



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:	
Commun. Serv. Comm. - Anl. Rept. (2015), Ms. P. Arab	5896
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
WCB - Anl. Rept. (2015), Hon. D. Whalen	5896
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 2455, Dart. East MLA: McVicar Conversation - Recording Produce, Hon. M. Samson	5896
Vote - Affirmative.....	5897
Res. 2456, Amherst Police Services Bldg. - Opening, Hon. D. Whalen	5897
Vote - Affirmative.....	5897

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 126, Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, Hon. R. Delorey	5898
No. 127, Labour Standards Code Hon. K. Regan.....	5898

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Louisbourg Seafoods - Deloitte Award, Hon. A. MacLeod	5898
Film Investment Fund: Prem. - Success Claim, Hon. M. MacDonald	5898
Delorey, Claire - Birthday Wishes, Hon. R. Delorey	5899
Canyon, George: N.S. Country Music Hall of Fame - Induction, Mr. T. Houston.....	5899
Screen Ind.: Prem./Lib. Gov't. - Detrimental, Hon. David Wilson	5899
Downey, Graham - Accomplishments Acknowledge, Hon. T. Ince	5900
Day, Sir Graham - Order of Canada, Mr. C. Porter	5901
Leedham, Ryan - WorldSkills Comp., Mr. L. Harrison	5901
Nova Star Cruises: N.S. Vendors - Payments, Hon. S. Belliveau	5901
Commun. Links - Falls Prevention, Hon. L. Glavine.....	5902
Archibald, Tom: Death of - Tribute, Hon. K. Regan.....	5903
Eaton, Dr. Leslie - Retirement, Mr. J. Lohr	5903
Justice: Street Checks - Charter Rights & Freedoms, Ms. M. Mancini.....	5904
Urquhart, Dr. Nathan - N.S. Medal of Bravery, Mr. E. Orrell.....	5904
Gov't. (N.S.): Rural Progress - Standstill, Hon. S. Belliveau	5904
Brewer, Lorraine - Vol. Efforts, Hon. J. Bernard	5905
Shea, Tim - Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Ms. K. MacFarlane	5905
Film Ind. Tax Credit: Elimination - Bus. Effects, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	5906

Sexual Violence - Com. Serv. Dept. Supports, Ms. P. Arab	5906
Joyce, Vincent/Chester, Patricia - Stellarton RCL Br. 38: Artifacts Room - Provision, Hon. P. Dunn	5907
Shoreham Village - Replacement: Lib. Gov't. - Promise Breach, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	5907
Malhotra, Vanita & Rakesh - Classic Physio: Success Congrats., Mr. I. Rankin.....	5908
Babin, Gilles: NSBI Reg. Bus. Advisor - Congrats., Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	5908
EECD - Hub Sch. Guidelines, Ms. L. Zann.....	5908
Health & Wellness - Paramedics Bill, Mr. B. Maguire	5909
Glenora Inn & Distillery - Success, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	5909
Com. Serv.: Commun. Organizations - Funding Priorities, Ms. M. Mancini.....	5910
Cormier, Lowell: N.S. Sport Hall of Fame - Induction, Mr. D. Wilton.....	5910
Field, Mike/Pelkey-Field, Dara - ITU Duathlon World Championships, Mr. L. Harrison	5911
Lib. Gov't. - Tuition Cap: Removal - Effects, Hon. David Wilson	5911
Fraser, Colin: Fed. Election - Congrats., Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	5911
Westville: Trans Canada Trail - Connection Congrats., Mr. T. Houston.....	5912
Food Banks: Usage - Increases, Ms. L. Zann.....	5912
NDP Budget (2010) - University Funding, Hon. L. Kousoulis	5913
Thanksgiving Farm & Food Show: Sponsors - Thank, Mr. E. Orrell.....	5913
Forrester, Eileen Pottie/Forrester Sch. of Celtic Dance - Anniv. (50 th), Mr. D. Mombourquette	5914
Kings Co. Museum - Excellence, Mr. J. Lohr	5914
Bruce, Heather: Kennetcook Dist. Sch. Students - Dedication, Ms. M. Miller.....	5914
Grant-Walsh, Margie/Chapman, Karen: Big Brothers Big Sisters (Pictou Co.) - Recognize, Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	5915

