



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now 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 bill:

Bill No. 100 - Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1735

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 correctional services provided in our communities and in our correctional facilities by Correctional Services probation officers, youth workers, correctional officers, support staff, and managers contribute to just and safe communities in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Correctional Services works co-operatively with other departments and many individuals and organizations, including the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the IWK Health Centre, other law enforcement agencies, volunteers, and non-government agencies to provide correctional programs and services; and

Whereas the work of all those who provide correctional programs and services deserve the respect, appreciation, and recognition of this House and of all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the week of May 3-9, 2015, as Correctional Services Week and honour the good work of correctional staff 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 Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1736

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

Whereas today is International Workers' Day, a day to recognize and celebrate workers' rights; and

Whereas the rights of workers in Canada and Nova Scotia are enshrined in and protected by legislation; and

Whereas safe workplaces and the right to be safe at work is critical, and government, employers, workers, and all Nova Scotians must continue to work together to ensure every Nova Scotian comes home safe every day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize today as International Workers' Day and celebrate all workers in this province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1737

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

Whereas immigrants have helped make Nova Scotia a vibrant and dynamic society and will continue to do so in the future; and

Whereas the Conference Board of Canada's National Immigration Centre recently hosted a major two-day event, Canadian Immigration Summit 2015: Towards a National Immigration Action Plan, to discuss the future of Canada's immigration system; and

Whereas this event brought together key stakeholders from across Canada's immigration system, including myself from Nova Scotia, to explore how to modernize and enhance national and provincial policies and programs, so we continue to be a destination of choice for talented newcomers and their families, and a place of refuge for those in need;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize the work of the Conference Board of Canada in bringing together stakeholders to discuss this important topic.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

FORD, HARVEY: WOODLOTS - VISITATION

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about a resident of New Glasgow.

Harvey Ford has spent most of his working life walking around woodlots in Nova Scotia, estimating and doing appraisals. His appraisals had him snowshoeing through the woods or flying over the area to obtain an estimate. He entered the Maritime Forestry School in December 1956, and began his employment as a forest technician. Harvey worked for Stora for approximately 33 years and retired in 1994. During the 1980s and 1990s he was procurement superintendent and remembers the busy times in Pictou County with 20 tractor-trailers hauling wood for him.

Harvey can still be seen roaming around woodlots despite being retired for numerous years. His motto is: if you like what you're doing, it will never be boring. It's like a hobby and he still enjoys the tranquility in the woods. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

EATING DISORDER CLINICS - CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about cuts the McNeil Government has made to organizations that support people with eating disorders, including Eating Disorder Nova Scotia and the IWK. The minister did admit that there has been a 0.5 staff reduction at the IWK eating disorder clinic. That's very disappointing, because the specialized care that people receive at the eating disorder clinic was very valuable.

I agree with the minister, we need more supports for people with eating disorders in communities across the province. But cutting support at the IWK isn't the right approach. Instead of simply moving resources around, the government should be investing more in supports for people affected by eating disorders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

CDN. LIBERATION OF NETHERLANDS - ANNIV. (70th)

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, before I start, may I make a slight comment about the pins? I just want to say that the pins that were given to you all were from the Dutch Embassy, and my riding association, to invite you all to come to Pier 21 for the anniversary of the liberation of Holland on Monday. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker I proudly rise today to draw attention to a very important day upcoming and one in which I feel a deep personal connection. Monday, May 4th, will mark the 70th Anniversary of the Canadian Liberation of the Netherlands from the Germans during the Second World War, a seminal event in the history of both countries and one that has created a long-lasting cultural and economic bond, as well as a profound amount of love, respect, and gratitude. Many Canadian soldiers, following the war, came home with Dutch brides. And a deep interest in the country that liberated them caused many more Dutch immigrants to flock to Canada to begin life anew.

It is to that migration in the decades following the war that I proudly trace my heritage to when my parents arrived in the mid-1960s. I wish to express my extreme gratitude to those who served and participated in the fateful events 70 years ago next week. We will honour and pay tribute to the memory of the 7,600 soldiers who died during the winter and Spring of 1944 and 1945 to make such a beautiful friendship and bond possible.

I ask all members of the House to join me in commemoration and celebration of these historic activities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - NURSING SHORTAGE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address an issue that could potentially mark a crisis in Nova Scotia's health care system. Early reports indicated that Nova Scotia could face a shortfall of 800 nurses within five years. Nova Scotia is one of the first provinces to face a shortage of nurses caused by the aging population, an outward migration of our young people, and too few seats in our nursing schools. Health care administrators are using overtime or flying out-of-province nurses in as a quick short-term fix for this problem. Neither of these options is a suitable long-term solution.

I urge the Minister of Health and Wellness to closely examine this situation and take the necessary steps to prevent this situation from reaching a crisis. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM - DETERIORATION

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In less than 18 months our health care system has deteriorated dramatically. Under the McNeil Government, here are the facts: home care wait-lists are up; ICU beds are closed at the QEII; long-term care wait-lists are the highest they've ever been; we are facing a nursing shortage like we did in the 1990s; ER closures are up for the first time since 2009; and the Dartmouth General Hospital's fifth floor expansion is being ignored.

Health care is a major concern for Nova Scotians, and they have had enough. The McNeil Government should have focused on front-line patient care; instead they were distracted by merging health boards and picking fights with health care workers. Nova Scotians want better from the McNeil Government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FITCH, REILLY - TOYOTA CAR ART CONTEST

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Annapolis Valley teenager Reilly Fitch has been selected to represent Canada in the 2015 Toyota Dream Car Art Contest, and was honoured at Best Toyota Canada, in Kentville, April 8th. Reilly won the 12 to 15 year age category with his design called Portable Playground. The Toyota Dream Car Art Contest, now in its

third year, encourages children to use their imagination to draw a dream car, whether it be a car that travels through space or provides a space for children to play together safely.

The Northeast Kings Education Centre student describes his dream car as a mobilized vehicle that enters places facing natural disaster, war, or crisis, and provides an instant play area for children. Fitch's original design was something that would go in and aid people who had been stranded or stricken by different disasters.

Please join me in congratulating Reilly Fitch on winning this award with such a thoughtful and well-done submission.

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

INTL. WORKERS' DAY

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, today is May Day, a Spring holiday for many of our friends in Europe. It is also International Workers' Day.

