more highway we twin the less money that's going to be available because we're going to be maintaining more bridge structures with those highways, the less we're going to have for a lot of these rural roads.

I have to talk a bit about the previous government's paving plant. Many a day I would stand in here and criticize it, but wish secretly if only they would bring that to Inverness County. That would have made such a difference in terms of getting some roads that hadn't been paved in 30 or 40 years (Interruption) it did make it to Inverness. I know I have a motorcycle and I was driving around Bay St. Lawrence on a nice sunny day when they were paving there, and there was at least an 18-kilometre stretch and I was thinking, boy, I could see this coming in handy in northern Inverness County, which was also identified as an area considered remote where there weren't many tender responses for road tenders because it's far away.

It might be close to a gravel pit and aggregate, but it's far away from where a lot of these paving companies are headquartered and they have to lug all their equipment up there. Who's going to do that for three kilometres, for a three-kilometre paving job?

I do think that the previous NDP Government was on to something when they started that plant, recognizing that there has to be a way to attract more affordable paving to those rural areas. It is needed. I was disappointed when the present government sold the paving plant that they did not continue the idea of packaging roads in a rural area like northern Inverness County to be that same efficiency even if it was by way of tender, but to gain the efficiency of packaging a number of roads so that if a paving company was bidding on, instead of three kilometres, 30 kilometres.

I know the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie would appreciate that as well. He has an area where there are probably roads there considered remote that would

benefit from this idea. I think we should all get together in the Legislature on a non-partisan level and come together to encourage the government. I say that and I giggle a little bit, but I know that members in rural parts of the province and the government side understand this. I know they're getting calls every day about their roads and I know that the previous government was on to something when they had this plan to pave rural roads.

I know there are roads, especially in the Margaree and Cheticamp area that haven't been paved in almost 40 years now and they're getting in pretty rough shape. So wouldn't it be great if the government had a plan like the previous government had for paving in rural areas. I think that's something the government should be looking at - it's not in this budget but maybe it will be in the next one. Hopefully it will.

I'll just say a couple of other points on that. I know that the previous government was budgeting about \$3 million every year in three areas which would probably do about 30 kilometres. Wow, what a difference that would make if we got that even for one year in northern Inverness County - and I say "northern" because that's what was highlighted as being more remote. But there are certainly other areas of the county where it could be used as well.

I know that roads are a challenge, and they will be a challenge for any government. I know the budget is about \$420 million and I know when you start shaking that around the province it probably feels like a salt shaker. There's not too much coming out and there's a big area to be salted. Another point - one of the reasons why we can't do as much paving is because we use a lot of salt in the wintertime, especially the last two months. I know salt is a major expenditure for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

I think if there was a plan by the government to get some of these rural roads paved people would feel better about it. Right now there is no plan; there's a five-year plan but in my area it's only covering Route 19, Highway No. 105 and Route 395 and there is just really only one other road that's not a route or a highway that can expect pavement in the next five years. So that doesn't make people feel good.

There's another road that I'm going to speak about but I'm just going to put that to the side. I just want to make sure that point is understood a little later on. I want to say one thing that I think is positive about the budget, because I know the government members would probably like to hear something positive, and that is the funding of harness racing. A lot of people say well, why fund harness racing? It's gambling. Harness racing - anybody who would say that, come on down to Inverness on a Sunday afternoon. You're going to see people from around the province spending money on a hobby. Instead of taking a trip to Cuba, their money goes into the horse-racing culture and activity. I call it a culture because these people are passionate about it. They live for it and on a Sunday afternoon they're spending money on fuel, coming from around the province, spending money on

accommodations, spending money on veterinarians, spending money on horseshoes, feed and equipment. This is investment, keeping money back in the economy.

I know the economy in Inverness - they've been doing this for pretty well a hundred years. I'm happy to see that the government continued to fund harness racing. As I say, a lot of people out there who know nothing about it would be quick to say well there's a waste of money; there's a million dollars you could take out of the budget. I think that investment is paid back, at least to break-even point, but I would say probably a lot more.

People who feel that's not a good investment, I would invite them to come down to Inverness on a Sunday afternoon and see all the activity. It's good for young people. A lot of people who have started in Inverness have gone away to ply their trade in Ontario and have made quite a bit of money, whether it's breeding horses or training horses or even owning horses.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that funding was in the budget for harness racing and I know that people are very passionate about it. I was just in Inverness at their annual banquet and the people there are very passionate about that and the next step, I believe, is to expand harness racing to become more of an experience for visitors. I know - and I love to travel - if I was somewhere on the continent, in a place in a rural area, and I could go and see some local people harness racing, I'd be fascinated by that. I'd be curious. I would spend probably a day at that activity and I'd spend another night's worth of money on accommodations and meals.

These are the kinds of things you see in travel books, you know, you pick up a Lonely Planet book and you learn about where you are going to visit and all of a sudden you see oh, go to this community on Sunday afternoon for this activity. All of a sudden, people have something to do and they enjoy it and they tell their friends about it when they get back that they had this unique experience and what happens? We get more visitors. This is all good investment. I congratulate the government on funding harness racing. You gotta give a little credit where credit is due, from time to time.

The member for Northside-Westmount, who I know has a track in his area, says they could use more funding and honestly, I think there are some strategic investments that could be made and those are investments that I will be bringing to the Minister of Agriculture. Actually, harness racing comes under the Gaming Minister so maybe I should bring them there - but strategic investments that will be focused on visitor comfort when they come to the track to try to build on that visitor experience. So I'll be coming asking for that, Mr. Speaker, but I'm not just coming with cap in hand, I'm going to come with a case that is actually going to bring money back to the government coffers because I think that's important and I would expect no less of somebody coming to me asking for money to invest in something, that there would be an expectation that there's a return on that.

Mr. Speaker, I talked briefly about roads. I want to bring up one road for the member for Cape Breton-Richmond. It's a road in his constituency that serves a lot of both of our constituents, that is the road that goes up to the paper mill in Point Tupper. I know there have been some concerns brought to me about that road and the condition it's in. I drove it not too long ago. I think even some investment there would help the people who are travelling on it every day and also for people who are coming to visit what is turning out to be a very successful enterprise.

For every cent - and thank God that mill was saved, Mr. Speaker. I know that people around the province questioned it at the time and I can understand why they would do that, but I can tell you that the Strait area would be a ghost town if it wasn't for that mill because not only would you lose all the jobs there, all the activity that that creates might be just enough to sink a lot of other businesses in the area. I want to congratulate the previous government - I'm giving them a lot of credit here tonight, but that's okay, we should be doing that, we should be recognizing when things are done by other political Parties.

I know that the night that mill was going to close, I was at my friend Keith O'Brien's house, we were doing a little workout, I think we were hitting the heavy bag. I can tell you that I was pretty shocked when I heard that the mill was going to shut down. I was like, oh my God, this is not good. This area is going to change forever and not for good.

Thankfully that mill is alive. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, from speaking with the owners of that mill, they are going to run a good business there. They are running a good business now; they are running a good business anyway, they were starting to turn a profit anyway, but for every cent that the exchange rate the Canadian dollar is below the American dollar, they are making an extra \$1 million a year on that, just on the exchange alone.

They are looking at other products they're not just looking at paper, they've been winning a lot of market share because customers are looking for a good quality paper and the paper they are producing, the supercalendar paper, is winning out because it is good paper. It might not be as good as some of the other qualities out there but in terms of the use for those customers, when I say not as good, it's not as expensive or as high end. But in terms of its usability, it provides a lot of the same characteristics, for less price. So they are cornering in on the market and we see in the U.S. right now they are upset about that. That has a lot to do with the fact that that mill is running a good operation. They are putting out a good product, they have the best equipment in the world at that mill, they hold world records for speed of production and they are doing well. They are looking at other options, Mr. Speaker, other businesses. I feel that mill is in very good hands and I feel confident about its future and possibly a future of expanded employment.

I do have to say this, ironically their biggest challenge has been having enough electricity, because they use so much power that they have to shut down from time to time

because there's not enough power on the grid. Every time they shut down, if they lose two or three days a month, at the end of the year that's about a month's production that they are not able to produce and sell.

Mr. Speaker, it's sad that they've got everything under control except the power. I think that is an issue that is critical. I know the Minister of Energy is aware of it because this operation is in his own constituency and I'm sure he takes that seriously. (Interruption) The member for Northside-Westmount is saying the monopoly is broken. Well it's not broken yet. Honestly, I don't think that the breaking of the monopoly would make much difference anyway, at least in terms of the way it was positioned before the election. I even saw somebody commenting on that the other day in allNovaScotia - actually no, I'm reading Mr. Howard Epstein's book and he's talking about that. (Interruptions) But he was quoting others. Anyway, I found that interesting.

Suffice to say, the point being Port Hawkesbury Paper needs a more stable supply of power and that's a very important piece for the government to be looking at, not just for the local Strait area, but for the GDP of the province, because as soon as that mill started producing paper again, what happened to the exports in the province? They went up significantly. At a time when we're losing jobs in the province government should do its homework, and I will be supportive of them in whatever that takes to ensure that mill has the power it needs. I'd be happy to talk about it with them anytime, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk about some other items related to the budget. I was thinking about education and I'm just going to speak about a small issue at Education and Early Childhood Development - it surprised me, it disappointed me. It has to do with a young boy who is not going to public school, he's being home-schooled, but he is following the required requirements by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to be given the equivalent of his schooling. He's actually an exceptional athlete; he's a young guy, I believe he's about 13 - don't quote me, but he's about that age. He's not allowed to play on the local school sports teams.

I thought well, why don't I make a couple of calls? Surely we can fix this. We often hear from governments of all stripes how important it is to be physically active. Here's a young guy who is following the requirements of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for his home-schooling, wants to play for the local school team - a great way for him to socialize. I know that a lot of people fear home-schooling because they think the children are not going to be able to socialize, it is going to have an effect on them down the road. Well, here's an opportunity for him to socialize, for him to be included - and we often talk about inclusiveness.

When I called the school board I thought surely this can be fixed and addressed, and it turned out it couldn't. I asked was there some specific reason, is it insurance? Maybe there's some way we can get around that. I know the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development well - she used to be the Leader of our Party over here. I thought

I could go and speak with her (Interruptions) I'm kind of speaking with her right now because I know she's listening. But I thought maybe there is something I can do to assist - and this is nothing to do with her, it's not her fault, this issue, but I'm kind of giving her an opportunity to become aware of it here, I guess. I said, maybe I can speak to the minister, if there's something I can do for the school board - it's about a young guy trying to play for the local school, but he's home-schooled.

The school board couldn't rectify it, it was kind of said, why don't you talk to the School Athletic Federation? I called them and they said this is our policy, you can come and meet with us, and I said come on now, policy is policy, but at the end of the day we have a young guy here who is a good athlete. I hear the coach wants him to play on the team. It would be a great opportunity for him to be included with the other children in the community. So, no, they couldn't change the policy. I said well, I'm not going to make these parents go through a bunch of meetings to be given some runaround. I just concluded the conversation. I said I'm disappointed because I think sport is a wonderful thing for people and surely a bunch of adults can get together and fix this. I will speak to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development because she knows she is inviting me to speak to her about that.

We talk about red tape; surely a few adults can get together and fix this matter for the sake of that young man. Who knows? He might get his university paid for someday if he's that good an athlete. I kind of have the sense that he might just be. Who would know? We're getting a little business done here during this bill here tonight.

Another item that I've dealt with over the years is Maintenance Enforcement. Looking in the budget, I know one of the challenges facing Maintenance Enforcement the last couple of years was when the office was moved to New Waterford. There was a large number of - I don't have it right in front of me here - but a significant number of vacancies in the office with that transition and that caused a lot of challenges. We get calls regularly from parents whose former spouse is not helping out with the cost of raising their children.

I know there's a report coming out. I was kind of hoping to see it. I see by the calendar on my desk that today is the last day of April and I know that this report was going to come in April. It's not here yet, I heard the minister say it's coming soon. I get a sneaking feeling that it's going to come shortly after the Legislature rises. I don't know if that's the case or not but we don't know what's in that report. We might like to ask some questions about it. The Legislature's a good venue for that. We will anyway, whenever it does come out. I was hoping to see that come out before this Legislature rises.

It doesn't matter whose government is in office, there are always going to be challenges in getting payments from people who are - I was speaking to a woman the other evening. She was telling me about a gentleman who for the past 18 years has been on the run and I think he's in Ontario now. He is completely off the radar. He's working under

the table. All of his income is coming in illegally, under the table, and he's avoiding having to pay her one red cent.

That's an awful thing. I'm hoping this report - I was looking at cross jurisdictions in Canada today, measures that can be taken to try to enforce payment. For somebody like that, I wonder what can be done, short of maybe throwing him in jail for a while, but those are the kinds of challenges that are faced. I want to raise the issue of maintenance enforcement and I want to mention that we look forward to the report coming forward from the Minister of Justice on that.

I want to see what is in that report to see if maybe there are some opportunities for improvement because there are a lot of people out there, a lot of parents suffering with the stress of trying to provide for their children, going into debt because they don't have the support of the other parent of the children. There's no need of that. May we find a way here to empower Maintenance Enforcement so that doesn't have to happen, at least as frequently as it does now. I saw a statistic the other day, I believe it's 58 per cent are in arrears. I could be wrong on that but I throw that out there. I know it's significant.

I think I only have about 10 minutes left and I have a stack here, I could probably go for another three hours. I remember my first hour-long speech in here, I thought how in the heck am I going to do this? Look at where I've detracted to. I could talk all day. When I go home, I have to reverse that and speak more quickly when I go to an event because I'll only agitate people. Of course, that's not a concern in this Legislature; sometimes it's the goal, but I say that in jest.

One of the things I want to talk about in the budget - it's very relevant to the budget because we've had deficit budgets, we've been going into a lot of debt, increased the debt 25 per cent the last number of years. That is the equivalent of - and I don't want to be saying this to pick on Sydney Steel, but I know a lot of people know how significant that operation was - it contributed 25 per cent of the provincial debt. There are a lot of people who say disparaging things about Sydney Steel. Some people would also say, though, that if it was around in the not-too-distant past, it probably would have been turning a profit as the market for steel improved.