Gabarus Lighthouse - This Lighthouse Matters Campaign, Mr. A. MacLeod	5915
Flower, Walter - Hockey Achievements, Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	5916
Stellarton Police Dept./Corina's Ice Cream Parlour - Child Safety Promotion, Hon. P. Dunn.....	5916
Steele, Penny - Women in Bus. Award, Ms. P. Eyking.....	5917
Margaree/Bressuire: Highland Games - Twinning, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	5917
Credit Union Sm. Bus. Loans: Entrepreneurs - Support, Mr. K. Irving.....	5917
Bedford/Sackville Commun. Health Team - Low Intensity Exercise Prog., Mr. S. Gough	5918
Cousineau, Medic - Book Release, Ms. J. Treen.....	5919
HOUSE RECESSED AT 2:00 P.M.....	5919
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 2:10 P.M.....	5919
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 930, Mental Health - Kutcher Intervention Model, Hon. J. Baillie	5920
No. 931, Prem. - Chief of Staff: Ms. Younger Personal Serv. Contract - Awareness, Hon. M. MacDonald	5922
No. 932, Prem. - Chief of Staff: Ms. Younger Personal Serv. Contract - Instructions, Hon. J. Baillie	5923
No. 933, Prem. - Chief of Staff: Conduct - Concerns, Hon. M. MacDonald	5923
No. 934, Health & Wellness - VGH: Bedbugs - Eradication, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	5924
No. 935, PSC: New Positions - Status, Ms. K. MacFarlane	5925
No. 936, Prem. - Dep. Min.: Tax Break - Details, Hon. M. MacDonald	5926
No. 937, Environ.: Land Protection - Percentage Target, Hon. A. Younger.....	5927
No. 938, Prem. - Chief of Staff: Media Questions - Availability, Hon. J. Baillie	5928
No. 939, Energy - NSP Performance Standards: Failure - Fines, Mr. T. Houston.....	5928
No. 940, LAE: Sexualized Violence - Legislation, Hon. David Wilson	5929
No. 941, Health & Wellness - Oral Cancer Drugs: Prov. Formulary - Update, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	5931

No. 942, LAE - Univ./College Students: Mental Health Serv. - Adequacy, Mr. E. Orrell	5932
No. 943, EECD - Info. Sharing: Embargoes - Explain, Ms. L. Zann.....	5933
No. 944, LAE - Care Workers: Injuries - Reduction, Mr. C. Porter	5934
No. 945, TIR - Cranton Bridge (Margaree): Replacement - Status, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	5935
No. 946, Fish. & Aquaculture: Lobster Marketing - Gov't. Leadership, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	5936
No. 947, Prem. - Univ. Tuition: Uncapped - Confirm, Hon. M. MacDonald	5937
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 122, Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act	
Hon. D. Whalen	5939
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	5940
Ms. M. Mancini.....	5941
Mr. T. Farrell.....	5941
Hon. D. Whalen	5942
Vote - Affirmative.....	5943
No. 124, Social Workers Act	
Hon. J. Bernard	5944
Mr. L. Harrison	5944
Ms. M. Mancini.....	5945
Ms. P. Arab	5946
Hon. J. Bernard	5946
Vote - Affirmative.....	5947
No. 123, Paramedics Act	
Hon. L. Glavine.....	5947
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	5948
Hon. David Wilson	5950
Mr. J. Stroink	5958
Ms. K. MacFarlane	5959
Mr. E. Orrell.....	5959
Mr. C. Porter	5961
Vote - Affirmative.....	5973
PRIVATE & LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 125, Zion United Baptist Church of Yarmouth Dissolution Act,	
Mr. T. Farrell.....	5973
Vote - Affirmative.....	5974
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 5:01 P.M.	5974