International Workers' Day commemorates a sad day in the early 19th Century when Chicago police fired on striking workers. A few years later an international conference in Paris called for a worldwide demonstration each year, on May 1st, to recognize the rights of workers to strike and peacefully protest. I couldn't help but think of the irony - here we are discussing the McNeil Government's anti-workers agenda on International Workers' Day.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

LANGILLE, SARAH-DAWN - DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD MEDAL

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sarah-Dawn Langille, of River John, who received the gold Duke of Edinburgh Award on April 22, 2015. Governor General David Johnson presented the awards at Saint Mary's University.

Sarah-Dawn previously received the bronze, and silver, Duke of Edinburgh Award before completing the requirements for the gold award. This award originated in 1957 and challenges participants to achieve personal goals in four of five categories: service, skill, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project. In working towards this goal Sarah-Dawn has contributed greatly to her community, learned leadership and communication skills, and experienced personal development. Sara-Dawn is presently studying veterinarian science at the daVinci College Centre.

I am honoured to recognize Sarah-Dawn for her achievements. Thank you.

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

PREM.: UNIONS - TREATMENT

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this Premier seems to have a serious problem with people who belong to unions. I guess he doesn't understand that it is a protected right under the Charter.

Over 30 per cent of Nova Scotian workers belong to unions, and the Premier is slowly taking the rights away, one industry at a time. We saw what the McNeil Government did to the rights of health care workers with Bill Nos. 1, 30, and 37, and how they attempted to dictate which union workers would belong to. We now see that workers in the post-secondary sector are in the Premier's crosshairs. His Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, who spoke with CBC's Information Morning yesterday, doesn't seem bothered that it might be unconstitutional. We should all be worried about that.

Which industry will they throw into chaos next?

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

SO. COL. ACAD.: BECAUSE I'M A GIRL CLUB - CONF.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, South Colchester Academy's Because I'm a Girl Club recently organized a tremendous event called Empowering Girls to be Inspired Women.

This conference-style event saw over 115 girls participating from South Colchester Academy, Central Colchester Junior High, Bible Hill Junior High, Truro Junior High, École Acadienne, and West Colchester Consolidated. Along with physical activities such as swimming and rock climbing, participants attended sessions hosted by local female business leaders on topics such as: Your Body Your Way; Finding your way as a female, with help from Nova Scotia; Art Empowerment; and Girls and Sports and Physical Activity. Also included was a session on how to start a Because I Am a Girl Club within your own school.

I wish to congratulate South Colchester Academy's Because I Am a Girl Club on the success of their conference, and to recognize them for their continuous efforts in empowering girls to be inspired women.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this session we have seen people being denied access to the public gallery; we've seen people's time to speak at Law Amendments cut in half; we have a Minister of Business who wants to keep \$17 million

secrets; and yesterday, when individuals and groups were trying to voice their concerns about the government's flawed policies, the McNeil Government's chief of staff decided that no one was allowed to send emails or report on social media what was happening at Law Amendments Committee. What is the McNeil Government trying to hide from Nova Scotians?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm going to rule that member's statement out of order. The member for Queens-Shelburne was commenting on matters that fall under the Speaker's Office, which is not allowed under statements by members.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: Seated in the west gallery today is one of my best friends, Marc Deslauriers. I'm thrilled to see Marc here today because he lives in Bermuda and has for about 20 years. Members of this House will know that I'm often at a loss for words, but when I'm talking about Marc, I'm not at a loss for words, because he's a good old Fairview boy. So maybe Marc could stand and receive the warm welcome of the House, please. (Applause)

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

DOCTORS' DAY (05/01/15) - RECOGNIZE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today is Doctors' Day in Nova Scotia. Doctors change lives. They are with us in many of the happiest times of our lives, and in the most difficult times of our lives as well. Their compassion and skill are appreciated by all Nova Scotians.

In Nova Scotia, physicians play an important role in health care delivery, treating about 30,000 patients each and every day. They're dedicated to improving the lives of their patients, whether they are specialists in our cities or rural physicians who are the backbones of many of our small communities.

Today I'm pleased to recognize the important and unique role doctors play in our province's health care system.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, since being elected in October 2013, the McNeil Government has brought many spectators to the House of

Assembly - spectators who stand outside with flags, poster signs, and loudspeakers. The McNeil Government has brought so many spectators to the House of Assembly that on several occasions they ran out of room in the gallery, so these spectators must go outside. The McNeil Government has shown these spectators - the workers, the taxpayers, the people of Nova Scotia . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to rule that statement out of order for the same reason as the previous ones: the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's is commenting on matters that fall under the purview of the Speaker.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

LISMORE HALL - BUY LOCAL EVENT

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, Lismore Hall is known for being the hub of activity in eastern Pictou County. They recently housed their second annual buy local event organized by the District One Development Society. Organizations and individuals displayed their goods and services to the eager public, who turned out in droves to support the event. Food was served by the Karen Lynn MacDonald Society and a group that is planning to start a meals on wheels in District One.

The concept of buying local is growing throughout Nova Scotia, and after such a successful event, organizers are already planning for a similar event next Fall. Congratulations to all participants and continued success in the Fall.

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

NATL. DANCE WK. (04/22 - 04/29/15) - MARK

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, April 22nd to April 29th marked National Dance Week in Canada. Every year, Dance Nova Scotia celebrates by encouraging Nova Scotians to discover the joy of dance. Through its popular Dare to Dance program, now in its 15th year, school students and staff are encouraged to dance for 20 minutes at least once during National Dance Week. A record of over 13,000 participants from 65 public schools took part this year, dancing everything from hip hop to flash mobs to conga lines and square sets.

I want to acknowledge the important work of Dance Nova Scotia, who are celebrating their 40th year of advocating for and promoting all forms of dance within Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

WALTER DUGGAN ELEM. - WOW! READING CHALLENGE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Wow, Mr. Speaker! Pictou County schools are filled with students who love to read. In total, 70 elementary schools participated in this year's WOW! Reading Challenge. In the Tartan Division, the winner was Walter Duggan Elementary from Westville.

Walter Duggan School was the first school to reach the one million books read level in the WOW! program. Thorburn Consolidated Junior High came first in their division in Pictou County and won the bronze banner in the overall division.

This is the 9th annual Reading Challenge and I am proud of everyone who took part. I'm pleased to know so many of our young people love to read and to learn. Congratulations to all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

NATL. VISION HEALTH MO. (05/15): CNIB - THANK

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, May is National Vision Health Month, a time for all of us to consider the importance of our eyes and vision. Canada's pre-eminent charity that supports people who are partially-sighted or blind, the CNIB, reminds us all to take our vision health seriously.