The fact is that at one time - and I looked at the numbers on this - Sydney Steel accounted for 25 per cent of the provincial debt. We've just done the same thing in the last six years. That's obviously not good for our people who are going to have to pay it off in the future. We're seeing another \$100 million added to the debt this year.

I was thinking, how can we turn this around? We talk about the federal government - the federal government could be doing more. Well, I looked into this. The amount of money that we do pay to the federal government - because some of the money that comes back from the federal government is ours. That's fair ball, that's our own money coming back to us. That number is about \$5 billion, but the amount that comes to us from the

federal government, in excess of the \$5 billion from the federal government, is \$7 billion. That tells me that we could be doing more for ourselves.

Now, I know that history has played a role. I know they were probably - well, they certainly were in this Chamber when they decided for Nova Scotia to join Confederation. At that time - hindsight is 20-20 - one could question why we joined Confederation, because our economy was running along pretty well. Not long after Confederation, subsidies were poured in to change the flow of goods that normally came to the coasts of Nova Scotia and moved them more to Central Canada. Perhaps that's why the shortfall in money coming from the federal government to us now is about \$7 billion, which is a massive amount of money. If we look at it in the context of the budget, which is about \$10 billion, we get about \$7 billion a year from the federal government in excess of the money that we send to them.

What could we be doing to try to improve things? We can't change the past. There have been a lot of good things that we're part of Canada; that's not my intent to start a debate on that. Despite what happened in the past, I think we have to look at ways where we can do more for our province, for ourselves. I think about royalties - one source of revenue: offshore royalties. There's \$1 billion in exploration work announced by British Petroleum and Shell. Hopefully, they'll discover reserves and we'll make royalties on that.

I know we recently had the Department of Natural Resources at Public Accounts Committee. There was an audit by the Auditor General and there were concerns raised about - are we accounting for those royalties? Are we ensuring that we are getting them? I'm not going to go into too much of that. I know that involved a lot of activity that is happening on land, but there are opportunities there too, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that we are taking the Auditor General's recommendations seriously. I know the department is. They have agreed to address them. I know in my own area there is significant deposit of limestone - I almost said gypsum, there is lots of gypsum there too - but the limestone. They say there is a 250 year supply of limestone which could be used for making cement.

Of course they bring challenges, Mr. Speaker, if you talk about developing resources. We certainly never want to compromise environment but if there is a way that we can do something, if we could develop that project without affecting the environment, having protections in place, and ensuring that the regulations are effective, then we could be doing something to improve the revenues of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I just have so much more here and now I'm being cut back. I feel a bit - you know, we should change the rules so we can speak longer than an hour. Nobody is agreeing.

I want to speak a moment on a couple of issues, and who knows maybe I'll get a chance to speak again on some of this. Mr. Speaker, I think in the next couple of minutes - I want to save some of this material because there may be another opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I think about going forward with this budget and I know in projections between this year that is coming up and the following year, there is a projected increase of 3 per cent of revenue coming into the province. It concerns me because I'm just wondering where that's going to come from. Unless we are expecting inflation to drive personal income taxes and HST revenue and other revenues like that up by three per cent, I'm wondering where that money is going to come from. It totals about \$300 million and I'm hoping that it's not going to come by way of tax increases.

We've had the Broten tax report; there is talk of taxes in that. I was interested to read that report; it was a good report. I was interested to read it to see the opinions and the ideas. We see in this budget the elimination of the Healthy Living Tax Credit. I know a lot of people appreciated that. One could question if it is best targeting those who need it the most? Maybe not, but it was some tax relief for parents with children and physical activity in sport.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it was really a bad thing and I don't see anything wrong with giving some tax relief to families. They are likely going to spend it back in the economy anyway. It was a little reward to take the sting out of the cost of sport and recreational activity and we certainly know that costs a lot for families. That is something that is missing and it was just something that I thought about now with the Broten report.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that I'm pretty well out of time here. It's coming down to the remaining seconds and I'm going to talk right to the very last second, just on principle alone.

One of the other things in the budget, Mr. Speaker - and I was surprised at this - we've seen the government ask people to make sacrifices. I think about things that I've talked about tonight, the park in Whycomogah, and other parks around the province. I think about people working in the visitor centre in Port Hastings, some of them have been working for six-month terms, or longer than six months, which gain them the ability to have benefits and now their work terms are cut back below that so they are no longer going to have benefits. Mr. Speaker, these are people that are being affected in very real ways, very real to them.

At the same time, based on our analysis of the budget, there was a 6 per cent increase in senior-level administration in government. There are people who are working in rural Nova Scotia having their terms cut shorter, so they're losing their benefits, and the government at the same time is spending an extra 6 per cent on senior administration. It doesn't send a very good message.

Maybe that's an investment in running government better, I don't know. On the surface of things, it doesn't look very good, and it's something these people see and it's very disappointing to them. I think - do I have another minute? (Interruptions) With that, Mr. Speaker, since I have to step down, I will step down.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to stand in my place and say a few words this evening. It may not be as many words as my colleague for Inverness, but I'll see what I can do.

First of all, I think I would like to say that it certainly is a difficult job to not only create a budget but to put a budget together. Even though we're in a small province of less than one million people, we have a budget that is close to \$10 billion, and a lot of work and preparation must go into creating a budget and trying to make life a lot easier for people in Nova Scotia.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and her department for the work that they did over the past many months. They had a lot of tough decisions to make, a lot of cuts to make, and we may not agree with all of those cuts and the process that was used in some areas, but nevertheless, it was a very difficult job. Again, my thanks go out to all the members of the Finance and Treasury Board Department with regard to the job that they did.

Most budgets will probably create more questions than answers. Usually that has been my experience. With regard to this particular budget, how will this budget influence income equality? There are a lot of Nova Scotians who are making low wages, and taxes are going up. Income equality is a very important thing when you speak to them.

When you think about the budget, how will the budgetary priorities support the long-term sustainability of the provincial economy? That's another important question dealing with any budget, especially a provincial budget.

Is a budget deficit a drain on the long-term economy of our province? If this government spends more than it taxes now, then it must tax more than it spends tomorrow. If the provincial debt is a major strain on economic growth, what, if any, are our options? We all know that government's budgets, like others, roll out the government's policies, priorities, political commitments, and ways in which they will raise revenue. Once again, that's a difficult task, trying to raise enough revenue to cover the costs of all the programs and services that the province would like to do. A budget is also with regard to how it plans to raise the revenue and how to use this particular revenue and the acquired funds to meet all the needs of the province.

The future of the province is questionable at this particular time. Does the government have a plan to move forward? Some people believe that they don't. We have a beautiful province. We have well-educated youth. We have numerous universities and community colleges. We have numerous highly-skilled tradespeople in the province. However, the majority of these Nova Scotians would prefer - of course, as we all agree on both sides of the House that these Nova Scotians would prefer - to stay home and work in

their communities. They would prefer to raise their families here in Nova Scotia, a place where they are connected to family and friends.

That is why the government's priority should be sustaining the jobs we have and of course creating new ones, especially in rural Nova Scotia. This is the only way this province will grow and flourish. We need more Nova Scotians working at home, paying taxes, and spending their money locally.

That is why it was so important that the government finally decided to consult with the film industry and to rethink their decision. Nearly 100 production companies operate in this province and pay corporate income tax. Millions of dollars enter our local economy every year through this industry. This industry finds itself in a very highly competitive global economy and they need government assistance. Our caucus realizes that changes need to be made to get our province back on track and those changes should create jobs and improve our economy. The elimination of the Film Tax Credit does the opposite.

A reasonable budget develops sustainable fiscal policies and economic growth. Is this the case with this budget? Time will tell. Government budgets affect the lives of everyone in the province, whether it is directly or indirectly. It can have the biggest impact on particular groups such as the elderly, the poor, children, minority groups, and residents in the rural areas. The well-being of these groups depends upon government decisions within the budget. Long-term care beds are filled in hospitals waiting for a place to be assigned. In some hospitals, surgeons are cancelling operations and surgeries because of bed shortages.

Will this year's budget cuts have a negative impact on programs that benefit the poor and vulnerable? Reducing funding to community groups dealing with mental health by up to 40 per cent is not a positive move. If anything, mental health is underfunded. The issues surrounding mental health have been ignored. Mental issues continue to increase in the province and this is not a time to reduce support. There appears - and the reason, I don't know why - to be an increase in mental health issues with young children entering elementary schools in the province. That is a reason why we need more support systems in our schools to address these concerns - more psychiatrists, more psychologists, and more guidance counsellors - because if we don't pay now, we will certainly pay later.

It is critical that we maintain these supports and increase them if possible. As I said earlier, we can't pay for everything and tough decisions have to be made, but when we're dealing with our youth, we're dealing with students in school, students entering school, we have to give them and the families all of the support that we can.

Another cut that hurts is EDNS, Eating Disorders Nova Scotia - they have to exist with about a quarter of their normal funding being removed. I've had some experience with students suffering from eating disorders and, again, it's a terrible disorder and very difficult to deal with. This area was cut from \$49,000 to about \$37,500, a reduction of

approximately \$11,000, or 23 per cent. The IWK Health Centre is reducing its eating disorder clinic's hours from three days a week to two. Mr. Speaker, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental health issue. Reports have it approximately 1,000, and sometimes as high as 1,500, in Canada die each year from this disorder. Girls and women represent 80 per cent of those affected.

When we're looking at budgets and dealing with budgets and the expectation is coming from budgets, we know that the government's budget is all about making the right choices and making the right decisions with a limited amount of money.

Health care continues to be the biggest item in the government's budget. Everyone's concern continues to be about the equality and accessibility of our health care. I commend the Minister of Health and Wellness for the monumental task that he has and the job he has bringing this health system under control. It must be because of his former career as teacher and principal that he's leading the charge.

It is not likely that economic growth or increased productivity will create the additional dollars needed to pay health care, the wait-lists for surgeries, the potential shortage of nurses, and the need for additional doctors in remote areas. Another thing we should be looking at, and I believe the minister has addressed this particular issue, is to reduce the red tape to allow Nova Scotia students who are at medical school outside the country and making it a little easier for them to get back into this country, and in particular back into Nova Scotia - and that will be a major plus when that happens.

There has been a great deal of uncertainty in the province's Film Tax Credit Program. Screen Nova Scotia stated there are 105 companies registered in Nova Scotia whose principle business is the production and support of film and television. This is a mess that the government probably wished they had handled differently.

Did the government consult with the industry before introducing legislation? If not, why not? Why didn't the two groups sit down and discuss the situation - that is the government's revenue is shrinking and the financial challenges that they face? This would have given the industry the opportunity to tell the government what they needed to become competitive. There are many questions surrounding this particular decision. Did the government have an understanding of the dollars of revenue generated in this province throughout this industry?

Just a few comments on student debt. With an average student debt of \$37,000, students in Nova Scotia were very disappointed with the government's budget. The budget lifts the 3 per cent tuition cap for this year. Many students are having trouble making ends meet right now, having trouble paying for their board, paying for their books, paying for tuition and travelling costs. With this particular 3 per cent tuition cap lifted for this year, this means that post-secondary schools can charge whatever they want. Because of that, student debt will certainly increase. Grad students and international students will see their

fees increase. In talking to some students, they were not anticipating that the cap would be lifted for this coming year. The consequences of that will not be good for many of our students attending post-secondary schools.

A spending increase of 0.8 per cent in the Department of Health and Wellness. We hear a lot of conversations around the province with regard to nurses. Even the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union feels that it is a message that there will be no wage increase for nurses. They feel they will not be able to keep nurses in this province. We'll have to wait and see what happens there.

Does this budget ignore the real problem our province is facing? Does it lack vision for the province? We all realize the province is experiencing a revenue deficit. We have the worst-performing economy in the country probably during the past 20 years and we should be very worried about rural Nova Scotia because it requires a great deal of our attention.

My colleague, the member for Inverness spoke a few minutes ago about the condition of the roads in Nova Scotia. I must say that in my constituency, I don't have that particular problem because the municipalities are responsible for the roads in my constituency. However, we have a great number of roads across our province that need attention and the dollars are not there. However, some of the roads have reached the point where they can't be ignored any longer and have to be repaired or resurfaced.

AN HON. MEMBER: Peter MacKay, is there any money to pave up there yet?

MR. DUNN: Well, I hope he has more funds coming to help all of us, not just Pictou County.

The remote areas of Nova Scotia desperately need investments in infrastructure such as waste water and transportation. We have to find a way to invest in people and communities. Our workforce in remote communities has practically disappeared. Businesses have closed down. People have moved away. Many have gone out West; we all have friends and relatives and neighbours who have gone out West to work and support their families back here. Unfortunately, some families have moved out and we are afraid that they may have gone for good and they won't be returning, which reduces our tax revenue base.

There are numerous budget cuts that will be felt by ordinary residents of Nova Scotia. Procurement allocation for long-term care facilities has been cut in half. There are 103 of 143 facilities are not getting cost of living increases. This represents 72 per cent of all long-term care facilities.

We have concerns about the reduction of community grants for mental health and addictions from \$1 million to \$600,000. Several organizations will see grants reduced by

approximately 23 per cent, for example: support organizations for people with AIDS, eating disorders, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, transgender communities and rural areas of Nova Scotia. The public suffers from these fund reductions. All grants at the seniors department were cut by 25 per cent. This budget appears to ignore the needs of the people who really need the support.

Nova Scotians living in poverty will see no increase in income supports. I believe this decision may end up costing the province additional dollars, as time goes on, the people who need the help and need it now. Health care spending may increase as a result of this and lost productivity. As mentioned earlier, if government wishes to attract and retain our youth, deregulating tuition fees for out of province and graduate students at Nova Scotia universities sends the wrong message.

Increased tuition fees will increase student debt and make it even more difficult for students to afford post-secondary institutions. It is our understanding that universities are allowed a one-time adjustment to raise as much as they desire, and was mentioned earlier by another speaker this evening, Cape Breton University has announced it will raise tuition 20 per cent over the next four years.