HOUSE RECONVENED AT 5:04 P.M.....	5974
CWH REPORTS.....	5974
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., Nov. 20 th at 9:00 a.m.....	5975
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 2457, Falls Prevention Wk. (11/15 - 11/21/15) - Recognize, Hon. L. Glavine.....	5976
Res. 2458, Pearson, Bruce - Retirement Congrats., Hon. K. Casey.....	5976
Res. 2459, Redcliff Mid. Sch. World Changers - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey.....	5977
Res. 2460, Sharon United Church (Tatamagouche) - Heritage Registration, Hon. K. Casey.....	5977
Res. 2461, Natividad, Monique - Contributions Congrats., Hon. K. Casey.....	5978
Res. 2462, Wynn, Megan: Belgium 4-H Trip - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey.....	5978
Res. 2463, Langle, Cassidy - Brigadoon Fundraising, Hon. K. Casey.....	5979
Res. 2464, Meredith, Andrew: Ryl. Cdn. Mint - Design Comp., Hon. K. Casey.....	5979



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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 will now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the Attorney General, I hereby beg leave to table the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: We'll hold that one for the next item; we are on Presenting Reports of Committees. Okay, everybody take a breath.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2014 to August 2015 of the Sixty-second General Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me a second chance at this one.

In my capacity as the Attorney General, I hereby beg leave to table the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 2455

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

Be it resolved that the House of Assembly directs

- (1) the member for Dartmouth East to produce to the Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly, by 12:00 noon of the day immediately following the day on which this resolution is passed, the original, unedited recording of the full conversation between the member and Mr. Kirby McVicar on February 12, 2015, at the member's constituency office;
- (2) for greater certainty, the Speaker to issue a warrant and authorize the Sergeant-at-Arms to obtain the recording if it has not been produced by the time it is required by this resolution; and
- (3) the Chief Clerk to make a copy of the recording available to any person upon request by that person.

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. 2456

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

Whereas the Town of Amherst will be opening its new Police Services building today, November 19, 2015; and

Whereas after the loss of the former police station due to fire damage in 2012, they have been working out of a temporary location in Amherst; and

Whereas the Amherst Town Police have been serving the citizens of Amherst since 1890 with exemplary service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Town of Amherst, Police Chief Ian Naylor, and his officers and staff on this very memorable day, and wish them all the best in their ongoing commitment to serving and protecting the people of Amherst.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 126 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 37 of the Acts of 2014. The Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act. (Hon. Randy Delorey)

Bill No. 127 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Labour Standards Code. (Hon. Kelly Regan)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

LOUISBOURG SEAFOODS - DELOITTE AWARD

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Louisbourg Seafoods who were recently presented with the Deloitte Award for Innovation as a “family operated seafood business focused and committed to excellence.” This award was handed out at the Canada Manufacturers and Exporters Nova Scotia 63rd annual meeting.

Louisbourg Seafoods, owned by Jim and Lori Kennedy, includes four plants, a fleet of fishing vessels, 500 employees, and our own “Mira Bay” brand of seafood products.

It is a true pleasure for me to congratulate Louisbourg Seafoods on another award and also thank Jim and Lori Kennedy for their dedication to their many employees and their community, and we wish them every success in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FILM INVESTMENT FUND: PREM. - SUCCESS CLAIM

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, when asked in Question Period yesterday about the new film investment fund and its failure to stem the bleeding of film jobs, investment, workers and businesses to other provinces, the Minister of Business claimed the new fund is a raving success - it was a masterful performance by the minister, worthy of an Academy Award.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the only tape of that performance that the public will ever get to see will have to be Legislative TV, as it's only one of the few stable production companies left in Nova Scotia, thanks to the Premier and his government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

DELOREY, CLAIRE - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity and the privilege to speak. Each time I take my seat I'm reminded of the privilege each of us has to represent the people of Nova Scotia here in the Legislature. And as I reflect on that privilege, I recall that our privilege comes with sacrifice, a sacrifice made by our families, especially the families of those members who must travel to the city to represent their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, as you and our colleagues in the Legislature know, the sacrifices made by our families include celebrating family milestones and other significant occasions without us. Birthdays are an example of such significant occasions, and today I want to acknowledge my daughter Claire on her 3rd birthday. (Applause)