Every 12 minutes in Canada, someone starts to lose their eyesight, but 75 per cent of vision loss can be prevented. Getting regular eye exams, quitting smoking, protecting our eyes from excessive sunlight, and adopting a balanced lifestyle are all things that can help preserve our eyesight.

In honour of Vision Health Month, I would like to thank the CNIB, in particular the Nova Scotia chapter, for all the work they do in our province. I hope that despite the McNeil Government's recent cuts to their funding, they will be able to continue their work for many years to come.

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

MY-PLAY SYSTEM - CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, last year, the McNeil Government cut My-Play, a program aimed at curbing problem gambling. They replaced it with - well, nothing. We know that VLT use has gone up again this year.

This year, the Premier and the Minister of Health and Wellness - who, let's not forget, once claimed to be an advocate on the issues - further cut programs and services for

mental health and addiction. We know that no more grants will be given out to organizations that support the work of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. That will undoubtedly have an impact.

I hope in the coming days and weeks, the McNeil Government will take some of the energy that it has been putting into fighting with our workers and drafting unconstitutional legislation and focus that into finding innovative ways to help Nova Scotians stay healthier.

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 as 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 look forward to it in the very near future. I would like to thank the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development for their work on this incredibly important file and thank the minister. I hope that the voice of young people is present every step of the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring further members' statements, with the unanimous consent of the House, we will now move on to Government Business.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Just before I leave the Chair, pursuant to Section 39(1) of the Rules of this Assembly, I now appoint the honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie as Chairman of the Committee to preside over the Committee of the Whole House.

[9:29 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Mr. Lloyd Hines in the Chair.]

[9:36 a.m. CWH on Bills rose the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Whole on Bills will now report:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Bills 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.

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please Bill No. 104.

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

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

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bill No. 104, the Milford Haven Fire Protection Commissioners Act, be read for a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, if I could for a moment, I want to give my thanks to the two fire departments involved for showing tremendous leadership in what will be the inevitable reorganization of volunteer fire service delivery in Nova Scotia. These are two large departments that have collectively decided that they can operate more efficiently for their members by joining together.

The constituency of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie has 26 volunteer fire departments that do tremendous service and with the pressures of depopulation it's inevitable that some amalgamations and changes are in order. I congratulate these departments for recognizing that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 104. 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. 106.

Bill No. 106 - An Act to Wind-Up the Colchester Regional Development Agency.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 106 be read for a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 106. 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, with the consent of the House, would you please revert to the daily routine, Statements by Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I guess we'll take a 20-minute recess until Question Period is ready to start.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess until 10:00 a.m.

[9:40 a.m. The House recessed.]

[10:00 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: GYNECOLOGISTS - NEGOTIATIONS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The province's gynecologists were promised that 90 per cent of their malpractice insurance would be covered as per the terms of their contract for the first three months of this year while the government was negotiating a longer-term solution to their issues. This week, it appears that the government has gone back on its word and shortchanged them on their reimbursements.

I would like to ask the Premier, why is his government negotiating in bad faith with the province's gynecologists?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness will respond.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for that question. We do have a circumstance at the moment wherein the Canadian Medical Protective Association - CMPA - has dramatically raised the fees. All provinces are looking at this issue. What I can assure the obstetrician/gynecologists is that we in fact have this on the table. During negotiations, we were at 80 per cent. That's where we are at the moment and we know it will be a hot item during the master agreement.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that may be true about the CMPA fees, but the contract is with the Government of Nova Scotia and it is the government that is responsible for honouring it. From the Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness himself, our gynecologists were assured that their fees would continue to be covered up to 90 per cent for the first three months of this year. Now those payments have gone out and they have been shortchanged. That is a government responsibility.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he ensure that the province's gynecologists are treated fairly and given what they were promised in their contract with the government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to respond.

MR. GLAVINE: I know that there was a contractual obligation there. The fees rose dramatically because we moved into the master agreement. That's where it will reach its final resolution. What I can tell the Leader of the Official Opposition is that the obstetrician/gynecologists in this province will be treated fairly through the master agreement.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, do you know what treated fairly should mean? It should mean that if you have a contractual obligation as the Minister of Health and Wellness has just said, then you should honour it. The government has broken its promise to the gynecologists. They broke their promise to the film industry. They broke their promise to the mining industry. The record of broken promises is stacking up.

Will the Premier at least apologize to the gynecologists of Nova Scotia for this latest broken promise to them?

MR. GLAVINE: I thank the member for that question. This is the part of the physician community that does in fact pay the second-highest fees in terms of malpractice insurance. It's giving us an opportunity to review that whole reimbursement area for

obstetricians. What I can tell the member is that when the master agreement is finalized, I think our obstetrician/gynecologists in fact will be where they have been for quite some time.

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

PREM.: CAPITAL INCENTIVE INVESTMENT PROG. - CUTS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we're finally learning which business grants the government has decided to slash. One of the biggest is the Capital Investment Incentive program, a cut of \$8.5 million. This program helped our manufacturing sector upgrade equipment and improve productivity, particularly for small businesses and manufacturers in rural Nova Scotia. Much like Film & Creative Industries, it was a complete surprise this program disappeared.

I want to ask the Premier, can he please tell these businesses why they cut this successful program without a transition plan in place or without any consultation or notice?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank all those manufacturers in this province who have seen fit to invest in their businesses in this province, being able to work with them cooperatively. We know that there has been a Capital Investment Incentive that is through NSBI now, which is a rebate program; it's not a grant program that the previous government had put in place. We have seen an announcement recently that the red tape reduction between our province and the Province of New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker, to move our region into the most progressive regulatory environment in the country. Businesses are very positive to that and very encouraged by the work that's being done.

Labour and Advanced Education is working towards finding university graduates and community college graduates their first job in this province through the Graduate to Opportunity program. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of initiatives that businesses are moving forward with this government to ensure that young Nova Scotians get an opportunity to work here.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the lack of consultation and planning is becoming a trademark of the McNeil Government. This government also cut nearly \$1.5 million from the Productivity Investment Program, a nationally renowned program that has been improving our workforce's skills since its inception. I want to ask the Premier, how does cutting funds from programs that train our workforce help our province stay competitive on the global stage?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question and remind her of the tremendous investment that is made through other programs and workers across this province. In partnership with the private sector we've seen a tremendous opportunity and broadened the opportunities for apprentices to get their first job in this

province; that's a good news story, and as I mentioned earlier, the Graduate to Opportunity program, which actually encourages employers to hire people in this province, to enhance those skills.