The budget will cut \$3.2 million from the Nova Scotia University Student Bursary. Community Services grants will experience reductions to discretionary grants for nine community organizations and by 2016-17 at least five groups will have zero funding. CNIB believe a reduction of \$152,000 in funding will mean cuts to services that help people learn to travel safely within their community, especially after losing their vision.

There have been a lot of cuts in this particular budget. I'm sure many of them were necessary, however, we certainly question some of them. The Gaelic Affairs office has been reduced by 40 per cent; two of five positions in the Antigonish office have been removed. This was very disappointing and I had emails and calls from a lot of residents in Pictou County that support the Gaelic movement. We have a higher number than usual in Pictou County that not only teach the language but promote the culture throughout the province and are connected globally with lot of friends and contacts that bring people to our province each and every year. Again, there's a lot of disappointment to see a reduction in that particular Gaelic Affairs office because of the great work that they do and the impact they have in our province.

Of course, emails are still coming requesting and asking the government to change their minds and reinstate the two positions because they feel that the numbers that are in their office are certainly small enough.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter in the room is getting a little loud.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre has the floor.

MR. DUNN: Another increase that will affect many residents of Nova Scotia is the increase in user fees. Approximately 1,400 user fees have been increased. This is really tough on ordinary, hard-working Nova Scotians, especially the ones who are not receiving any pay increases and are just basically struggling to make ends meet. These are ordinary residents who have to pay extra dollars for things like fishing licences, hunting licences, marriage certificates, licences on their vehicles, licences for trailers, and of course many, many more. Again, these hard-working Nova Scotians whose pay hasn't increased have this extra burden to take care of.

The Healthy Living Tax Credit, which was mentioned by the member for Inverness a few minutes ago, was cut. Perhaps it wasn't achieving its objective. However, it was in place to help people become involved in recreation and fitness programs. Certainly, as we look around this province, we need our young and old involved in recreational programs and in fitness programs. Although not large, this was part of an incentive to help them become involved where otherwise they may not have been.

Again, we know we have to spend within our means. We do not have a big flow of revenue and dollars coming into our province. A budget is very much like a road map. Hopefully, this government's road map is a good one and will show some success as we move onward.

Our labour force is shrinking and things are rather bleak with regard to our economy in the Province of Nova Scotia. We have too many people working outside this province. I have many friends and relatives who have left Nova Scotia - and I'm sure that's the same for all members on both sides of the floor - who are out in other western provinces working now in the oil and gas industry. Many of them will not be returning home. They have married, have young families, and are settling in the western provinces after purchasing property and homes.

So many Nova Scotians are looking and expect the government to help them. On the other hand, government only has a certain amount of dollars and has to make these tough decisions. We know that Nova Scotians, through this budget, will pay more tax. There will be more tax revenue during the next few years to the tune of approximately \$30 million. The majority of Nova Scotians are very concerned about this mainly because it leaves less money in their pockets, less money to spend in their community, less money to spend with their families.

There appear to be numerous projections in this Financial Measures (2015) Bill. Hopefully, those revenue projections become a reality, that these revenue projections will occur in the next few years.

The reality is we have to increase our population. We need more Nova Scotians returning home. We have to create the jobs and improve the economy in order for this to happen.

That noise outside sounded like the skates on the ice the other night with the MLA squad. Anyway, the increase of extra revenue will certainly occur through tax increases. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the concept of bracket creep. Getting more tax revenue from the same people making the same amount of money. We know that Nova Scotians pay very high taxes. We know that 1,400 user fees have been increased. We know that Nova Scotians have less money in their pockets and will probably continue to until we get a chance to smooth the economy and get more jobs in this province. More revenue for the province, perhaps on the backs on many who cannot afford to do so. Once again this increase is making the lives of Nova Scotians more difficult. We need a real plan to grow the economy, a plan to create more jobs.

If the economy grows, the government will receive more revenue. Hopefully, the government will start receiving more revenue through the oil and gas industries in the years to come. With extra revenue the government will certainly have a better opportunity to help the Nova Scotians that definitely need the support and the systems and programs and services that are required to support them in their senior years. The government's energy should be focused on positive ways in which they can increase their revenue base. Fuel rebates for the mining industry was expected to begin this spring. The mining industry was looking forward to this assistance. It looks like this industry will be waiting longer because it's not going to happen in this budget.

Revenue projections are available for the next few years. The amount of revenue available to government will be limited. Many, many different opinions floating around. The Ivany report sees the tax base declining. The reality is that too many Nova Scotians cannot make a comfortable living for their families. They are certainly going through hard times. The expense side of the equation is also critical. Tough choices had to be made. However, how you make these choices is important. Emotional roller coaster for several families through this process. There are several layoffs through this process and once again it's unfortunate that this has to happen and Nova Scotians are losing their jobs. It's difficult enough to raise families, pay your bills, and live comfortably when you're working not to mention being in a position where you are losing your jobs.

The population of this province has been decreasing since 2011 when it peaked to approximately 948,000. Over the next two decades, projections have about 20,000 expecting to leave the province which will certainly lower our population base and therefore the real problem we will face is the makeup of our population. Our population will be aging, our population will be older, and of course, we know what that means. The support systems that we need will increase. Our projection of a weakening economy will certainly will not help that either. There are few workers to pay taxes and definitely more elderly people in need of government services.

A provincial commission in Nova Scotia forecasts that within 20 years, our province will decline by 100,000 or about 20 per cent. We are facing an economic crisis and too many Nova Scotians have left the province in search of employment. It doesn't

appear that this out-migration is going to slow down very soon. A stagnant economy is forcing Nova Scotians to leave.

We have reached the point that government and Nova Scotians are wondering where the dollars are going to come from in the next few years to pay for the health care of a population with an ever-increasing senior population and fewer workers. All we have to do is look around our respective neighbourhoods and witness all the homes or houses for sale. Who will purchase these houses? Who will purchase these homes and businesses that real estate companies have on their websites?

Car dealerships are feeling the pinch. Some used car dealers have decided to close shop. I know in Pictou County, the volume of vehicles being sold over the last number of months has certainly decreased. I have a couple of friends who were in the used car business and rather than to keep working in that particular industry, they decided they would close shop and perhaps wait to see if the economy would improve to where it will be worth their while to open up their used car dealership again in the future.

We witness this in many communities across the province, with many stores closing, small businesses and stores closing that can't seem to make ends meet because so many people in the community have left to find work elsewhere. Hopefully, we'll see the day when these people will come back and settle back in Nova Scotia and spend their money and improve the economy here.

Residents are having difficulty paying their power bills. I'm sure that many colleagues in this House have had the opportunity to speak to constituents who have come to their office unable to pay their power bills. Again, I must say that our contacts with Nova Scotia Power have been very, very positive and very good to make some sort of an arrangement where they will help out a customer who has had trouble through the cold winter months not being able to pay their power bills and making arrangements where they will pay a certain amount of the next number of months to pay off what they owe.

Many Nova Scotians who have retired cannot stay in their home because they cannot afford it. The costs of the upkeep, taxes, and in particular heating their homes - as we all know, it seems that the elderly like to have the thermostat cranked up and their home is very hot and that costs a lot of money.

Schools in remote areas of the province continue to close. Of course, as a result of that, just imagine the distance and time students will be spending travelling to school on buses. We appear to be on a path where some small communities will probably simply disappear. We will not be able to sustain these particular communities.

That leads me up to a comment: Have we been aggressive enough in pursuing immigrants? Some people think we haven't. Nova Scotia makes up 2.8 per cent of Canadians and I believe the number of newcomers is around approximately 0.9. Again, I

think we can do a much better job of bringing in more immigrants to build up our population. Of course, if we build up our population, we're building up our tax base, we have more people working in our communities, and we have more people spending locally and, as a result of that, supporting the small businesses in the communities across the province.

The demographics and economic downturn trend are quickly reaching a crisis level. If we continue to avoid or ignore this, we may not be able to recover or cure the problem. The labour force shrinkage from March 2011 to March 2015 has some staggering numbers. In the Annapolis Valley region, 3,700 less in the labour force; in the Cape Breton region, 5,500 less in the labour force; the North Shore region, 5,700 less; and the southern region, 3,500 less in the labour force. The only place that showed any growth was Halifax, again, with a labour force of approximately 6,200 more.

However, in rural communities, we are experiencing some satellite courthouses closing and several land registry offices. This has been very disappointing to employees who work in these places because they now are in a position where there is no other places in their community to acquire a job, and at their particular stage in life, they certainly don't want to pull up their roots and move to another community or some other part of the province.

Rural decline is on the rise and old industries continue to close. I think back in my own area, just in Trenton alone - the Trenton railcar plant which flourished for many, many years. I believe it was May 2007 when Greenbrier decided to close shop and go back to the U.S. I had the opportunity to work in that plant when I was in Grade 12 and at that particular time, there were 2,300 people working in that plant. Other times, there were workforces of 1,200, 1,500, and 1,000. Again, we all realize the railcar industry is an up-and-down industry where it's booming one minute and a couple of years later, it hits rock-bottom and there's no work for a number of months until car orders are acquired.

It was really very, very disappointing to me when all the railcar equipment was removed from the plant. In fact, if you go into that facility now - and it's probably one of the larger facilities across the province or in Atlantic Canada - there are actually empty buildings with no equipment inside. Over the past couple of years, there has been a great demand for new railcars. However, the facility in Trenton cannot make these railcars because all of the equipment has been either sold, sent to Mexico, sent to Oregon, or simply scrapped. I guess I wish that they had saved enough of this equipment in certain buildings so that the place would be more diversified so that if windmill towers were not working out and orders were not coming in to Daewoo, they could switch over and make these cars.

I was recently talking to someone who worked in management at the plant a few weeks ago. They said there is a need right now for at least 15,000 new cars and many more after that, and they want them as quickly as they can get them. That is not to mention the retrofits - all the cars that are on our railroads across the province right now that have to be

brought up to today's standards. Again, if that equipment was still in that plant, we would have at least 1,000 to 1,500 people working there right now for a considerable amount of time.

The manufacturing life of industries across the province has certainly changed in the past 10 to 20 years. As I mentioned, the Trenton railcar industry was one. Another one was Nova Forge. Nova Forge was also on the same property as the Trenton railcar plant - a company from Houston, Texas. They also closed shop, putting a lot of workers on unemployment. Again, that was a very unfortunate thing to happen because that particular facility was on the same property as Trenton railcar plant. It was sort of a double dosage of pain.

As we move up the line, another company along the river - Maritime Steel. That seemed to be along the river in New Glasgow for more years than we can count. Again, an aging facility that needed a lot of repairs with a workforce of sometimes around 70 people. The plant finally closed - the facility is closed and probably will not reopen again. There have been many attempts to reopen it, but they were unsuccessful. With the plant laying idle for the last two or three years, it would take millions of dollars for it to be brought up to a point where production could occur. They had very many productive years over the years making castings for a lot of companies in the States and overseas.

It continues to get more difficult for people who live outside the urban areas of our province. The services are not there to serve the people in many cases. These areas do not have the luxury of transit buses or rail travel. Many of them, as they continue to get up in age, find it very difficult to get to medical appointments, get to grocery stores, drugstores, and so on. That's just the reality of where we find ourselves. The dollars are not there to correct this.

With fewer people living in these areas, some people think it doesn't make sense why new businesses would consider going to small populated areas. Business need people to grow and prosper. If we do not find ways to improve the economy of our province, we'll never be able to afford to pay for services like health, schools, roads, home care, and supporting our aging population.

If you want young people to settle in these areas, we have to provide the essential services or they just won't settle. Families want to be relatively close to a grocery store. They want to be close to recreation facilities. They want to be close to schools. In fact, some families want their kids to be able to walk to school from where they live. In these areas, that's just not a reality. It's just not something that's going to happen. They want to be able to have a doctor's office close.

The government has decided to cut \$17 million in grants and programs that came from the former ERDT department. I hope the government did some consulting with the business world so companies expecting financial relief were prepared for these cuts.

Other cuts continue to roll in. There will be a \$2.5 million reduction to the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust, now the responsibility of the Labour and Advanced Education Department. It will drop its budget to \$2 million for 2015/16. The province will also cut \$900,000 from its research and innovation programming, a \$543,000 reduction in trade programs, a \$1.25 million cut in the productivity innovation program, and other funding programs have been cut. As I mentioned in my opening comments, a lot of tough decisions had to be made, and as a result of that, we certainly had cuts in many areas across the province.

Madam Speaker, in a conversation with constituents a couple of months ago, they were wondering why the government was not leaving the resource base - and we think of the resource base as forestry, fisheries, et cetera - and turning the province into 100 per cent knowledge-based. Again, sometimes it all depends on where a person is working and what they think should happen in the province with regard to improving the economy and creating jobs. My quick reply to this particular person was, I think the province could support both, continuing to improve and pay attention to our resource base, like the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been doing, and increasing our knowledge base, which seems to be the way to go with regard to the youth of our province.

Madam Speaker, a lot of outlying areas in our province were certainly disappointed in the budget when they realized that things were going to change - seasonal jobs in our parks, as an example. My colleague, the member for Inverness, mentioned about the park in Whycomomagh decreasing from 11 to four employees. Of course when this happens you lose that personal contact. Again, perhaps it is time for us to move on and use technology to help us in these areas. Unfortunately for these seasonal workers, they can't move. They live in these communities, they have lived in these communities all their lives, and they are at that particular age that they are just not going to pull up and leave. In fact the question would be, where would they sell their homes? Where would they sell their properties if they wanted to move and leave? Again, talking to just a few of these here, they have no intention of leaving, despite the fact that they are not employed any longer.

When you look at these areas, Madam Speaker, will this particular move improve customer service? I'm not so sure of that. It's always nice to have that personal contact and not talking or dancing with a kiosk. My colleague, the member for Inverness, also mentioned harness racing and again I'm not exactly a fan of harness racing. I've attended a few races over the years and certainly enjoyed them, but I know I do have some neighbours who certainly spend a great deal of their time throughout the warmer months going to these particular races across the Maritimes and down into the United States, and it's certainly a great hobby for them. They certainly like the opportunity to have this in our province.