This is the second year in a row that I've stood in my place on November 19th to wish her a happy birthday from the floor of the Legislature rather than in person, at home, with a hug. So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to highlight the sacrifices made by the families of all members of the Legislature, but in particular to literally go on the record to let my daughter know I'm thinking of her and wish her a very happy 3rd birthday - and I hope when she is old enough to understand what I do when I go to Halifax, that she'll agree the sacrifice was worth it. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

CANYON, GEORGE: N.S. COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME - INDUCTION

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in recognition of his talent and his contribution to country music, the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame recently inducted Pictou County's own George Canyon. George has been a recipient of many prestigious awards, and although he now resides in Alberta, he is a frequent visitor to Pictou East and still considers it home. Due to other commitments, George was unable to attend the event, but his mom Cheryl Lays accepted the induction honour on his behalf.

On behalf of all the residents of Pictou East, I extend congratulations and best wishes to George Canyon on this award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SCREEN IND.: PREM./LIB. GOV'T. - DETRIMENTAL

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the Premier needs to stop complaining about the bad press he's received around the cancellation of the Nova Scotia Film Tax

Credit. Last month in an interview, the Premier says he wants the province's film and television industry to get back to work and stop complaining. The Premier goes on to say, "I would argue that the negative press that the industry has been putting on themselves has been more detrimental to the sector than any change we made."

Let's get one thing straight; the only people who have detrimental to the screen industry in the past year are the Premier and his Liberal Government. Thank you.

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

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an introduction, if I may, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: If I could draw the attention of the members to the east gallery, where I have Christopher Downey, son of the late Graham Downey, Halifax's first African Nova Scotia councillor and deputy mayor. I would like to ask the House to give him a warm welcome, please. (Applause)

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

DOWNEY, GRAHAM - ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACKNOWLEDGE

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments and honour the memory of Graham Downey, who passed away on September 5th. Mr. Downey served as councillor for District 12 for 27 years, winning eight consecutive civic elections. He had the distinction of serving longer than any other councillor in Halifax. Those victories were based on the platform of providing basic needs such as upgraded and affordable housing, street lighting, cleaner neighborhoods, better schools, and community recreational facilities.

He worked for the CBC for 21 years and was co-owner of the Arrows nightclub, which brought many popular entertainers to Halifax from around the world. Graham Downey is also remembered for his leadership as a recruiter and coach. The final team he coached and managed was the Vaughan Furriers, which went on to win the Maritime Junior Baseball Championship in 1962. His teams were always multi-racial, which wasn't an easy task in the 1960s.

Graham Downey was also recognized with several awards and appointments, including the W.P. Oliver Wall of Honour, the 2002 Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, 2012 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and many more recognized awards. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Downey, and I know he will be missed. Thank you all.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

DAY, SIR GRAHAM - ORDER OF CANADA

MR. CHUCK PORTER: The Order of Canada is a Canadian national order and the second-highest honour for merit in the system of orders, decorations, and medals of Canada, coming second only to membership in the Order of Merit. On Wednesday, November 18, 2015, Sir Graham Day was one of three Nova Scotians to receive this prestigious award during a ceremony held at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

Sir Judson Graham Day was born in Halifax, graduated from Dalhousie Law School in 1956 and for a while appeared on *Singalong Jubilee*. Currently living in Hantsport, Sir Day has received numerous honours, including being inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame in 2006, and was knighted in 1989 by Queen Elizabeth II.

On behalf of all the residents that I have the honour of representing, and the constituency of Hants West, we would like congratulate Sir Graham Day.

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

LEEDHAM, RYAN - WORLDSKILLS COMP.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, WorldSkills is the largest vocational education and skills excellence event in the world. In August more than 1,000 skilled youth from 72 countries and regions competed in more than 45 disciplines at this international competition in Brazil.

Ryan Leedham, an aircraft technician from Brookfield, earned the right to represent Canada on the world stage by winning gold at both the Nova Scotia Skills Competition and the Skills Canada National Competition. He then successfully competed in the WorldSkills Canadian Trials, which qualified him for the WorldSkills Competition.