We believe in professional development. We believe all organizations should be investing in their employees; as a government we invest in our employees. It's an ongoing process. As we evolve and meet the challenges of today, programs need to evolve to meet those challenges and we're very encouraged by the way the private and public sectors have joined government to ensure that we have the right tools in place for our workers today.

MS. MACDONALD: Again, it's our rural economy that this Premier's budget hurts the most, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ivany told us that improving productivity and competitiveness is the foundational base in rural industries. It's essential if we are to build a stronger trade economy for the province as a whole. I want to ask the Premier, can he tell us exactly what the impact on international trade for Nova Scotia will be due to the slashing of \$17 million from programs that made this province more competitive globally?

THE PREMIER: I want to tell the honourable member what makes this province competitive; it is its workers and the entrepreneurs. We've increased small business loans through the credit union; we've doubled it. We've increased the cap so that there will be loan guarantees on those small businesses. Those are great signs, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing markets open up. We're seeing our lobster that's continuing to be distributed out.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're seeing entrepreneurs across this province embrace the new opportunities not only trading in the eastern U.S., trading in Europe. We just had the largest single investment of any province in Canada from Asia, a \$50 million equity fund that goes into small businesses. The big difference between this side of the House and that side of the House is we don't think we need to throw money at people to get them to invest in this province because they know the quality of this province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: EA - MACQUARRIE FILE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Today is Doctors' Day, a time when we show our thanks and our respect to the doctors of the province. Recently Dr. Robyn MacQuarrie had meetings with senior officials of the Department of Health and Wellness, including a very interesting one with the minister's own executive assistant. He said he wanted to see her and showed her a file he keeps as he vets people who want to meet with the minister. In that file were a pile of newspaper clippings, Facebook posts, photographs of Dr. MacQuarrie and advertisements in which she has appeared. A clear intimidation tactic. I'd like to ask the minister, did he

instruct his executive assistant to keep a file on Dr. Robyn MacQuarrie and other Nova Scotians or only those who disagree with his policies?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, an emphatic no.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister has nothing on Richard Nixon, because the fact of the matter is that his staff are keeping files on people who disagree with the government.

On Doctors' Day, a day where we are expected and should be showing our respect for the doctors of the province (Interruptions) When challenged on this by Dr. MacQuarrie, the minister's executive assistant actually sent her a message saying: I am no longer able to tell if you are being dishonest with me, or the other obstetricians of Nova Scotia are being dishonest with you.

There is no respect in that, Mr. Speaker. The minister says he doesn't know that this is what his office does, keeping files on people, showing disrespect in their communications to them. Will he apologize to Dr. MacQuarrie and ensure all Nova Scotians that his office will not keep files on people who disagree with his policies?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the comment. What I can assure the Leader of the Official Opposition is that I am more than prepared to meet with Dr. Robyn MacQuarrie, and any physician in this province at any time, as I have met a couple of hundred so far in my first 18 months in office. Thank you.

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

BUS. - COMMUN. ACCESS PROG.: LOW-INCOME FAMILIES - EFFECT

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Business. Included in the list of program cuts by the new Department of Business is the Community Access Program, also known as CAP. I just want to take a moment and read a comment from the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education from May 14, 2012, about the impact of cutting this program. She said: "The decision to stop funding this program will mean many low-income families will continue to be at an educational and economic disadvantage."

My question for the Minister of Business is, why is ensuring that low-income families aren't at an educational or economic disadvantage no longer a priority for the McNeil Government?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It's quite obvious that this government certainly recognizes the needs and challenges of our vulnerable population. My colleague in Community Services has done an excellent job in

reaching out to, and communicating with, and meeting with and providing support to those people in the community who are challenged.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I guess by not increasing income assistance for two years, and freezing it, is reaching out.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read you another quote from the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. When the federal government cut funding for the CAP program in 2012, she said if cutting the program “was a positive decision, they would have been out front with pictures and cameras and announcements, but instead they did it trying to fly underneath the radar.”

My question for the Minister of Business, is why did he try to fly under the radar by keeping the McNeil Government’s decision to cut the CAP program a secret for a period of three weeks?

MR. FUREY: Quite honestly, the analysis done of the cuts that my colleague has referenced and the cross-departmental responsibilities, in our review of duplicate and triplicate funding formulas, it has taken time - just this week we were able to pull that information together and we’ve shared that information publicly.

Mr. Speaker, it is about being transparent, but it’s also about being accurate and factual.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC. - AGRIC. IND.: WINTER IMPACTS - ADDRESS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Given that damage this long winter, and high snow loads, have caused the greenhouse and the dairy industries - with the greenhouse and barn collapse more than \$10 million in damage I understand - and given the impact on the apple industry in the fact that they have not been able to get pruning done in a timely fashion, and delays in the planting season, and impacts on maple sugar production from the high snow loads, my question for the minister is, can the minister tell this House what he is doing to address these many impacts the high snowfall and long winter have had on our agricultural industries?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Indeed, it has been a serious winter for the farming industry in the Province of Nova Scotia with several greenhouses collapsing. The toll and the cost of that keeps mounting. We’ve been dealing directly with the Greenhouse Growers Association through Perennia. We’ve had some workshops already with them and we will continue to work with them. We’re looking forward to federal programs that may be able to help them. We are identifying those and working with them as well.