Madam Speaker, in the budget, I was certainly very pleased to see the extra dollars that have been placed in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. I think there are some very positive improvements happening in our province in our

schools. I certainly hope that the school boards, the different families that we have in our province and management levels of our boards and schools - they'll co-operate and work with the department, help the department in creating the initiatives, directives and policies that are coming forth and that they'll improve things.

In particular the most recent one, the school code of conduct - it's something that I was hoping would take place many, many years ago because there were so many flaws in it. I am sure that some parents will say principals can suspend a student for 10 days where five days was the maximum before. I certainly agree with the 10 days because it takes so much time for school management, principals, teachers, and support staff to deal with situations that have escalated to the point where they have to be removed from the classroom. Anyone connected with schools knows that a lot of steps occurred before they were removed. I think 10 days is a very positive move to give these schools the chance and the time to bring in all the people who are responsible for making the necessary adjustments to have this particular student or students brought back into the classroom. I've often felt that five days just was never enough. You start out on a Monday and you have so many other responsibilities; the next thing you know, it's Friday, and you didn't accomplish or couldn't get the people together due to other commitments and so on by perhaps parents, support staff, and so on.

Again, I'm looking forward. Hopefully, all schools across the province will buy into this school code of conduct. Another positive thing about it is the fact that there's finally going to be one school code of conduct because there have been too many interpretations of it at the family level, at the school level, at the school board level, and we should be very close to being on the same page with this new code.

When I think of policies - and there are policies everywhere; in government, in schools, and so on - the member for Inverness was talking about a particular school policy with regard to a student being home-schooled and wanting to play for a particular school and so on. It reminded me of a particular policy that I was involved in with sports at a school back in 2005. I wanted to take my high school hockey team to Florida to play in a tournament and I had to go through a tremendous amount of red tape.

They said yes, you can go; it will be a one-time only. So we went and they enjoyed themselves. Some of these students were never on a plane, never out of the Maritimes and certainly were never in the States, so it was a great trip for them. They had a wonderful time. They were well behaved. I think the only problem I had was getting them away from the beach to get their hockey gear to get to the rink to play.

The next year, I wanted to do the same thing and I was cut off at the pass. Through emails and letters and calls and sitting down and talking, the reason why we couldn't go down and play was the fact that they had a policy and a rule that it would be an advantage playing after the season closed. We were going down after the actual high school season closed. I said, I have 12 players on this team of 20 who are grads this year. They can no

longer play hockey. There's no advantage over any other school in the province. They would not change that policy.

I still shake my head today. I use the rationale - look what you're doing to the kids. You're preventing them from an experience of their life. Nothing that I could say or do would change that particular policy in that particular case. We went, but we didn't play hockey. We said we were going to go anyway, so we went down and we looked after them. Parents came to chaperone. They enjoyed the pools and the beaches and so on, but we couldn't take our gear and so on.

Again, in my last few words, I hope that the provisions and the money that's in this budget will help Nova Scotians. Again, I know that there are going to be some growing pains over the next few years because of the lack of revenue coming into our province and that's why the government had to make some really tough decisions - people were laid off, programs were cut, and so on - but hopefully we'll all see the fruits of the labours of the FMA and in future years there will be an increased revenue coming into our province, and we'll have more programs for youth and for the elderly.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for those few words.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and say a few words about the budget also. I certainly recognize that it is a signature moment in the year of a government that is a critical element in laying out the plans of the future and that an enormous amount of work goes into the budget. I'm sure that planning for the next budget starts likely the moment this budget is passed. I realize, too, that this budget involved many difficult decisions for the government and I'm sure that it wasn't an easy process to arrive at where they arrived.

I would like to say I have a number of general remarks, but while I have it in my hand, I just want to address a few specifics out of the actual FMA bill. There are some curiosities - there are three small curiosities in this bill for me when I read it. The one that jumps right out in the initial part of the bill - and I'm sure that you've all read it - is the Corporation Capital Tax Act. I know we've talked about this \$12 million cap and it says, "The tax payable by a corporation is," and there is (a), (b), (c), and then (d) says, "for a fiscal year commencing on . . . the first day of January, 2015, the lesser of (i) four per cent of its amount taxable, and (ii) twelve million dollars." So it's capping the tax payable by a corporation at \$12 million, or 4 per cent.

In order to trigger that 4 per cent, \$12 million is 4 per cent of \$300 million. So a corporation would have to have \$300 million. Maybe I don't read that correctly, but that is pretty big stuff - you know, pretty big numbers - and I just question why that cap was put in and who it is benefiting. It can't be particularly benefiting many companies.

Then to flip ahead a couple of pages there are a number of tax credits that had been cut. So you think about likely benefiting a very few number of huge companies, and maybe I read that wrong but if there's 4 per cent, \$4 million would be 4 per cent of \$100 million - I think I'm correct on that. So just a curiosity for me.

Then there are, of course, a number of tax credits: the recreation tax credit was cut, and the dividend tax credit for non-eligible dividends, effective January 1st, was reduced. So there were a number of tax credits that were altered but yet one, presumably a very small number of companies was put in and it seems like a bit of an oddity to me.

Another oddity to me in the bill is the fact that on the last page there are effective dates of the various sections and it's curious to me that one section, "Section 15 comes into force on such day as the Governor in Council orders and declares by proclamation." In other words, there's no set date for Section 15 to come into effect, it's just whenever the government chooses to do so. Most of the other sections either come into effect immediately, or in April, May, or June, and that makes sense.

But Clause 15, of course, relates specifically to the Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia Act. Clause 15 says the Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia Act is repealed. So in other words that isn't actually repealed until that moment that there's an Order in Council, and maybe there's some logic to that but it seems to me a little bit odd, because as we know, the staff was all let go a couple of weeks ago and it has essentially been wound up.

I think I can answer my own question in that a further clause in the bill states that certification of the film and creative industries in Nova Scotia as an independent production fund under the broadcasting - so nothing in this part is intended to affect the certification of the FCINS as an independent production fund. The answer to my own question, I think, is that, in fact, there are still some responsibilities FCINS has to have and presumably that is looking after what I think would be called the Eastlink Fund. So, it still seems to be a bit of an oddity to me and if I think about what happened in the budget and the budget process and the pushback on this Film Tax Credit, which I do want to say more about later, but clearly some things needed to have been thought through a little differently. Maybe I'm not reading that quite right and maybe there is logic to that, but I just question that.

The final thing I question in the bill is the fact - and I know this has been commented on by my colleagues to the left and it has been asked in Question Period, but - the Civil Service Collective Bargaining Act is being amended. Restrictions to the term "employee" in Section 11 says, "Notwithstanding clause (f) . . . no person is an employee for the purpose of this Act who is," and then the amendment, of course, is now in the Department of Business. So a person who is employed in the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Business, the Office of the Legislative Counsel and the Office of the Auditor General. I guess I just question that.

I know having gone through the Department of Business Estimates fairly closely - and I do want to say more about that in a little bit - I know there are 36 people there in that department and I guess all of them are, so to speak, management and none of them are staff. I just question the logic of that and I know there has been an explanation for that, but I just question that.

I do want to talk about one of the major - and maybe this hasn't gotten as much talk as the Film Tax Credit, is the cut to ERDT. I know that nobody takes any pleasure in seeing peoples' lives so altered as a whole department to be cut. I know that it has been said by the government that part of the logic of that is the failure of economic development basically to produce results. We've talked about the difficulties that our province has economically.

If you think about it, most towns and municipalities have business development officers. There is certainly a federal government component in the business development sector, there's ACOA, there are RENs and yet all of those things together, if the basic conditions aren't right, no matter how many people you have working at that it doesn't necessarily make that much difference. Certainly, none of us are really happy where the economy is at, we know that it has to do better. We have the Ivany goals, the Ivany report, all of that.

If I think about the role of government in the economy, what comes to my mind is that we should be creating the regulatory framework for business and communities to thrive in regulations and legislation fundamentally, that we create a clear path forward so business - and I know we talk about that - it's boiler plates sort of to talk about cutting red tape - but if a business wants to go forward it has a very clear and straightforward path that also gives a clear path through the environmental regulations. I don't think any of us today want to see and I don't believe fundamentally business can success without good environmental regulations, but it needs to be sort of a clear path forward that doesn't involve going in this direction and then backing up and going in another direction and backing up and going in another direction and just sort of getting bogged down in possible dilemmas. I believe that is fundamentally the thing that we, as government, need to do.

One of the examples I would give is the onshore natural gas, the fracking moratorium of a few months ago. I know this is debatable to make this statement, but I believe that bill was partially politically motivated, and I understand that my colleagues across the floor might differ, but the Wheeler did say go slow, not stop.

If we think about it, if we want industry in the province, as a government we need to create the framework for that industry to go forward in a straightforward manner. A few days ago as part of our meetings with the UNSM, I was speaking with Don Downe, mayor of Lunenburg, and he said to me that when he was in government, he worked quite hard on Sable Island and offshore to see that industry had a clear path to get it done, and he said that industry didn't mind the fact that it was difficult just as long as they could see where

they were heading; they knew they were making progress, they could go through the hoops and they could get there.

I think it's clear that with government the best thing we could do for industry - and I know we've talked about not picking winners and losers and choosing who can fill out the reports or write the best grant application. If I may digress, one of the things that disturbs me - and I do want to say more about agriculture - but one of the changes that we see in agriculture, farmers have always interacted with the government in terms of getting some subsidies for various activities and now we have a system where in order to get the subsidy you have to be the best at writing the application, in a situation of not quite enough money to go around, rather than previously just choosing first past the post, the first applicants in. That was the way it was done for a number of years and if you go back further in time there was usually enough money to go around and if you didn't get the funding it was because you were way late and then for a few years it was all gone within a day.

Now we have a situation where we're choosing winners and losers in agriculture and who has the best resources or is able to put together the best application, which is essentially picking winners and losers too. I'm not sure - I think that and I'll get back to that - but I think we need to look at that, but my point is is that for industry to develop, to go forward, I think it needs to be clearly spelled out what needs to be done and what needs not to be done.

I know that when we talk about reducing red tape, it's getting at that same concept, maybe from a different direction. We're saying we want it to be straightforward for business but more than that I think we need to lay out the road map for business, too, for it to go forward. One of my big disappointments about the moratorium on fracking is that it was a very unclear bill. It was a bill that did not prohibit high-volume hydraulic fracking in sandstone, which apparently does happen. It did not prohibit medium- and low-volume fracking in shale, which presumably does happen, and it did not prohibit coal-bed methane, yet the word "moratorium" went out there and that was enough to put a stop to all of that and then we are left waiting for the definition of those terms. What is high, medium, or low in the context of hydraulic fracturing?

That was never, as far as I know - I've never heard that definition given. Apparently for the industry it is simply the volume of fluid used or simply dependent on the thickness of the shale. The industry will just look at what is the layer of area they want to engage and that dictates the amount of fluid.

Clearly, this policy in this area needs to be - I believe it's the role of government to not simply do what industry wants but to create a balance between what industry wants, and maybe that's not even the right way to phrase that because I'm sure that industry by and large wants to do the best possible job - but create that balance between the environmental issue that will arise and what allows industry to go forward. We face those decisions all the time in our culture, but the ones that we're familiar with we're quite

willing to accept. We're quite willing to accept the furnace oil guy coming and delivering furnace oil to our home when, in fact, there's a fairly significant danger of the furnace oil guy making a mistake and filling your oil tank up too full, creating a huge environmental issue for you that will cost anywhere between \$500,000 and \$1 million to clean up. It's a problem for your insurance company, actually.

We can accept risks like that because they are familiar and we kind of know what they are, but I think it's our job as government to sort of work our way through these new industries in this province to be able to get a clear path forward that satisfies both environmental and industry. Industry can see what the process is at a glance, but yet it satisfies all those environmental requirements - best in the world, hopefully - without saying "no". I mean, there's always no, but the best possible environmental regulations - hopefully we would have them and hopefully there would be something there for industry to work with and go forward on.

If I think about it, I think, well, one example of that is aquaculture. We have enormous potential in aquaculture in this province. In fact, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has introduced aquaculture regulations. So there's an example right there. I will commend the minister for bringing forward the regulations that sort of address, I think - I mean, I haven't gone through them too far - in a straightforward way, the needs or the hopes or the wishes of the environmental question or whatever the environmental side is; addresses those issues and yet provides a clear path forward.

I did notice there was an amendment, I think, to that bill sitting on my desk a day ago that said that essentially, the bill is accepting the Doelle-Lahey recommendations carte blanche. I may be incorrect about that, but I believe I saw that. I've got a lot of papers in front of me and that one is gone.

I will express my disappointment with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in that effectively, two investment cycles are lost to aquaculture. What I mean by that is that Doelle-Lahey report came out, I think, early in 2014. My sense of the aquaculture industry is that it operates on a similar cycle to agriculture in that if you're going to do investments and construction and invest in an industry, you are probably going to do that in the summer. Lacking those regulations to go forward, that industry probably didn't do a lot of investment or new business in the summer of 2014.

Meanwhile, we were waiting for those new regulations. It's clearly easy to understand that it could take some months to put together new regulations. I would have hoped that we would have had them by September, because having them right now means that effectively we've lost two investment cycles in aquaculture. Nova Scotia has enormous potential in aquaculture with our sort of fragmented coastline. There are many places of sheltered water. Clearly not every spot in Nova Scotia is suitable for aquaculture, but it's clear that it has many places that would be.

While we were waiting for that Doelle-Lahey report and while we were waiting for the regulations last summer, fine, we lost a summer's worth of investment in the industry, but by waiting until now, we've effectively lost a second summer's worth of investment in the industry because it's really a little bit too late for a lot of businesses to react to that in this investment cycle.

Meanwhile, I know the minister has said that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board is ramping up, and I think that's terrific. We have the only aquaculture degree program in Canada at the Dal Agricultural Campus. We need to be able to keep those trained people in the province rather than having them, by and large, going out to British Columbia as they are now.

Clearly, we've got a tremendous opportunity for investment in aquaculture and we've had two years of lost investment cycles. One year lost was inevitable in the way that report came out, but not two years, especially not now when the regulations are basically accepting that Doelle-Lahey report in its entirety. That could have been done six or seven months ago.