The countless hours of training and dedication paid off as Mr. Leedham brought home the silver medal from the WorldSkills Competition. I am honoured to have the opportunity to congratulate Ryan on his success in these competitions.

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

NOVA STAR CRUISES: N.S. VENDORS - PAYMENTS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the clock run out on me at the conclusion of Question Period, as the Minister of TIR was saved by the bell.

Small businesses in southwestern Nova Scotia have been waiting for word on when they will receive the money they are owed by Nova Star Cruises. They cannot understand how out of the tens of millions of dollars the Liberal Government has given Nova Star Cruises, there is no money to pay Nova Scotian vendors for the services they provided.

The minister was saved by the bell yesterday, but if in the future he does not provide the answer to my question of who will get paid for the outstanding bill of \$200,000, it will be the Liberal Government who will collectively pay the piper during the next election. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Could I make an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: It's my pleasure to introduce Mary MacLellan, the president of Community Links. Ms. MacLellan is here because November 15th to 21st is Falls Prevention Week in Nova Scotia, and Community Links is one of the important community organizations working to help prevent or reduce falls, particularly for seniors. I would like for members of the House to give Ms. MacLellan a warm welcome today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

COMMUN. LINKS - FALLS PREVENTION

HON. LEO GLAVINE: It's a good time to remind ourselves and all Nova Scotians that one in three Nova Scotian seniors will be hurt or injured as a result of a fall, and many of these falls could have been prevented by managing personal risk and creating safer environments.

The province acknowledges the work of Community Links and the leadership of people like Ms. MacLellan and the hard work of many community and provincial organizations that strive to help prevent and reduce falls for Nova Scotia seniors.

We should all take a moment during this week of November 15th to 21st to work towards greater prevention.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

ARCHIBALD, TOM: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to tell you about my neighbour Tom Archibald, who passed away recently at the age of 73. Tom was quiet and worked hard, enjoying a 30-year career with the RCMP as a toxicologist.

But he really blossomed when he retired. He took up running and won his age category in several Bluenose marathons. He had nine years with his companion Darlene MacDonald, and together they danced and travelled and made wine. Tom had other passions: Volkswagens, the CBC, and the Liberal Party.

My husband Geoff says he probably knocked on about 4,000 doors with Tom before the election was even called. By the time the election rolled around, Tom was too sick to canvass, but he was so glad he lived long enough to see a federal Liberal Government once again.

He canvassed with me in our last election, and that's where I learned about his other passion, Volkswagens. He was too polite to say so, but you just could tell he was horrified by the state of my Jetta's interior.

Mr. Speaker, my condolences go out today to Darlene; Tom's sister, Holly; his ex-wife, Margaret; and their families. He was a gentleman, and he'll be missed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

EATON, DR. LESLIE - RETIREMENT

MR. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to talk about an extraordinary woman. Dr. Leslie Eaton, a chiropractor in Kentville, closed her office to retire after 64 years of operation and practising her profession.

When she opened her business in 1951, she was the only chiropractor in Kentville and the only female chiropractor in Nova Scotia. Dr. Eaton grew up in the Annapolis Valley, attended Acadia University, and studied to be a chiropractor in Missouri before coming home to the Valley to open her practice. Dr. Eaton saw huge changes in her profession throughout the years. She maintained an outstanding level of business excellence, was loved by her patients and was recognized as Chiropractor of the Year for the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors in 1996.

Today I extend to Dr. Eaton my sincere best wishes for a happy retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

JUSTICE: STREET CHECKS - CHARTER RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, the controversial policing practice of street checks or carding, has garnered public and media attention across our country in recent months. In a recent report by the Globe and Mail, it was found that last year the Halifax Regional Police Department conducted 6,798 street checks; that's almost 2 per cent of the population.

In this report it was also found that citizens were not informed of their Charter rights to disengage. The dedicated work of Nova Scotia's police officers and departments cannot be understated; they keep our communities healthy and safe while sacrificing their own safety. However, this work must be balanced with respect and adherence to individual rights, liberties and freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Justice is ensuring that all Nova Scotians' interactions with law enforcement are rooted in individual rights and freedoms, as defined by our Charter. Thank you.