MR. LOHR: It is indeed these federal programs that I wish to ask about. Can the minister tell us specifically for which sectors he is applying for federal disaster relief - which sectors of Nova Scotia's industry of agriculture is he addressing with the federal government?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question to the industry in Nova Scotia. We are looking at a whole fleet of different programs. There are three or four that may fit. Some of them don't fit particular greenhouse operations and other businesses because they never enrolled in them to start with. There are some issues there, some disconnects with the industry. We're working as diligently as we possibly can. We've been talking to the industry on an ongoing basis and will continue to do that to mitigate the damage as best we can.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

PREM. - ELECTRICITY RATES (2016): STATUS QUO - MAINTAIN

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The government has set up plans to announce legislation in the Fall affecting the province's electricity system. Nova Scotians want to know if they will pay more or less for electricity next year. My question for the Premier is, can the Premier tell Nova Scotians that electricity rates will not increase under his plan in 2016?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to first of all thank the member for Dartmouth East for the tremendous work he did in providing competition in the energy market. I want to thank him for the leadership he showed in removing the efficiency tax off power bills across this province. We're certainly disappointed to see that the Opposition Parties supported the URB's decision to scoop all that money up instead of passing it on to hard-working Nova Scotians.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Energy today for the work he's doing in ensuring that not only do we have a robust transmission system in this province, but that we have one indeed between our sister province next door to ensure that we can capitalize on all the renewable energy that takes place in the provinces across this region. We're extremely excited to see the investments taking place in all sorts of energy.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear in there whether the Premier expected rates to go down or not. I'll try again, because we've heard the Premier suggest before that rates would go down. Nova Scotians will remember very fully the Premier's plan on restructuring Efficiency Nova Scotia and how that would reduce rates. Instead, power rates remain the same this year as they did last year despite comments from the Premier saying he would lower rates. I will ask the Premier again - I'll ask it a little differently this time - when can Nova Scotians expect a break on electricity rates?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, dear diary: power rates did not go up by the admission of the member across the aisle. Let me also tell you, this government has continued to ensure that we bring fairness to the electricity rates in this province. This government has continued to ensure that we bring competition into the marketplace. We're going to continue to ensure that ratepayers are looked after in this province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - C.B. REG. HOSP.: ISSUES - ADDRESS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in Cape Breton last evening, three emergency rooms were closed - Glace Bay, Northside, and New Waterford - leaving only the emergency room at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital open. Yesterday, even before the other ERs were closed, the Cape Breton Regional Hospital already had a full patient load and overflow, and another 20 patients needing care. The minister has been saying, don't worry - this situation will be resolved shortly.

I'm concerned for the Islanders and for anybody visiting the Island this weekend. I would like to ask, when exactly can residents and visitors of Cape Breton expect to see the issues at the hospital addressed?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that's a question to prepare a number of visitors for this weekend, but no, it is a very serious issue. I know that the Northside is in the process now, with probably the next CEC in the province. That work is in progress. We do have the mobile unit in the New Waterford area, but unfortunately, it is not getting quite the pickup that we need. People still go to the Cape Breton Regional. This whole area, in terms of its future emergency care services, is in progress and being addressed, but we know that getting physicians to cover 24/7 now is a major problem.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I want to remind the minister that it was his government that delayed the ongoing openings of CECs for over a year. I want to also remind him that this weekend people in Glace Bay won't have access to the ER at all. It's closed until Monday morning. That means that all weekend long, Cape Breton Regional Hospital will see additional patients, and people will have to wait even longer to receive medical attention.

How much longer should residents of Cape Breton expect to be impacted by the issues of the emergency room closures?

MR. GLAVINE: I know there was a delay period while the consultant, Mary Jane Hampton, was getting a full sense of the CECs as they exist and what we need to design for the future model of care. It is now being considered in conjunction with the whole health services plan for the province. That work has been started by the new provincial

health authority, and we can assure all residents of Cape Breton that the emergency issue is being addressed. I know that we will have the right model for the future of Cape Breton.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - BLACK-LEGGED TICKS: SNOW - IMPACT

MR. TIM HOUSTON: I am due to do a diary post on Lyme disease, so with this question to the Minister of Health and Wellness, I'll give the Premier a sneak preview. Researchers in Albany, New York, say that the heavy snow that blanketed the northeastern United States this year was like a cozy quilt for baby black-legged ticks, keeping them insulated. When the snow in the woods gets too deep, deer often come out of the woods in search of food. New York researchers found that this resulted in infected ticks being found in more urban areas.

My question for the minister is, was the minister aware of the impact the snow can have on the black-legged tick population, and has the department done any similar research to that in New York?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I live in rural Nova Scotia. I live very, very close to the natural world, and have worked to have a good understanding of it. You're right - the great snowfalls we had this winter have provided a great blanket for nature.

Once again, starting with the Spring season we will have monitoring of the black-legged tick and whether or not it is spreading into other areas. The six hotspots in particular are being monitored as we speak.

MR. HOUSTON: I also live close to the natural world. I have stood in this House many times and told stories of Nova Scotians and them having to travel to the United States for a diagnosis and having to spend money on treatments - spend great amounts of money on their own health care. The minister has, and we have, talked about different initiatives that he has undertaken in his department, but we have yet to see a comprehensive strategy to deal with the Lyme disease issue we have in this province.

My question is, does the minister have any plans to complete a provincial Lyme disease strategy?

MR. GLAVINE: I went through what would look like, I guess in one package, a comprehensive Lyme disease strategy. The Departments of Health and Wellness, Natural Resources, and Labour and Advanced Education, and the work they do with those who labour outside - all of those components are now in the works here in our province. We have had a number of people diagnosed and treated in this province. There is a great deal of professional development with our doctors. I believe that now we have a very strong way of preventing, diagnosing, and treating Lyme disease in our province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: HOSP. INVENTORY REVIEW - CONDUCT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Yesterday, we learned that the source of the black dust found on the surgical equipment was a sign of corrosion of the equipment itself. The minister knew how old the equipment was and that it had reached its life expectancy, but no plans were made to have it replaced in advance of the massive cancellations of surgeries. The minister said that the plan is to review the inventory of equipment around the province - he said he was going to plan to do that - but the minister cut the budget for hospital equipment by \$12 million from last year's forecast.

Why did the minister not initiate an inventory review before the budget was finalized?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: As the member for Argyle-Barrington knows, we have a contingency fund in the province for equipment that does break down as well as what is planned to be spent each and every year. We were fortunate in the 2014-15 budget year to actually purchase some of the equipment that was going to be on the list for this year, so we've actually made an advance in purchasing some equipment. However, in terms of lessons learned here, it is indeed to have a more robust inventory of when equipment is indeed nearing the end of its life cycle.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: In the next five to six weeks, as we wait for new equipment, thousands of Nova Scotians' surgeries will be cancelled. As we wait for the review of the inventory, it will be unclear what other areas of the province could face challenges similar to that experienced at the QEII, but the budget for new equipment is simply not there to respond this year.

My question to the minister will be, what will the minister do if new equipment needs to be purchased and his budget cuts won't allow it?