I think that's where government needs to sort of try to think in terms of how industry would think. There is clearly no subsidy there - it's just creating the right framework for that business to go forward. It's something we desperately need. It's something the Ivany report has referenced. I just think it's very unfortunate the way that has panned out in that the second season was lost. But now we have the regulations. Again, I say I commend the minister now that we have the regulations, but it's unfortunate that it took two years to get to it.

Another area I think we need to bring a little bit of common sense into in how we operate as government - and this is just sort of my take on it. I will admit I don't know a lot about Northern Pulp or the Boat Harbour cleanup. I've driven by it many times, but I've never been on site. If it was my farm and the whole thing belonged to me, I would not be talking about the cleanup until I was actually ready to turn the switch on, turn the big ball valve to have the effluent going into the new treatment plant.

I think that as government, what effectively has happened is that we've created a deadline on the cleanup without really addressing the new treatment plant. I think it's quite clear that we need to have Northern Pulp. We need that pulp and paper plant in this province. It's a very integral part of the timber and wood industry. I just question the approach to that. I would really think that the cleanup should start the day after the new treatment plant was fully operational. If you think about it, five years go by pretty quickly.

I know I've heard said, oh yes, that can get done in five years; we can get that new treatment plant in five years. But there are all sorts of possibilities of ways that could come off the rails. I know that there are very high expectations in regard to the future treatment plant in terms of how well it's going to perform. There would be a very high standard put

to that new treatment plant and I'm sure the public would want some input into it. The time will go by very quickly and I think it's unfortunate that we've done that.

I do want to say a few words about the Film Tax Credit. I know I referenced it earlier in speaking directly of the regulations. I think it's very unfortunate the way the whole Film Tax Credit issue sort of panned out in this budget, the way it unfolded. There are a number of unfortunate aspects to it, but one is the fact that it was only a few short months ago that the government indicated that would be there for five years. The industry took a breath of relief, I'm sure, and thought yes, we can work with that. Then changes were made. I don't know precisely how much consultation was made in the changes to the Film Tax Credit, but it didn't seem like it was a whole lot.

One of the aspects of the Film Tax Credit that the industry was very wedded to was the fact that the Film Tax Credit was able to be used to go to the bank and get financing. One of the crucial aspects of any business is financing. I know if we're looking for financing on the farm, there are hard assets: there's land, there's property, some of that stuff. There is equipment, but equipment isn't such great financing because oftentimes it's already financed; it depreciates. If you think about the film industry, there are probably not a lot of hard assets in that industry if they're looking for financing. They probably don't actually - it's not really what that industry is about, hard assets.

So for the film industry, the Film Tax Credit as it was, I think, was very crucial in that it allowed them to go to the bank. That was one of the first comments we heard when it came up that it was being changed. I think that was a very damaging aspect of the change to the Film Tax Credit. Clearly, in version two of the Film Tax Credit, which resulted after quite a bit of consultation, it was something that was bankable. In other words, that they could go get financing with.

If you think about it, it would have been great if the amount of effort put into consultations during the Budget Debate had been put into place before the Budget Debate happened, if the industry had been consulted to that level before and the survey of other jurisdictions had been done before. I think it could have saved the government a lot of grief. It would have been good if that had happened last November, when Bill No. 46 came in, and when you were passing Bill No. 46, it would have been good if that could have been thought about then - what do we really want to do four months from now? Which is why I think that it is important that the next budget start being worked on the day after this one passes, and I do believe to some extent it does. I guess that's a very unfortunate aspect.

Another unfortunate aspect to that was simply that - and I know you've been told this, but it bears repeating - I do believe as government, our credibility as legislators is linked to our keeping our word. If a bill is passed - I know bills can be changed, environments change, circumstances change, but clearly in that short a time frame nothing really did change. All of the situations were largely the same, so there really wasn't the

justification for the change in the policy. I think that was a particularly anguishing thing for the Film Tax Credit and for the people connected to the film industry.

One of my big surprises was how well the film industry has spread its network throughout the province. It's quite clear that it isn't just located in downtown Halifax. I discovered because of this that there's a fairly well-known film producer living a few doors down from where I farm some land in Habitant. I discovered that one of my friends, who actually played the piano at our Kings North PC barbeque last summer, rents furniture to the film industry, and all of these things.

Not only that, but I think one of the things that maybe all of us in this House didn't realize, but maybe in hindsight do, is the affinity of ordinary Nova Scotians, who aren't connected to the film industry - their appreciation of the fact that Nova Scotia was the site for *Amelia Earhart*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Book of Negroes*, *Haven*, or *Trailer Park Boys* - all of these great productions. There's an enormous amount of pride of place, of Nova Scotia, in that.

Ordinary Nova Scotians who have no connection at all to the film industry were saying to me that they were upset about that. That was a surprise to me. People who I maybe would have thought would have said, John, I don't like that increase in tobacco prices - I might have expected them to say that, and I did have one or two say that, but I had more say, what's going on with that Film Tax Credit? Why is that being changed? People who had no connection at all to the film industry other than that they watch it on television. They had a certain amount of pride in that industry, that it was here, that Nova Scotia was being shown to the world.

I've had the privilege of travelling across Canada and have been in almost every significant part of some provinces. I can tell you that we do live in one of the most beautiful provinces for scenery and for a variety of scenery, if you think about within 100 miles of Halifax, what you can have for different types of scenery, of any province in Canada.

I think about Saskatchewan. It doesn't change a whole lot, although they do have some beautiful parks and they do have the north. But in reality, with the ocean, the sandy beaches, the forests, and some mountain scenery, we have all the typical types of scenery. We're a great place to have this industry located, with the central City of Halifax, with all of the universities. One of the important things about the film industry is that . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. There are too many conversations in this room besides the speaker. I would appreciate all members keeping conversations either very low or outside the Chamber. Thank you.

The honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not taking it personally. (Interruptions) Maybe my wife is listening, but actually I can assure you that she doesn't watch Legislative Television. I wish my mother did, but she doesn't watch it either. I know that out in television land that somebody is listening - and I think you made me lose my train of thought . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Start over.

MR. LOHR: I'll start back at the beginning then.

I guess what I was saying about the Film Tax Credit, the film industry, was that another big surprise - not a surprise, but what was clear from the feedback that was coming back to us was that it was a very young industry. There were many young people being brought into the province through this industry, exactly the type of thing that we appreciate here in this province when we have so many young people going away - a very creative industry, obviously.

I believe that if you look at what happens when you make - and I think I said this in the House before - if you look at what happened with the Yarmouth ferry, when that ferry was cut, a lot of inertia or momentum for that was lost, and to get it back again is twice as hard and twice as expensive. We're dealing with that now with the Yarmouth ferry.

One of the things about this Film Tax Credit is that if we let this industry slip away - and it is a highly mobile industry - it will be twice as hard and it will take twice as much money to get it back again. I really think it's critical that we keep it.

I know one of the issues the government had with the Film Tax Credit was that in some ways it wasn't actually a tax credit but a labour subsidy - and an outstandingly excellent one for the amount of money involved compared to most other types of subsidies that the government would do, which would be in the low, single-digit percentage maybe, or close to it. But, anyway, single digit and this one was up 50 per cent and maybe slightly more.

One of the reasons that got that high was because the film and creative industries in the Free Trade Agreement, as I understand, were non-countervailable. In other words, any country could subsidize to whatever extent they wanted and it was not limited. So it wouldn't be like just because we had a highly subsidized production or had put that level of subsidy into a film production, it wouldn't mean the U.S. would say no, we're not taking that, that was too much subsidy.

That does happen in other industries - for instance, the paper industry. I know that right now, at this moment, the Port Hawkesbury mill is facing a challenge from the U.S. on the level of subsidy that they would receive and they are well aware of that, I think they

are well positioned to fight that challenge. I don't think that's fair; the U.S. also subsidizes their paper mills, they also subsidize their industries - various states subsidize.

So, in effect what we have is we are competing with other jurisdictions in an environment in which there's no upper limit. That's where it has gotten to the levels that it has gotten to, and the film industry simply responds to stimulus. Meanwhile, what we get out of it is, we start to get a critical mass of talent here in the province. I think we were starting to really get that and I think that was really good for us.

To go back to the beginning of that, I think that the idea that the two elements to the thing, the changes were not bankable and the fact that the industry had been sent such a positive signal only a few months before, and then to have it reversed was very detrimental to the whole thing.

We could say that about the mining fuel tax credit, and we've said quite a bit about that in the Legislature too. The industry was sent a signal a few months ago that that fuel tax credit would be available and this budget didn't bring it in. I know we had talked about that at length. I did have a couple more points that I had wanted to make about that. One is that this fuel tax credit would be something that would be very easy to bring in, and if you were to make the regulations available today, essentially tomorrow the mining industry could be buying tax-exempt fuel. That's because all around the province, virtually every fuel delivery truck has probably got tax-exempt diesel on board.

That is what we call "dyed diesel." We've had it on our farm. Farmers have access to this dyed diesel, which doesn't come free by any means, but is slightly less expensive, because there is one tax that is exempt. The forestry industry also has access to that dyed fuel, and I understand the fishing industry does too. The mining industry would have no trouble calling up the fuel supplier, whoever is bringing their fuel, and saying, make that dyed diesel, if the approval was given for that fuel tax credit.

The point about that fuel tax credit is that it's not picking winners and losers. It's simply there, available for whoever is using the equipment. Certainly we see, from what I've seen of open-pit mining, when my colleague for Pictou Centre - I visited him a few weeks ago, on account of hockey games at the Wellness Centre for my son. Open-pit mining uses an enormous amount of heavy equipment, clearly, and must use an enormous amount of diesel fuel with all of that big equipment to move those vast amounts of rock. Clearly none of that equipment will ever go on the highway. It's all very, very different equipment that is far, far too large to go on any highway.

To go back, I think it's important that if government has said that they are going to do something, they do it. I think that bears on the credibility of every one of us, whether we're one side of the House or the other.

Just to go back, the other thing is fixed election dates. Clearly the government has said that they would have fixed election dates numerous times in the past. We've said that we would have it. It would save \$1.6 million, we were told. I don't know if that's \$1.6 million in the year of an election or \$1.6 million - which I suspect it is, so if you break that over four years, maybe that isn't as - amortize it.

Nevertheless, \$1.6 million is a very real amount of money. I just think that if we've said we're going to do something, it's incumbent on us to keep our word. I know you're probably aware of this, but I would say that you would be surprised by the amount of business done in this province simply on a handshake and on keeping your word.

I can tell you that nearly all of the agriculture industry operates that way. I know that in our business, in our dealings with Sobey's and Superstore, those companies, the way they deal with farmers is largely on, are you going to have that product? Yes, we'll buy it, yes, okay, and that's it. In some cases the farmers would like to have a contract, just for that security of knowing, but in fact we do it on word of mouth. I know that other industries work that way too, and that is still a characteristic of our province - one that I think is a very good characteristic.

I think that it is something that we as legislators have to take very seriously too - if you said you're going to do something, do it. I think that even if it's something that may be a little more difficult for the public to accept, if they know that's what's going to be done, that will be done.

I can give you an example that our Party said: that we would amalgamate the district health authorities. Your Party said that you would do it. In fact, in all of the issues around that, I don't think I heard any union members say, no, they were against that amalgamation. In fact, it had been said - and whatever the turmoil that was going to result from that, with sorting out the unions, they were in favour of that amalgamation themselves. Even if it wasn't clearly favourable for them, they understood.

I just would like to talk, since I know that none - and I've kind of beat through some of the issues that my colleagues have also talked through - I just would like to talk about some agricultural issues, of course.

One of the issues we talked about in estimates with the minister was the disaster assistance programs. We clearly have come through a very tough winter and I know the Minister of Environment says that is a federal issue, the fact that we have had such poor weather, but I would say that locally that is his responsibility and I want to express my disappointment with the minister. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would remind all members to please address their comments through the Chair.

The honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: I would like to express my disappointment with the Minister of Environment on the poor weather we had this winter and I know that the Minister of Environment has said that is a federal responsibility. I would like to say that the minister is the one who reported on the groundhog and clearly gave us a defective reading and I think he needs to be held responsible for that.

Clearly, we've had a very tough winter and that has affected agriculture. One of the issues is that there is disaster assistance funding available in Ottawa, if the province triggers it. One of the issues is then there is, I believe, a 60-40 matching fund, so 60 per cent is federal money and 40 per cent is provincial money. If there is a disaster, that can be triggered.

I know the minister is in that process with the apple industry. Last summer we had post-tropical storm Arthur, which caused significant damage in the apple industry with fire blight; the industry had a few orchards that were affected by fire blight and had never seen the like of it. I know that is in process right now. Clearly this very cold, long winter we have had is starting to impact some of the other sectors in a different way. During estimates I was encouraging the minister to see that those requests were put into Ottawa, to do the studies anyway, which is the first step in seeing if some of these sectors qualify for disaster assistance. One would be the greenhouse industry where a number of greenhouses were smashed by the snow and presumably are only now being uncovered.

I know that not even in the Valley has all the snow gone, although it's largely gone. Another one would be the maple sugar industry, which had such high snow levels in the woods that the tap lines, which are put out about five feet high, were actually buried in snow even in the Spring when the sap would start running and were frozen, so significant damage in those industries. Is it enough damage to trigger federal disaster assistance? I don't know the answer to that and neither does the minister. The way to find that out is to trigger that process, to ask that question.

Now on the floor of the Annapolis Valley we have farmers who have gone through enormous lengths to simply get some of their early crops in but the whole cropping program is probably two weeks behind. Weather is weather though and sometimes those things can be made up; it's surprising how Mother Nature can turn things around. If we have a good summer and a good Fall, maybe the poor start to the season will be totally forgotten. It's rare that any kind of weather isn't good for something. No matter what kind of weather we have, usually there's some crop that it's good for and other things that it's terrible for and winter wheat has come through the winter very well.

Another issue that we drilled down to in estimates was the non-provincially inspected butchering of livestock and the hobby farmer who has a couple of turkeys or a pig, or as we mentioned, the fact that there's probably somewhere between 10,000 and

20,000 deer butchered in the province each Fall, and how to address that. Clearly there is a lot to be done there. I think that the minister needs to think about how, rather than regulating them out of business, to try to help that sort of cottage industry come up to the level of standard which meets some of the food safety issues.