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

URQUHART, DR. NATHAN - N.S. MEDAL OF BRAVERY

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a second Cape Bretoner who recently received the Nova Scotia Medal of Bravery. Dr. Nathan Urquhart, originally from Dundee, jumped into the April waters of Halifax Harbour to rescue a man who had fallen from the boardwalk. Dr. Urquhart secured the unconscious man and kept him afloat for 15 minutes until emergency responders arrived.

Dr. Urquhart's heroic response saved a life. Nova Scotia is a much better province thanks to the people of the calibre of Dr. Nathan Urquhart. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): RURAL PROGRESS - STANDSTILL

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, progress in rural Nova Scotia has stalled under this government, in fact in Yarmouth things are literally at a standstill. The lights at a four-way stop at the intersection of Starr's Road and Brunswick Street have been out of service for some time now, causing long lineups and frustrated motorists.

The mayor has told residents that the problem lies with the lights' sensors and that finding replacement parts has been a difficult, ongoing process. Hopefully the MLA for Yarmouth can help.

Patience is running out in rural Nova Scotia also with job losses. Hopefully the government sensors are picking that up, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BREWER, LORRAINE - VOL. EFFORTS

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, as we all know in this House, volunteers aren't paid, not because they are worthless but because they are priceless. Lorraine Brewer, a resident of Dartmouth North, is just such a priceless individual. Lorraine has volunteered at Harbour View Elementary, helping provide healthy starts for the children there through the breakfast program. Monday through Friday mornings for over five years Lorraine has been a friendly face for the children in our Dartmouth North community.

She also assists in the school's dental health program but her volunteer efforts don't end at the school, Lorraine is also an active member of Holy Trinity Emmanuel Church, participating in their annual Christmas hamper program, their clothing depot and in all of Holy Trinity's many community events throughout the year whenever she is needed.

She was also recently recognized last Spring with an HRM volunteer award. Lorraine Brewer is an amazing example of the dedication, love and commitment of people in the Dartmouth North community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SHEA, TIM - DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and recognize Tim Shea of Pictou. Tim is a student at Pictou Academy and was a recipient of the bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. In order to achieve bronze level Tim had to complete components consisting of an activity, a skill, and a community involvement.

For the community involvement component he volunteered with a hockey team. As an activity he played hockey and mountain biked and as his skill, Tim took up photography.

Finally, in order to meet the requirements, he had to complete a trip which he did at a nearby camp with other students who were also completing the award requirements.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to congratulate Tim on his achievement and wish him well as he considers the silver level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FILM IND. TAX CREDIT: ELIMINATION - BUS. EFFECTS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal Government gutted the Film Industry Tax Credit in April, Nova Scotia has lost two major industry infrastructure businesses.

On August 27, 2015, a statement to Global News from the SIM Group, the parent company to SIM Digital, in reference to the elimination of the Film Tax Credit said that has led to a decline in film and television production in the province. Mr. Speaker, how many companies in the film and television industry must move out of Nova Scotia before the Liberal Government will admit its mistake?

Mr. Speaker, I know one mistake that will not be made again in our province - Nova Scotians will not hire McNeil Movers in the next election.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, I want to remind the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's the term "McNeil Movers" is unparliamentary and I will not stand for its use again.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE - COM. SERV. DEPT. SUPPORTS

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, this government understands that sexual violence is a serious issue in the province. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, the honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park has the floor. Please start again.

MS. ARAB: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government understands that sexual violence is a serious issue in this province. That is why this government committed to the province's first Sexual Violence Strategy. The Department of Community Services engaged with over 1,000 Nova Scotians who helped shape this strategy. After consulting with Nova Scotians we have developed a strategy that focuses on helping people get urgent support faster through existing crisis lines, online, and other new technologies, expanding the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program in Sydney and western Nova Scotia, the creation of nine community support networks to coordinate counselling and support, visibility of services and help with navigation, and establishing a prevention and innovation fund to support best practices, research, and evaluation.