MR. GLAVINE: As I indicated yesterday, no matter what the cost of providing the sterilizers for the QEII would be, that was not on the table in our discussions. It was simply working to get the surgeries back up to 100 per cent across the province. Every day this week, an improvement has been made. Now we're into the second part of the plan, and that is to look at the surgeries that were postponed, triage those surgeries, and start to move them out to a few of the other capacity areas of regional hospitals. I feel that we're in a much better place today than where we were on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

TIR: NOVA STAR FERRY - LINEN SERV. PROVIDERS

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Taxpayers have put another \$2.1 million into the *Nova Star* ferry and the boat hasn't set sail yet this season. According to a story yesterday in the *Portland Press Herald* out of Maine, the Maine-based Pratt Abbott Cleaners ". . . will provide linen service to the ferry, as it did last year." I'll table that story.

Given that the State of Maine and its taxpayers have not provided any financial support, this is concerning. My question for the minister is, were there no Nova Scotia-based companies that could have provided the linen service for the ferry?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: It's an important question from the member across. First of all, our trip to Maine in hopefully mid-June, or earlier than that if possible, is going to explore some of those things with our potential partners in Maine. We really have to get a sense as to where Governor LePage and the entire government and the private sector are from Maine with respect to how they are going to support this endeavour. It's very clear that we're 100 per cent committed to sustainability and long-term survival and growth and prosperity for the Nova Scotia ferry that is going to be there.

Just one important point: this is the value in the alternative procurement. We have to look at what the net benefit is for Nova Scotia. Some of these services, as the member identified, we have to know that that money is staying in Nova Scotia. Despite what the Leader of the Official Opposition said about the RFP, that creates rigidity so that we can't protect Nova Scotia investment. This will allow us to do just that.

MR. LOHR: I would like to thank the minister for that answer and say yes, we are concerned about small businesses in Nova Scotia being able to participate in the economy of the ferry. In that same story, the owner of Two Fat Cats Bakery in Portland ". . . said she has exchanged emails with the company about once again supplying pastries and cookies for the ferry." Although there is no formal deal in place, she says the early contacts have been encouraging - first the linen contract and now possibly the pastries.

My question for the minister is this, can he explain to the House the vendor procurement process for the *Nova Star* and exactly how Nova Scotia companies can bid on these contracts?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, my understanding with respect to the current operation is that these are business decisions that were made through *Nova Star* and their operations to reduce the cost to the extent possible. That's where we are at the present day.

Our conversation with Mark Amundsen about this very topic is that we have to see that investment and the money that we've put in as a province, as taxpayers, to make sure

this service is there for the long term. We have to know that that money is staying in Nova Scotia and being part of the Nova Scotia economy.

Again, Mr. Speaker, there are indications that Maine is interested. They want to be a partner; they want to share in the success of the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry service so we're looking forward to those conversations but we do want to make sure that we protect the taxpayers, the people and the economy of this province. Thank you very much.

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

COM. SERV.: C.B. CHILD POVERTY - ADDRESS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, a recent report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives titled *A Generation of Broken Promises: The 2014 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia* outlines a disturbing trend of child poverty in Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, our beautiful Island of Cape Breton also has the second highest rate of child poverty in Canada: one in three children live in poverty in Cape Breton. I will table that report.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Community Services please explain why the shocking rates of childhood poverty in Cape Breton are not directly addressed in this budget?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. As someone who has worked in the community for years, looking at the root causes of poverty is really what is going to lift people out of poverty, I was really pleased over the last couple of years to see the investments that were made to organizations that support families in crises.

I know there is a child poverty problem in Cape Breton. It didn't start on October 8, 2013, it has been going on for many decades. (Interruption) It's a sad fact, yes it is.

I'm encouraged by the investments we've made in different organizations that actually help families in crises including transition houses, family resource centres. Also in the coming weeks I will be looking at Children's Outreach; a few of them will be centred in Cape Breton as well, to help with families who are in crises in that area.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the minister for her response and I'm sure she does care what is going on in Cape Breton, as we do on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the McNeil Government froze income assistance for the second year in a row, as we know. This means that many Cape Breton families with children have to stretch their budgets even farther to pay for basic necessities like food, shelter and utilities.

Can the minister please explain how freezing income assistance rates for the second year in a row is actually helping address the issue of child poverty in Cape Breton?

MS. BERNARD: I again thank you for the question. I truly believe, as somebody who has been in this situation and somebody who has worked in the community, that incrementally raising social assistance rates each month or each year doesn't address the root causes of poverty. Your government raised the rates but there is still poverty in Cape Breton. It really has to look at the strategic investments of helping people move out of the situation and the condition of poverty. That's what we're doing in the department.

We're also looking at benefit reform that really looks deeper into the situation of poverty so that we don't perpetuate a cyclical and generational effect of poverty in this province. It hasn't been done in many decades and I look forward to the results of that reform.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: SCH. SAFETY - DEPT. PLANS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. On Wednesday, all members of the House were troubled to hear that an 18-year-old student was stabbed on school property at Millwood High School in Middle Sackville. The minister's action plan states that we need to ensure that we can create the kinds of caring, respectful and safe schools that students, parents, and teachers deserve.

My question to the minister, is the department currently engaging with school boards to examine any new ways to improve school safety for students?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member for the question. I too was troubled when I heard of a tragic incident on school property. I do want to commend the administration, staff, and adults in the school who took the appropriate action not only to care for the young man who was injured, but also to contact the police to ensure that they were alerted. I do understand that as a result of that quick action, a suspect has been apprehended.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, we all appreciate the swift response of law enforcement officials in cases like this. Partnerships between law enforcement and school boards through school liaison programs have proved to be a big benefit for students, schools, and communities. My question to the minister, is there any dedicated funding from the

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development set aside for school liaison programs? And is the department actively involved in promoting and expanding these partnerships between law enforcement and schools?

MS. CASEY: To the member opposite, partnerships are necessary more so perhaps than ever in our schools when we have issues that are brought to the school that play themselves out there. I know that in many municipalities, there is a partnership between the municipality and the school to ensure that there are law enforcement services available to the school, in particular our large high schools.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FINANCE & TREASURY BD. - TOURISM PLANS: TIANS - CONSULTATION

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. In a letter to the Premier, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia expressed its disappointment that it was not approached far in advance of the government's announcement that it was creating Tourism Nova Scotia, a Crown corporation. I will table that letter. They only found out about this plan a day in advance, when asked for a news release comment. This is concerning, as it suggests another example of the government acting before doing its homework before-hand.