That being said, those things have been going on for hundreds of years and it's not clear that there are even a lot of incidents. I know that if there are food poisoning incidents with modern - actually, with the modern DNA testing, you can test the DNA of the E. coli and actually figure out exactly where it came from, something which even a few years ago was not possible. You can trace these things; you can figure that out.

Nevertheless, there aren't in fact a lot of incidents of that. In fact, it's quite clear that our young people in our province - there's sort of a new move back to agriculture. I know we've seen that before in the past, but I think this one is different. I think this one is going to last a lot longer. There's sort of a new appreciation of agriculture. Many of these crafts that we've taken for granted - we've just assumed food came in a grocery store - there's sort of a new move to want to know where that food came from, that homegrown food.

There's sort of a new desire to be able to do some of those things yourself - gardening and beekeeping and raising a few turkeys and a couple of pigs. I'm actually starting to get into some of those activities myself. I see that in the young people who I know. There's sort of this move back towards that.

I believe that's something in agriculture that needs to be encouraged. Part of that is if you have raised a pig or a turkey or a chicken, you have somewhere to go and get it butchered. I think that's something that we, as a government, need to wrap our heads around. I'm not saying there's any easy solution to that, but we need to find a way to provide the training or the infrastructure to make that happen in a responsible way.

Another issue, I think, in the future will be what some people call food security. That's sort of code for: have you got enough food to eat? In fact, our problem is that we often have too much food to eat and we all struggle with the fact that there's too much. If you think about it, none of us have ever really known hunger. There's a sense that even as the food system becomes more amazingly efficient and food on your grocery store shelf - if you look at where it came from, it comes from a staggering number of different areas. Some of it travels thousands and thousands of miles - halfway around the globe - and arrives fresh on your grocery shelf.

There's a sense of abundance, but at the same time, there's sort of a sense of the brittleness of the system, that it has gotten so huge that maybe it's not as secure as it is. I know that people have said that three days with the Highway No. 104 being closed down at Amherst - if the road was ever washed out or something happened that trucks couldn't come across that border, in three days, we'd see the difference in our grocery stores; in two

or three weeks, we'd essentially be out of food. That sense of food security is a part of this movement to want to grow your own food too.

I know we've said this fact or this assumption before in the House, but someone has said that there will be more food consumed in the world from this day forward to 2050 than was consumed from right now back to the beginning of time. Even if that is not correct - which I kind of wonder about the assumptions that go into something like that - even if it is remotely correct, it's still a staggering thought. We face daunting challenges in the world to feed everybody. Clearly, agriculture and aquaculture are going to be significant parts of our future economy, I believe, in Nova Scotia; they need to be.

I hope fishing will continue to be too. I think the increase is there. Obviously with fishing, we've seen that even though people probably 50 years ago wouldn't have believed it was possible. We've seen that we can simply fish every fish out of the sea and there's no more there to be had. We've realized that we have to be extracting that resource in a very responsible manner. The growth will come in aquaculture and agriculture when there's enormous potential in the province to have agriculture grow.

I know that 100 years ago most of the province was farmed. There would have been farms all the way along Highway No. 12 from Kentville to Chester, and there are virtually none now. Annapolis Valley would have been fully farmed, and clearly one of the things that we're lacking is farmers. I do believe we need to protect the farmland as we do in the Annapolis Valley, but one of the critical things is that we need to bring farmers in - just as my family was brought in in 1958.

My mom and dad came to Canada with no money but with a good education in agriculture, a fantastic education in agriculture, and I know that international immigration is one of the goals - and in fact I think it's actually Goal 2: International Immigration - goal number two of the Ivany report, and I believe that one of the things that we need to do is be looking at how we can bring more farmers into the province and see some of this land that is no longer farmed to be utilized, and clearly another element is access to capital.

I know that if you go back to the Film Tax Credit issue that was fundamentally an access to capital issue, that the film industry would not be able to get, probably not entirely, but a huge part of that was to be able to get funding, access to capital and it was in the 1950s too, access to capital was a big issue. One of the things that made the Dutch farmers successful in the province was the fact that the Government of Holland, for whatever reason, made an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia that every single loan they would guarantee, so the Nova Scotia Government, through the Farm Loan Board, would lend out virtually to 100 per cent of the value of the farm, because they knew the Government of Holland was guaranteeing the loan.

So they had access to capital to a greater degree at that moment in time than Nova Scotia farmers had themselves, and it caused a little bit of friction. But in fact those farmers

were able to buy farms - in the 1950s there was by and large a mass migration away from the farms in the province in any case and people were going to factory work and going to other types of work and moving away from farming. The Dutch farmers were able to buy those farms and by and large be successful with them - in fact, and I don't know if this is just urban legend, but the rumour is that there was only ever one that was defaulted on, that the Dutch Government had to pay on.

Clearly we have many issues in rural Nova Scotia and we see many great declines. One of my first experiences as a new MLA was to have one of the key people, a lawyer who had been a good help in my campaign said, John, you have to read this book; it was the biography of George Nowlan and so it was the story of Nova Scotia, politics in Nova Scotia from about 1920 to about 1935 I think approximately, somewhere in there, and I started to read that book and, frankly it could have been written yesterday. It was out-migration, it was all of the same issues we face now, and in fact I have a book at home entitled *Forgotten Towns of Nova Scotia*, so there were many towns in rural Nova Scotia that existed 100 years ago that don't exist now at all. They are just forgotten.

This problem of out-migration and moving away from the rural areas of Nova Scotia, we've been dealing with this in this province for 100 years and it's probably partly because of the accident of geography, in my opinion, in that when this land was settled, migration sort of moved - the New England States, the Boston States, and Nova Scotia, were settled first in the 1700s, 1800s, and then as the West opened up - and the West really didn't open up until just the turn of the last century, about 1900. And if you think about it that was the migration West - and then there was the dust bowl in America between the wars and there was a vast migration West and even here there was an opening of the West. That sort of out-migration was always going on to the West then.

I believe that if we look at in our time, primarily it is not triggered by the fact that there are new lands being opened up, that's all over and done with and we're living in a time when people are much more mobile, but it's triggered by the fact that for whatever reason the western provinces of Canada, anyway, have been much more willing to engage in resource extraction than we have and for whatever reason have dealt with that.

Maybe that's because in some ways they are much more thinly populated. When you're out on a farm in rural Saskatchewan, you can look in any direction and in most cases not see anybody or any buildings. There are lots of places like that in the Canadian West and the Canadian North. We are a little bit more thickly populated, but I don't believe that should be a reason for us not to engage in resource extraction.

If I think about where my family comes from, one of most highly, densely populated countries in the world, in Holland, they do deal with these issues and have resource extraction there also. It is something we have to, I believe, in Nova Scotia, be willing to open the door for and to create the right environment for.

I know that we've said a fair bit about the Ivany report and I think that one of the things we need to do when we look at this budget is to say, what is the checklist for the Ivany report? I realize that in some ways the Ivany Report - and, in fact, I heard Ray Ivany say this himself. He was asked the question, why weren't there more specifics put into those goals? There is the goal, but there are no statements of how to achieve that goal. There is not really that in the Ivany report, an exact road map of how to achieve those goals. It is up to us as legislators to figure that out and I would suggest, up to the government. When I look at the Ivany report, I don't see many of the goals addressed at all in this budget and that's probably one of the more disappointing things.

I know there is the One Nova Scotia Commission, which is looking in. That body has been at work now for almost a year, but I would have hoped that in this budget we would have seen more specifics on the Ivany report goals and how to address them and in some ways there's very little. Actually, I think it could be said that in some specific ways it is detrimental to what the Ivany report would tell us.

We've talked about the Film Tax Credit a fair bit and we recognize that that Film Tax Credit encouraged that new, creative industry and brought many young people into the province. It's just the kind of thing, I think, the Ivany report would say yes, that's a pretty good thing; we should be doing that.

I know Goal 4 of the Ivany report is a business start-up goal, that we would have 4,200 new business start-ups per year, a 50 per cent increase over the current 10-year average. Clearly, if we were to lose the film and creative industries, we would lose a fair number of small businesses. I think that would be detrimental to that goal. There are interprovincial migration goals here and international migration goals in the film and creative industries; we're part of that, the retention of international students.

Even if we set aside that film and creative industry issue, I ask myself, is this budget addressing these Ivany commission goals? It's not clear to me - in some cases yes, maybe, to be fair you could say okay, maybe that is, but by and large I don't see it doing that. I know that to be fair, the reorganization of the Department of Business, that's like a wedding, all full of hopes and dreams and who can say. We hope that the marriage lasts a long time and the minister and the department fulfill all the lofty goals that they have; it remains to be seen. It remains to be seen if 36 employees in the Department of Business can accomplish more than ERDT did. I hope so. That is one of the things that I wonder when I look at this, when I look at the Ivany goals.

I'm told by my colleague that I have 30 seconds. I want to say that I'm disappointed because I didn't get through near the material I had prepared. Obviously I had over-prepared, but I did have a number of . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You can go again if we do a dilatory.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: We're open next week.

MR. LOHR: Anyway, I understand from my colleague that I may get the opportunity to address this again. I want to say thank you for your rapt attention.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The time has elapsed for the member for Kings North.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I'd like to say it was an honour to stand here and speak to this bill, I'd like to be able to stand up and say this is a great bill and we support it and sit down, but I can't say that. I can't say that because when I look at this bill, it looks to me like it's more of an attack on rural Nova Scotia than it is almost on anybody. There are things in this bill that seem like they're going to affect more of us who live in the rural areas than any of the people who live in the city.

You know, I think the Liberals missed the mark on this budget. This is probably the first budget - well, it's the only budget - they can entirely call their own, and not only do they put the entire film and creative industry at risk, they increase taxes on families and small businesses, cut front-line services for vulnerable people, and grow the cost of senior administration here in Halifax.

Governing means making tough choices and we understand that, but those decisions have to be well thought out to understand the implications. The biggest problem with the government is we find that they have not been doing their homework. They'll introduce a bunch of bills. There will be people complaining about the bills. They will reintroduce the bill. They will amend the bill. They may even park the bill.

The first thing I want to talk on is a little bit about health care. I know that there are a few things in the budget that are decent for health care, like the increase to the orthopaedic surgeries to try to catch up on the backlog. But you know, right now we're having a problem with the sterilization equipment here in the hospitals and some of those surgeries have to be cancelled. That amount of money that they are going to put into that may be just enough to catch up.

I hope, if they do, they can increase the amount of physiotherapists who are available to fill the backlog, maybe increase the amount of beds that are available, the nurses who are going to be available. If you are going to put that money in to decrease the backlog of some of these surgeries, you're going to have to provide the support personnel and the other stuff that goes with it.

One of the big concerning things for me is the young people coming to this province to relocate here. They are having a problem with family doctors. I know there's a process

in place to try to improve the family doctors in the area, but they've cut the amount of practice insurance assistance to some of our most important doctors in the province. Obstetrical doctors have been cut in their insurance. I'm told that the obstetrics part for doctors to practise in the Province of Nova Scotia is around the \$30,000 range for their malpractice insurance. (Interruption) Oh, \$52,000 - even worse. Anybody who delivers babies in the province is delivering about 30 babies before it is even worth their while. I've had a couple of doctors in Cape Breton who do obstetrical calls who are going to withdraw their services for obstetrical calls because they can't afford it. It is not worth their while to do calls once or twice a week and probably never deliver that many babies and have to pay that malpractice insurance.

What people don't understand is - some people say, well that's fine, my family doctor delivers babies. But family doctors aren't allowed to deliver those babies without the support of an obstetrical doctor in the area. So if they're not taking calls and they pack up and leave the area, like one of the obstetrical doctors is leaving Cape Breton, it's my understanding - if she's gone there will not be anyone to deliver babies.

It's not like an orthopaedic case where a fellow breaks his leg and there's no surgeon on call. They can put him in an ambulance and ship him to another area - for example, Halifax - and have that surgery the next day. A woman gets into trouble during pregnancy and it's an emergency, it has to be done immediately. So if you put a lady in an ambulance and send her to Port Hawkesbury or Antigonish, and we hear that Antigonish is not going to have obstetrical calls, so send them to Halifax. What happens? Both mom and baby are at risk.

That worries me. It worries me that the fabric of rural Nova Scotia is going to be eroded to the effect that people will not want to move there. It's bad enough, the job situation in rural Nova Scotia, but for those who do have a job that want to start a young family, without that support they're not going to set up there.

Another thing that's concerning to me is the fees on the ferries that have increased over the last little while. I attended two meetings on Sunday, one in Neils Harbour and one in Little Narrows. At both of those meetings we had a great turnout; the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg and I attended the one in Neils Harbour, and the member for Victoria-The Lakes joined us for the one in Little Narrows.

They were there to talk about the increase of the fees on these ferries. They're as much as 160 per cent. We hear it costs \$9 million to operate the ferry system here in the province, a ferry system that's a vital link in some cases but a necessary link in other cases. We're told there's just over \$1 million in return of revenue of those ferries, or approximately 11 per cent. We increased the cost of a single trip from \$5.50 to \$7. That's \$1.50 a trip and they say that will increase the revenue by up to 19 per cent.

I had a question in Question Period today where I was told it would increase the revenue by about \$700,000. That's a lot of trips to get that revenue increased to \$700,000. What happens if the ridership decreases? My concern is in some of these areas there is a chance to go around the ferry area, but in some of them there isn't. Who is going to be able to afford that increase if you're living on a fixed income, if you're living on one side of the ferry and have to drive around? The road system is not the greatest in some of these areas. Then we hear that it's a matter to recoup some of the costs, it's a cost-recovery system.

We had a lot of debate in here about the Yarmouth ferry and I think the Yarmouth ferry, we're told, is the same as a highway and we should treat it that way. We're all for the Yarmouth ferry being a vital link but we're all for the vital ferry being a vital link so that it is efficient and effective and does what it's meant to do.

Up to the end of last year, there will have been \$41 million spent on the ferry and I'm told there's about a \$13 million return. We're not increasing the cost of that ferry, we're throwing more money at it to make it work. I think it's a good idea to make it work, but at what cost? If that ferry is a vital link, how come the rest of the ferries in the province aren't?