My question for the minister is, can the minister explain why she did not share the government's plans with the association and ask for feedback in advance of the announcement?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I was just wondering about who would be the appropriate minister to answer that question. I know that the industry itself has been asking for this greater autonomy and a chance to have control over how monies are spent and how we promote our province. If you want a second question on that, I would suggest you go to the Department of Business.

MR. LOHR: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer, and yes, I do want to redirect to the Department of Business. While the board of this new agency will be made up of industry members, the government should ensure that TIANS is consulted going forward. The association represents members across the province and has knowledge and experience that should be drawn upon.

My question for the Minister of Business is, as the minister moves forward, will he ensure that TIANS is appropriately consulted so that we can build a stronger tourism industry here in Nova Scotia?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, this past week, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Squires, who chairs the TIANS board and represents the industry. Four of the TIANS

members actually sit on the tourism board, so there's a tremendous link between TIANS and the new tourism Crown corporation. I can assure the member that going forward, there will be exceptional co-operation and consultation between both agencies to ensure that we meet and achieve the objectives laid out in the Ivany report.

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

TIR: C.B. RAIL - SUBSIDY

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of TIR. Yesterday in Question Period, the minister indicated his deputy would be attending a public meeting on the future of Cape Breton rail lines. The minister said, "Any information they need will be provided . . . he will give them absolutely every shred of data, information, and direction that we have." The minister also said, ". . . this is not about a long-term subsidy."

If it's not a long-term subsidy, Mr. Speaker, will the minister's deputy be providing information at today's meeting in Sydney about a short-term subsidy available to save the rail line?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, the meeting today is with a group formulated by Dr. David Rae, from CBU, who is looking at some of the community involvement and how a community operation could play a role with the rail line.

The minister's Rail Advisory Committee has looked at a number of very important pieces of this over the last year. As the member opposite knows, we've brought in very important legislation that gave us not only some time to explore options, but of course protection from environmental liabilities and from financial liabilities, Mr. Speaker.

We've done some good work on this one. It's certainly not over yet, but we are committed to understanding what the business model is, what is the best way to keep the rails on the ground and make sure that they are contributing to the Cape Breton economy, specifically as it relates to the Port of Sydney.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the rail line has been the lifeline of business in Cape Breton that relies on this line to ship their products. This line was built with public money and now Cape Bretoners are concerned about losing this line. This is about the future of Cape Breton. How much of a subsidy is the minister willing to offer the rail line as people in Cape Breton build their business case to keep this vital transportation link?

MR. MACLELLAN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the member to the party. We've been talking about the Cape Breton rail line for quite some time, so it's great that he is finally interested.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also remind the member that it's a very dangerous path to play politics with this one; it's a very sensitive issue in Cape Breton. We are doing our very best, we've put together an advisory committee that is exploring all options for this rail line, so don't bring it to the floor of the House now. We've been working on this, we've been working very hard. (Interruptions) We're putting together a plan (Interruptions) we're talking about the private sector and involvement. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Kings North.

BUS. - TOURISM N.S.: TIANS BD. MEMBERS - SECRECY

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Business. Yesterday in conversations I had with Mr. Glenn Squires of TIANS he expressed his frustration that the TIANS members, who represent TIANS on the board of Tourism Nova Scotia, have been told that everything the board does is confidential and that they are not to bring that information back to TIANS.

My question for the minister is: Why has that been communicated to those representatives of TIANS on the board of Tourism Nova Scotia? Surely they are able to bring back, communicate back to TIANS, the information on the board.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for the discussions that take place within the tourism board; they are certainly independent of government. What I said in my response to the previous question, I will ensure that there is strong dialogue and communication between TIANS and the board. We'll take steps to ensure that those discussions continue.

I had a tremendous meeting with Mr. Squires earlier this week. I actually met with the board of Tourism Nova Scotia and I believe with the representation on the board we have an opportunity to move the tourism industry forward. I have full confidence in the board, and I have full confidence in Mr. Squires and the membership in TIANS.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Business houses the Office of Regulatory and Service Effectiveness and the government has said the office will work to implement regulatory recommendations in the Broten report. My question for the minister is this: Will the office review the regulations that were not included in the scope of the Broten report, or will it be limited to the recommendations from the Broten report?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. The primary objective of the regulatory group is to implement the recommendations of the tax and regulatory review. But if we are genuine about moving the opportunities of Nova Scotia forward, obviously the regulatory body will review across government, across departments, any and all regulations that we can address that will enhance small business

and medium or large business in the Province of Nova Scotia. The objective is to eliminate redundant regulations and enhance business opportunities in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD: MEADOWFIELDS COMMUN. SCH. - AIR QUALITY TESTS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I can promise her that it won't be about rail lines.

After a strange odour was detected by students and staff at the Meadowfields Community School in Yarmouth, it was discovered that this was caused by wet insulation and rodent droppings in the walls at the school. Because Meadowfields is a P3 school, the owner has contracted an air quality consultant to conduct tests to ensure that the students and staff are not at risk. The board has indicated that the results will be posted on its website.

My question to the minister is, what discussions has the minister had with the school board and school owner, and will the department receive those air quality tests?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Yes, it's certainly in the public domain that there was an odour in the Meadowfields School. It is a P3 school, and as part of our lease agreements the P3 owner is responsible for responding to concerns and issues and doing the follow-up at their cost for any remediation that needs to take place. They are working very closely with the staff in the Tri-County School Board and also are keeping our department closely informed on what next steps are taking place.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I understand that after the odour was detected, classes continued in the affected area for a week before students were moved. The board superintendent has said that some staff had complained of headaches and dry eyes. I know the safety of students and teachers is a priority for all members of this House.

My question to the minister is, as many of our P3 schools begin to age, what oversight and standards do boards in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have to ensure that issues like this are investigated and corrected as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of students and teachers?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite. The safety of all of our students, regardless of whether they are in a P3 or whether they are in one of our publicly-owned schools, is a priority. We'll work very closely with the P3 operators, and we do have, as I said, a lease agreement, a commitment from the partner that they will maintain the buildings to a standard that is acceptable to the boards.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

TIR - HWY. NO. 104: SUMMER WORK - CONFIRM

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Highway safety studies were released earlier this week. I know it is early days, but I was wondering if the minister could share any information with this House about what work may be done this summer on Highway No. 104 to try to make it a little bit safer?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite, specifically, we're looking immediately at some of the measures that we can put in place within our TIR game plan now - rumble strips, some brush cutting, looking at signage and some of the speed indicators. Also, broader than that, even for a short-term level, we're looking at some of the specific options coming from the safety review and how we can put them in place this summer - again, within our maintenance envelope.

We're working on those as well, but I do want to mention for the member opposite how thankful we are to have a leader like Joe MacDonald in the province, who has done tremendous work on advocating for twinning and the importance of road safety in this province. Joe's a great guy. I know he's a friend of the member opposite, and we appreciate his work and we know that Highway No. 104 is important for Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MR. HOUSTON: I thank the minister for that answer, and I do think that even rumble strips are an excellent addition to improve the safety of the highway. I thank him for acknowledging the work of Joe MacDonald. He's certainly a great advocate for that area, and an all-round good person.

I do also look forward to the minister's community consultations about exploring the possibility of toll roads. I wonder if in the last 15 seconds the minister could shed any light on a possible timeline for those consultations to begin.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker. The highway system is important to us . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired. Just before we move on to government business, we have a couple of introductions.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: With your permission I would like to introduce a Cape Bretoner in the west gallery today. Mr. Speaker, joining us is a great Cape Bretoner and the president of the Cape Breton Business College, a strong advocate for his area, and that

is Brian MacArthur and his wife, Leslie. I would like them to rise and receive the welcome here of the House of Assembly. (Applause)

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today in Question Period the Minister for TIR, the MLA for Glace Bay suggested I should not ask a question regarding rail lines in Cape Breton. This is a Transportation file which I am the critic of, and I ask you to review the proceedings here in Question Period today and I look forward to your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that point of order under advisement.

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: In response to the member's point of order, what I was referring to - I did not say he couldn't ask a question. What I said was, don't play politics with this issue. We've had a very open and transparent process through the rail advisory committee of which that party has not participated in any way, shape, or form, so I won't take a lecture from that member about what MRAC is doing and the good work for Cape Breton. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture on an introduction.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: In the west gallery I'd like to introduce two gentlemen from Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario. It's Wes Wiens, he's the owner of VineTech Canada, and with him today is Ivan Bock, who is head of R & D. Both gentlemen are here to talk to our wine industry, which is very important to our province. I'd ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: With the unanimous consent of the House, we will revert to the order of business, Government Notices of Motion.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1744

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I thank the parties opposite for permitting this.

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

Whereas physicians provide high-quality health care to about 30,000 patients in our province every day; and

Whereas physicians work in a variety of roles from family doctors, specialists, and surgeons who all play their part in helping Nova Scotians live life to the fullest; and

Whereas May 1, 1831, was the birthdate of Dr. Emily Stowe, the first female doctor to practise in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize May 1st as Doctors' Day 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 Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. We will be meeting again on Monday, May 4th from the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Following the daily routine we will go into third reading of Bill Nos. 89, 91, 95, 101, 102, 103, 105, and 109. There will also be Committee of the Whole House on Bill No. 100 and possibly Bill No. 75, and we will continue with second reading on Bill No. 108.

With that I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday, May 4th, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House adjourn and rise again on Monday, May 4th, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until Monday, May 4th, at 4:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 10:55 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1738**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Professor May Chung challenged her students at NSCAD University to design a series of creative campaigns to promote diversity and reach out to new residents; and

Whereas on April 10, 2015, Professor Chung's class presented their welcoming campaign ideas to a packed room at Halifax City Hall; and

Whereas the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia will select one of the five concepts for a full promotional campaign to be rolled out across the province this Fall;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Professor May Chung, her students at NSCAD, and the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia for putting their creative talents to good use and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1739

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Monique Fares is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduate student at the Saint Mary's University Sobey School of Business; and

Whereas Monique's strengths include versatile problem-solving, a dynamic work ethic ignited in team settings, and being adaptable in a variety of environments; and

Whereas Monique's convocation ceremony will take place on May 15, 2015, at Saint Mary's University;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Monique Fares on her graduation and wish her continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1740

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas I had the pleasure of attending a grand tasting of wines and foods from Italy that was held in Halifax on April 23, 2015, by the Institute of Fine Italian Wines - Premium Brands/Grandi Marchi and Rodolfo Meloni, president of the Italian Wine Society of Halifax and the Italian consular correspondent; and

Whereas the Institute of Fine Italian Wines - Premium Brands/Grandi Marchi is the result of the determination and enthusiasm of 19 of the most important Italian wineries to promote the culture of Italian high-quality wine on world markets; and

Whereas a variety of authentic Italian delicacies were served during this evening that brought together families and brands which characterize the Italian wine-making tradition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Institute of Fine Italian Wines - Premium Brands/Grandi Marchi and president of the Italian Wine Society of Halifax Mr. Rodolfo Meloni on hosting the grand tasting of wines and foods from Italy event and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1741

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Halifax's business community sat down for dinner with newcomers to Nova Scotia at the annual Halifax Chamber of Commerce Spring Dinner on April 30, 2015; and

Whereas the dinner, hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, is an opportunity for newcomers to learn about Halifax's business community and vice-versa; and

Whereas Mr. Francis Fares will step down as chair of the Board of Directors of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce after a successful tenure leading the board and working to make our capital city and our province a better place to live, work and do business;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Chamber of Commerce on their Annual Spring Dinner, congratulate Mr. Francis Fares on his service as chair and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1742

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Halifax's business community sat down for dinner with newcomers to Nova Scotia at the annual Halifax Chamber of Commerce Spring Dinner on April 30, 2015; and

Whereas the dinner, hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, is an opportunity for newcomers to learn about Halifax's business community and vice-versa; and

Whereas Mr. Robert Batherson will be taking on the role as chair of the Board of Directors of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, after a successful tenure leading the board, and working to make our capital city and our province a better place to live, work and do business;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Chamber of Commerce on their Annual Spring Dinner, congratulate Robert Batherson on his new role as chair and wish him continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1743

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has been welcoming people from around the world for centuries; and

Whereas immigrants help make our province a more vibrant and dynamic part of our daily life, enriching our communities and helping to grow our businesses; and

Whereas the Truro Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of immigration and recently brought together a meeting dedicated to the topic of immigration and settlement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize the work of the Truro Chamber of Commerce in helping to promote immigration and settlement in our province.