They've increased the 10-trip passes from \$13.50 to \$35 - that's the same amount of money if you bought a one-trip pass. The advantage of having a 10-trip book is not there. Some people really can't afford that increase. Before, if you bought a 10-trip book, you saved almost \$20, so to the locals that was a good thing for them. They could travel back and forth, save that money, and not put themselves in an economic disadvantage. But with this price increase they're not going to save that anymore. Car passes went from \$162 to \$250. There's really no benefit, Madam Speaker, for anybody in the local area to buy the 10-ticket book.

We're told that they're trying to look at some ways to either make a payment plan or to have some kind of system in place so that it wouldn't be a great amount of money up front. Madam Speaker, we have bridges here in Halifax that use a MACPASS system, so once the amount of money is paid for the trip you take, it deducts the money off your MACPASS. That's not a bad idea. The people living in the area would probably like that.

When people in the area heard that these changes were coming, they tried to buy cheaper passes before they came into play. They were told that they could only buy two at a time, but prior to that you could purchase as many as you wanted to.

When we talk about alternate routes, I've heard the member for Victoria-The Lakes say that the ferry in Englishtown - there is another route there. It's not really necessary, but it's a convenience. Madam Speaker, that may be true, but we could also say the same thing for the Halifax bridges. People could drive around the Bedford Basin. It's a convenience to have the bridges there, and it's great for traffic flow. They're going to spend \$150 million

to upgrade the Macdonald Bridge this year, and I'm told \$11 million in tolls come in on it. So if we're talking return on our investment, that's not a great return either.

When we do a road in the province - there is only one toll road we have - we don't put a toll on it. We don't try and recover the cost of it. That's covered in our taxes. Some people in the Victoria-The Lakes area, Englishtown, Little Narrows, north of Englishtown, think that this is part of their highway as well, that they shouldn't even have to pay a toll. But they're not against that if it's reasonable. They're thinking that there's got to be some consistency. Why do you pay 80 cents to cross the bridge in Halifax Harbour and \$7 to cross the Little Narrows ferry or the Englishtown ferry?

What's going to happen, Madam Speaker, if the ridership goes down because of the ferry and the toll increases? Are we going to increase the ferry rates more next year?

We also have to look at how the heavy traffic on the road around St. Anns Bay is going to chew the road up. The road is already in rough shape. It's going to chew up the road more, so it's going to cost more in infrastructure upgrades to the roads.

We also heard about a couple of small businesses at the meeting at Little Narrows - one lady who just moved back to the area to open two small businesses, and a gentleman who has a trucking company. The gentleman with the trucking company has over 30 employees who have to travel across the ferry just to get to work in the morning and to go home at the end of the day. That's \$14 a day for every employee of that company just to get to and from work in the morning. That's an extra hour's pay for most people who work in this province. They have to work one hour completely free just to get to work. If you told every employee in Nova Scotia that that was the case, we would have a revolt on our hands. The people just want something reasonable for their ferries.

The trucking company says it's going to be hard for him to compete. The cost of registering his trucks has gone up, to get his trucks and his equipment across the ferry to the mainland area, where he has to compete with other construction companies, is going to be more difficult with the ferry increases.

We heard from people at the Highland Village who were concerned that the increase in the fares is going to cause people to bypass the Highland Village completely and continue on into Sydney, where they can go to Louisbourg, where they can go to some other things. That's really going to hurt the people of the Highland Village. It's going to hurt employment there, Madam Speaker. The businesspeople in that area aren't going to be able to compete.

One of the biggest problems we heard is that the people who live in these areas aren't going to buy their groceries or their convenience items in the little stores in the areas - they're going to save it up and make one trip across the ferry and go into the city, Port

Hawkesbury or Sydney, to buy all their groceries, to buy all their goods, and make one trip instead of being able to go across the ferry when they need something.

Anyone who lives on the other side, who has to go there to get their groceries, is not going to do that. What's that going to do to small businesses in the area? I hope that has been taken into account because the little bit of money they're going to get on the ferry increases they're going to lose and businesses are going to close and people aren't going to be working because of that.

We also heard some people who are going to take 30 to 60 minutes just to go to a doctor's appointment, to pick up their mail. That's an awful hardship for some of the people who live in that area. Beautiful part of the province and it's really going to hurt, and I argue that people in rural Nova Scotia are going to suffer because of some of the stuff in this budget. If most of our major transportation links were designed to make money, what about our highway repairs and our bridges? Are we going to put tolls on them? We have to know what's going to happen so people can plan how they're going to live and where they're going live.

I also heard some talk about a possible bridge in Englishtown and/or Little Narrows because the ferry in Little Narrows has been out of service since January. So people who bought a yearly pass aren't even going to be able to use that because the ferry has been out now for over four months. There's talk about pro-rating it, that's one thing, but if it's not in service and the reliability is not there, that's another thing. That would make a big difference for people who have medical problems, for emergency vehicles to get to the other side in Englishtown where the ferry goes to, or Little Narrows. What about fire protection? That's some of the luxuries that people in the city enjoy and don't have to worry about. But it's a real concern for the people who live in Little Narrows or north of Englishtown.

It's going to cause a population decrease, it's going to cause an out-migration, and it's going to cause people not to raise their family there or set up their small businesses. It's not only a convenience for people who live in rural Nova Scotia; I think it's a necessity. I'm hoping that if the ridership decreases, especially in the Englishtown area, that there will be more money put into the infrastructure of the roads, as I said earlier. How much are we going to actually gain? My feeling is that it's not going to make that much of a difference when you have to put extra repairs in the roads. The little bit of money that they're going to make on the ferry is going to have to go into the major infrastructure.

The other problem I have is I heard that most ferry fares in the province, 75 per cent of those fares are taken from the Englishtown and Little Narrows ferry. The ridership there has increased enough so that it's paying most of that revenue income. The people in Little Narrows and Englishtown and the people who use those ferries feel like they're subsidizing the other ferries in the province. Why is that happening? The other problem I have is just to maintain the service; I'm okay with that as long as the service is there. If the service is

not there, why increase the fares? If you decrease the fares they figure that the ridership would increase because people would use it more.

The other thing is the Film Tax Credit. The decrease in the Film Tax Credit was floated at a meeting when the minister was at the chamber of commerce. The reaction from that industry was immediate. The minister stuck to her guns and we're told that by not doing her homework, we've had a lot of the film industry now decide to either not shoot any of their films and do their work here this summer and there was a huge outpouring from the film and creative industry warning the minister of the consequences of changing this tax credit without the consultation. But they went forward on the planned changes and they gutted the Film Tax Credit and the Film and Creative Industries office. To us, that's a complete mistake. It's an industry that brings in over \$100 million a year, for the sake of a \$26 million investment. If I asked anyone in the Chamber here to give me \$26 and I'll give you back \$100, I don't think there is anyone in here who would deny that. I'm sure everybody in here would take that as a decent investment, but they went ahead anyway.

The industry took it on the chin for about a week and the government took it on the chin for about a week. There were protests here at the Legislature. There were thousands of people out here, one of the best protests I've seen since I've been here. I'm only here a short time, but it was well organized. There was no trouble. They had their speakers. They had their protestors. They had Bubbles and his kitties and finally the government decided to sit down and talk with them.

After two weeks of chaos for the film industry, what damage has that done? (Interruptions) I'm not going down that track, but I hear that Bubbles wanted the Premier in an episode, but anyway, we won't go there.

It seems backward to me that the consultation would take place after the cut to the Film Tax Credit was introduced. From what we hear, that deal is still not for the best. We're hearing there's a cap; we're hearing there's a soft cap; we're hearing there's a hard cap, no cap, stocking cap, baseball cap, the Vancouver Grizzlies - the white caps. The industry has to know what's available to them and they have to know that if once the major companies have used up that money, the smaller companies can use some more to do their productions. Some of the smaller companies, I am told, do their productions at the end of the summer, at the end of the year. Are they going to be guaranteed that money is going to be there? If it's a hard cap and it's used it's gone.

There are 2,700 people employed in the film industry in the Province of Nova Scotia. It's an industry that has been built up over the years to a point where people want to shoot their films here. We have the natural beauty, the natural infrastructure. We have places like Louisbourg, like Chester. In the city, itself, in the downtown here there are lots of movies shot here. We've even had movies shot in North Sydney on the waterfront, shot in the mines in Cape Breton. That has been made available because of the Film Tax Credit

that's available here in this province to those industries. But then, we sit down and try to iron it out, after the fact, and all it did at the time was muddy the waters a little bit.

We heard from the industry saying that it was really not the best thing; there was a hard cap, a soft cap. I still don't think we have a firm agreement yet. We haven't been able to get an answer from the Premier on whether it's a hard cap or soft cap, if the money will be available, what the consequences are if it's used up. Madam Speaker, it's not the first time we've seen this type of consultation done.

There are other cases in here where the government estimates there will be \$150 million in personal income tax revenue this year. Where does that money come from if people aren't working? We've lost a huge amount of workers here in the province. Some of the statistics I have: there was over a 12,000-person net loss in the province last year in labour force shrinkage. How can you increase the revenue if your labour force is shrinking by that much? And some of the areas where most of the shrinkage is taking place is in Cape Breton - 5,500 fewer people in the workforce; the North Shore region - 5,700 people, even more than Cape Breton; the southern region - 3,500 people; and the Annapolis Valley, 3,700 people.

We can look out the window here and we can see cranes dotting the city skyline. They've gained some jobs. We're told that they are not all full-time jobs, that they are part-time jobs, but over 12,000 people in the province have lost their jobs. That's the labour force shrinkage. The job shrinkage - over 3,700 jobs lost.

How do you increase revenue from income taxes when all these people aren't working here? People are leaving our province. It doesn't take much to go to the Sydney airport on any given day or evening or morning and watch the planes leave here - watch the children and the wives and the husbands saying goodbye to their loved ones to go for two, three, or four weeks at a time or three or four months at a time, missing out on school concerts, children's hockey games, a chance to drive them to school in the morning, just to see them grow. They miss out on that - the best years of their children's lives, and they have to leave here to go to work.

I have a neighbour who does that. He has been doing it for a number of years and he has missed a lot of both of his children's activities. The fact that they can't even go out in the yard to make a snowman when he is away working has to play a role on the family structure and has to play on the family itself, on the children and on the person who is away - mothers, fathers. The problem with that is that some families do that for a certain amount of time but realize that it's not the best, so they move their whole family out there.

That in itself should be enough to try and make the conditions in the province suitable for business, suitable for employees, and suitable for employers to come here to keep families together. If we are going to increase the tax revenue, we have to increase the amount of people working here. We have to increase the amount of businesses that are

here. We have to make sure that the jobs that come here are good-paying jobs so that the people will come back from away.

That hasn't happened in the last year and a half. Under this government, we've seen - like I said - those job losses. They've banned one of the only new ways to increase revenue in the province, and that would be fracking. We have thousands of people who leave our province to go to work out West and do just that. As the Wheeler report said, we're not saying to do this stuff in an irresponsible way; make sure we're doing it in a proper way. It has been done all over the world. Let's find out the best practices and start to look at where the onshore gas might be.

It's a huge industry. We could have all our people come back home. We could have everybody home in their own bed every night, having supper with their families. Maybe it would cut down on some of the other problems we have in society - some of the problems with the justice system, some of the problems with the police system, where there'd be both parents home to support these children. Who knows what could happen? But we banned fracking. We gutted the Film Tax Credit. We're not doing our best . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member if he would like to adjourn debate on Bill No. 108 for tonight?

MR. ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on the Financial Measures (2015) Bill for this evening.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 108. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for tonight. Tomorrow, we will sit on Friday, May 1st, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, we will look to do Committee of the Whole on Bill Nos. 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, and 109. If time permits, we will look at third reading of Bill Nos. 89, 91, 95, 104, and 106. If time permits, we will look at resumption of second reading on Bill No. 108, the Financial Measures (2015) Act.

Madam Speaker, with that I move the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, May 1st, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at the hour of 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 10:00 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1697**

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Michelle Bayers Hylands is a resident of Porters Lake and a community volunteer; and

Whereas Michelle is employed locally as an optometrist assistant at Eastern Shore Optical in Porters Lake; and

Whereas Michelle is a breast cancer survivor and continues to fight for a cure by being a spokesperson for cancer survivors and coordinator of the annual Relay for Life for the Canadian Cancer Society in Musquodoboit Harbour;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Michelle Bayers Hylands for her commitment to helping others deal with breast cancer.

RESOLUTION NO. 1698

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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 Kassandra Pitt of West Porters Lake, through her exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project, was presented the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, CC, CMM, COM, CD, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Kassandra Pitt for her exceptional achievement and for being an excellent model for youth on the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1699

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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 Brittany Pitt of West Porters lake, through her exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project, was presented the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, CC, CMM, COM, CD, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Brittany Pitt for her exceptional achievement and for being an excellent model for youth on the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1700

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Marianne Nash is a long-time resident of East Petpeswick and an active community volunteer; and

Whereas Marianne is a retired schoolteacher from the Halifax Regional School Board and has positively affected the lives of thousands of students; and

Whereas Marianne volunteers many hours at Oyster Pond Academy, Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital, and her church, St. Philip Neri in Musquodoboit Harbour;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Marianne Nash for her continued support to the residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1701

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas East Jeddore resident Nancy Hill-MacInnis is a devoted community member; and

Whereas Nancy is employed at the medical clinic in Musquodoboit Harbour, serving the Eastern Shore community; and

Whereas Nancy knows the importance of community connection and support, and therefore volunteers with many activities with local schools and most recently led Musquodoboit Harbour's first and successful Parade of Lights;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Nancy Hill-MacInnis for her continued support and dedication to her community and residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1702

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Musquodoboit Harbour resident Marcel Lapointe is retired from the Canadian Armed Forces; and

Whereas Marcel is a parishioner of St. James Church, Head Jeddore, who helps out with various parish activities; and

Whereas Marcel volunteers with the Musquodoboit Harbour Food Bank and coordinates many activities as a member of the Musquodoboit Harbour and District Lions Club;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Marcel Lapointe for his hard work and dedication to his community and for his continued embodiment of the Lions motto of "We Serve".

RESOLUTION NO. 1703

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Kimberly Marks is a lifelong resident of Ostrea Lake and a community volunteer; and

Whereas Kimberly has been employed locally with Lawton's Drug Store and has volunteered and supported the Eastern Shore Minor Hockey Association events and the Ostrea Lake Fire Department; and

Whereas most recently Kimberly, in her husband's honour, created the Brad Marks Memorial Award, given annually to a graduate of Eastern Shore District High School who attends the Nova Scotia Community College for trade related studies;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Kimberly Marks for her continued community support and in recognizing the importance of supporting youth on the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1704

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Janice Bray is a resident of East Jeddore and a devoted mother and community-involved person; and

Whereas Janice owns and operates a local business known as Janice Bray Photography; and

Whereas Janice is dedicated to her community, volunteering with several events at Oyster Pond Academy, and most recently holds the treasurer position with the Eastern Shore Minor Hockey Association;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Janice Bray for her dedication to her community and for her continued support to residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1705

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Gina Dunn has been a lifelong resident of the Eastern Shore and currently lives in Porters Lake; and

Whereas Gina is co-founder, staff writer and distribution coordinator of the Eastern Shore Cooperator newsletter; and

Whereas Gina has been involved in many community organizations over the years and has served on many local boards including the Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre, Porters Lake Community Services Association and the Porters Lake and Area Soccer Association;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Gina Dunn for continuing to be an active member of her community and for being a positive role model for all residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1706

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Shirley Lowe has been a longtime resident of Grand Desert and a retiree of Bell Aliant with a long service record; and

Whereas Shirley is a parishioner of St. Anselm's Church, West Chezzetcook, volunteering in various parish activities; and

Whereas Shirley is an active member of L'Acadie de Chezzetcook Museum, volunteering for various activities which promote the Acadian culture in the Chezzetcook area;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Shirley Lowe for her hard work and dedication to her community of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1707

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Owen Young grew up in West Petpeswick and currently is a long-time resident of Lower East Chezzetcook; and

Whereas Owen is a parishioner of St. Genevieve Church, East Chezzetcook, who is actively involved in various parish activities such as cemetery maintenance, usher, greeter, and altar server; and

Whereas Owen has been a member of the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club for approximately 10 years, serving on various committees such as bingo, sports, visitations, and social outreach;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Owen Young for his long-time commitment to his community and for his continued embodiment of the Lions Club motto, "We Serve".

RESOLUTION NO. 1708

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Allison Murphy has been a long-time resident of Grand Desert and is a retiree of the Province of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Allison is a parishioner of St. Anselm Church, West Chezzetcook, and a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 9033, West Chezzetcook; and

Whereas Allison is a member of the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club who volunteers on various committees and projects;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Allison Murphy for his hard work and dedication to his community and for his continued embodiment of the Lions Club motto, "We Serve".

RESOLUTION NO. 1709

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Joan Hughes has been a long-time resident of Head of Chezzetcook, growing up at a time when one had to work hard for everything one received; and

Whereas Joan and her family operated a gas station and restaurant for many years in Head of Chezzetcook, working long days to make a living and to provide a service to the community; and

Whereas Joan is a parishioner of St. Genevieve Parish, East Chezzetcook, who helps out wherever and whenever she can;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Joan Hughes for her dedicated community service and for offering her time and talents to her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1710

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Porters Lake resident John Boucher retired from the Canadian military; and

Whereas John is a parishioner of St. Anne Church, Lake Echo, and is actively involved in parish activities; and

Whereas John has been a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 9033 for many years and has worked on many council activities, including financial responsibilities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking John Boucher for giving his time and talents for the benefit of his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1711

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas John Dodsworth has been a long-time resident of Conrod Settlement; and

Whereas John has been a long-time member of the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club; and

Whereas John has served on various committees within the Lions Club such as bingo, sports, visitations, social outreach, and has also served as King Lion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking John Dodsworth for his long-time commitment to his community and for his continued embodiment of the Lions Club motto, "We Serve".

RESOLUTION NO. 1712

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Joyce Fawcett has been a long-time resident of West Chezzetcook; and

Whereas Joyce is a parishioner of St. Anslem's Parish, West Chezzetcook, helping her church in various aspects of parish activities; and

Whereas Joyce is an active member of L'Acadie de Chezzetcook Museum helping with such activities as visitor receptions and student summer worker support to name a few;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Joyce Fawcett for her hard work and dedication to her community of Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1713

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Porters Lake resident Robert Rowlings has been a long-time active member of his community; and

Whereas Robert has been very involved in various aspects of parish life in his church of St. Anne's, Lake Echo; and

Robert has been a Charter member of the Knights of Columbus Council 9033, West Chezzetcook, volunteering with various activities such as fundraising, social outreach and serving as treasurer;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Robert Rowlings for his dedication and offering his time and talents for the betterment of fellow Eastern Shore residents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1714

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Phyllis Keizer has been a long-time resident of Head Chezzetcook and is a well-respected member of her community; and

Whereas Phyllis has been actively involved in the Canadian Cancer Society for many years as a fundraising canvasser; and

Whereas Phyllis is a parishioner of St. Barnabas Church, Head Chezzetcook, actively involved in parish activities such as choir, We Willing Helpers and parish suppers:

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Phyllis Keizer for giving her time and talents for the betterment of people on the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1715

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Leon Bonang grew up in Head Chezzetcook and currently is a long-time resident of Porters Lake; and

Whereas Leon was a long-standing member of the Chezzetcook District Fire Department, helping with fundraising, treasurer and firefighter activities; and

Whereas Leon is a community-minded individual being active in his church, St. Anselm's, West Chezzetcook, and is also a volunteer member of the Porters Lake Community Services Association;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Leon Bonang for giving his time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1716

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas John Pitcher has been a long-time resident of the Chezzetcook and Porters Lake areas; and

Whereas John has been very active volunteering with various organizations in the Chezzetcook and Porters Lake area for many years; and

Whereas John has been involved with the parishes of St. Anselm's, West Chezzetcook, and St. Genevieve's, East Chezzetcook, taking part in liturgical celebrations, fundraising activities and Parish Council work;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking John Pitcher for his continues support for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1717

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Hilda Rowlings has been a long-time resident of the Chezzetcook and Porters Lake communities and a retired business owner; and

Whereas Hilda is always willing and able to help her husband Robert with fundraising activities with the Knights of Columbus; and

Whereas Hilda is very involved with her church, St. Anne's, Lake Echo, with various activities such as Eucharistic ministry, fundraising, and social outreach;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Hilda Rowlings for giving her time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1718

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Geraldine Mannette was born in Middle Porters Lake and currently is a long-time resident of Porters Lake; and

Whereas Geraldine is a parishioner of St. Anslem's Church, West Chezzetcook, actively involved in various aspects of parish activities; and

Whereas Geraldine has a deep love for music and has entertained at her church and her community as a member of various choirs on the Eastern Shore;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Geraldine Mannette for giving her time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1719

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Edward Mannette is a long-time resident of West Chezzetcook and has been actively involved in his community most of his life; and

Whereas Edward was an active member of the Chezzetcook and District Fire Department helping with firefighting, fundraising, and maintenance of the station; and

Whereas Edward was a long-time volunteer with the Boy Scout movement, helping young men develop character, and was a member of the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club serving in various capacities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Edward Mannette for giving his time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore and amplifying the Lion's motto, "We Serve".

RESOLUTION NO. 1720

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Edgar Wadden, a long-time resident of Porters Lake, has been an active participant in sports, education and community affairs; and

Whereas Edgar has taken a leadership role in hockey on the Eastern Shore, and as school teacher and principal he positively affected the lives of thousands of students; and

Whereas Edgar has been a parishioner of St. Genevieve's Church, East Chezzetcook, participating in various parish activities, most notably serving as chairman of the Parish Council;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Edgar Wadden for giving his time and talents for the betterment of residents of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1721

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Dora Crawford is a long-time resident of East Chezzetcook and is actively engaged in her community; and

Whereas Dora is involved in various aspects of her church, St. Barnabas, Head Chezzetcook; and

Whereas Dora has been very active in the Girl Guide movement for many years, particularly in the Chezzetcook and Porters Lake areas, helping young girls build skills and character;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Dora Crawford for giving her time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1722

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Musquodoboit Harbour resident Dennis Manuge is a devoted husband, father, son and Canadian military veteran; and

Whereas Dennis recognized an injustice affecting thousands of Canadian families, making tremendous personal sacrifices while in the pursuit of righting a wrong; and

Whereas Dennis provided unwavering leadership in a successful advocacy effort on behalf of 7,500 veterans with disabilities and their families, enabling them access to an improved quality of life;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Dennis Manuge for his hard work and dedication to his community of the Eastern Shore and his fellow Canadian military veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 1723

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Darlene Redman has been a long-time resident of Porters Lake and a very active volunteer for the community; and

Whereas Darlene has always given her time and talents to such organizations as St. Anne's Church, Lake Echo; the Chezzetcook and District Fire Department and the Chezzetcook and District Boys Scouts movement; and

Whereas Darlene has helped lead these groups in their fundraising events including catering services for suppers and related dining activities;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Darlene Redman for her hard work and dedication to her community of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1724

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Bruce Conrod is a lifelong resident of East Chezzetcook and has been actively involved in his community most of his life; and

Whereas Bruce was an active member of the Chezzetcook Recreation Society, helping with fund raising events and the construction of recreation facilities at Nathan Smith Park, East Chezzetcook; and

Whereas Bruce is a well-respected pillar of his community, including exemplary service to his church, St. Barnabas, Head Chezzetcook;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Bruce Conrod for giving his time and talents for the betterment of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1725

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the Junior International Cup, part of the US Open, was held in Las Vegas; and

Whereas Riley Deveau, a member of the Bushino Ki Karate Club in Church Point, competed in his first international competition; and

Whereas Riley Deveau defeated opponents from the USA and Ecuador to win gold;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Riley for winning an intermediate kumite gold medal at the Junior International Cup and wish him all the best in the upcoming US Open.

RESOLUTION NO. 1726

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the North American Cup was held in Las Vegas, USA, on April 2nd to April 5th, 2015; and

Whereas Trysten Deveau, a member of the Bushino Ki Karate Club in Church Point, competed in the 16-17 Female Elite -54kg Kumite; and

Whereas Trysten's hard work and dedication earned her a bronze medal in her division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Trysten for winning bronze at the North American Cup and wish her all the best in the upcoming US Open.

RESOLUTION NO. 1727

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the Resource Recovery Fund Board Nova Scotia hosts the Nova Scotia Recycles contest; and

Whereas the purpose of the contest is to promote participation in waste reduction; and

Whereas Ms. Kayla Savary's class at Digby Elementary School in Digby was the contest winner of the Grade Primary to Grade 1 colouring contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Kayla Savary's class on their achievements and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1728

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Fairview Junior High School hosted a major fundraiser event on April 25, 2015, in support of the Grade 9 student culture trip to Toronto; and

Whereas this dance and silent auction saw record attendance, with 168 people buying tickets, and record-setting fundraising from the silent auction; and

Whereas everyone that attended had a great time, making this event much more than a fundraising drive but a great social and community school event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Principal Peter Wicha, Committee Chair Margaret Poole, School Liaison Officer Melanie Ross, Krista Sidney, and her decorating committee and all teachers, staff, chaperones, students, volunteers, and donors who helped make this amazing fundraiser a big success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1729

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas my godson, David S. Arab, is a construction management technology student at the Nova Scotia Community College; and

Whereas David grasped the principles and practices used to manage construction projects - administering contracts, estimating costs, and coordinating worksites; and

Whereas David's convocation ceremony will take place on June 15, 2015, at the Dalhousie Rebecca Cohn Auditorium;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate David S. Arab on his graduation and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1730

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

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

Whereas Savannah Dewolfe is a young lady from Eastern Passage and is well on her way to having a successful career; and

Whereas she will graduate from Carlton University this month with a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management and will work hard to complete her master's at the University of Ottawa next; and

Whereas in February of this year Savannah was sworn into the Senate Program as a Senate Page and is thoroughly enjoying the exposure to Parliament;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Savannah Dewolfe on her accomplishments and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1731

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships were held in Richmond, BC, from January 30 to February 1, 2015; and

Whereas Alex Comeau from Clare competed in the Male 14-15 category in this tournament; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication Alex has displayed were rewarded with a fourth-place finish in his division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Alex for his fourth-place finish at the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1732

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships were held in Richmond, BC, from January 30 to February 1, 2015; and

Whereas Tyler Deveau from Church Point competed in the Male U21 Under-75 kg category in this tournament; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication Tyler has displayed were rewarded with a fourth-place finish in his division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Tyler for his fourth-place finish at the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1733

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships were held in Richmond, BC, on January 30 to February 1, 2015; and

Whereas Trysten Deveau of Church Point successfully defended her 2014 title in the Under-53 kg Kumite Individual Female Juniors division (ages 16-17) and captured gold in the U21 Under-55 kg category; and

Whereas in addition to her two gold medals, Trysten also received a bronze medal with Team Atlantic Canada in the Team Kumite competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Trysten for winning two gold medals and one bronze medal at the 2015 Karate Canada National Championships and wish her all the best at the upcoming North American Cup in Las Vegas.

RESOLUTION NO. 1734

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas CASE IH, a global leader in agricultural equipment through VanOostrum Farm equipment, began to provide new leased equipment including compact tractors, skid steers, utility vehicles and disc mowers to the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture when the university was experiencing some critical equipment failure in 2010; and

Whereas this equipment, used for cropping, snow removal, small plot research and grounds maintenance, has been critical for the ongoing operations of the farm, which serves as a teaching and research environment for the faculty of agriculture students; and

Whereas on May 6, 2015, the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture is hosting a celebration to commemorate the success of the five year partnership with CASE IH and VanOostrum Farm Equipment, an agreement with an estimated value of \$850,000;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate CAS IH and VanOostrum Farm Equipment for continuing its commitment to heightened

agricultural educational experiences, giving students at Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture access to the latest farm equipment technology.