In the coming days the Minister of Community Services will be announcing additional supports that focus on prevention and innovation. These supports will be available to community groups, universities, schools, and organizations with innovative

ideas on how to prevent sexual violence. Mr. Speaker, sexual violence prevention has and will always be top of mind for this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**JOYCE, VINCENT/CHESTER, PATRICIA - STELLARTON RCL BR 38:
ARTIFACTS ROOM - PROVISION**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Stellarton Legion Branch 28 has devoted a room to military artifacts. Vincent Joyce, president and founder of the Pictou County . . .

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

MR. DUNN: . . . Military Museum, and Patricia Chester, president of the Stellarton Legion, joined forces to complete this project. Mr. Joyce has approximately 15,000 military artifacts in the museum and has provided several for the new military display at the Stellarton Legion. Rare photos and uniforms are now proudly on display. Mr. Joyce and Ms. Chester hope other Legion branches will follow suit and establish their own areas of remembrance.

Congratulations to Vincent Joyce and Patricia Chester for providing the space to honour our military history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SHOREHAM VILLAGE - REPLACEMENT:
LIB. GOV'T. - PROMISE BREACH**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the 2013 election the Liberal Party made a promise to Nova Scotians that they would honour all capital programs announced by the government. Investing in senior long-term care facilities was important to the NDP Government; this was shown through creating 1,000 additional beds, and capital plans were also in place to build new facilities.

The seniors living at Shoreham Village, in Chester, and their families were thrilled to learn they would be getting a much-needed new home. Unfortunately, this has not turned out to be under a Liberal Government. Mr. Speaker, Premier Movers drove right past Shoreham Village and broke their promise, and the hearts, of seniors living there.

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

**MALHOTRA, VANITA & RAKESH - CLASSIC PHYSIO:
SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Vanita and Rakesh Malhotra, owners of Classic Physio. With more than 28 years of experience and a team of over 30 therapists in five locations, four in Nova Scotia and one in New Brunswick, the Classic Therapy group prides itself on delivering high-quality rehabilitative services and excellent care to their clients.

Classic Physio has been a welcome addition to the Hatchet Lake Community and with an improved expansion site plan for 2016-17, adding on a strip mall shopping plaza will bring more new businesses and services to the area.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Vanita and Rakesh on their business success, and wish them all the very best for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BABIN, GILLES: NSBI REG. BUS. ADVISOR - CONGRATS.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia Business Incorporated has recently appointed Gilles Babin, native of Lower Eel Brook, as the Regional Business Development Advisor for Digby and Yarmouth Counties. The Regional Business Development team has the expertise to support businesses of any size across Nova Scotia.

Gilles has worked in and around the local area for a number of years in a similar capacity. He's familiar with the people and the businesses in the region. I'm confident that his knowledge will be a very valuable asset in his new role with NSBI.

I want to take this opportunity to wish him continued success in all his future endeavours. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

EECD - HUB SCH. GUIDELINES

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is said that a school is the heart of small rural communities. Although declining enrolment has put many of these schools at risk, the hub school model represents an innovative solution to a critical dilemma facing Nova Scotia. However, the guidelines on hub school proposals released by the Minister of

Education and Early Childhood Development suggest that the government is only interested in paying lip service to this creative initiative.

For instance, the communities of River John, Maitland, and Wentworth were put through the wringer for two years and made to jump through higher and higher hoops. The guidelines state that there can be no increase to capital or operating costs of the school board in question. This meant that the tiny village of River John was told that they needed to come up with an extra half a million dollars. By adopting this guideline, the minister has implied that the McNeil Government will not invest a single dime to see hub schools succeed, thus ripping the heart out of rural Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I want to remind everybody in the House that referring to the government as anything other than “the government” or “the current government” is unparliamentary. We will not use the Premier’s first name in referring to the government. We will not change a reference to the government as “Premier Movers,” as well; anything that infers a lack of respect for the government will not be tolerated.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - PARAMEDICS BILL

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health and Wellness introduced a bill that will replace the Paramedics Act that was passed but never proclaimed. There are about 1,400 registered paramedics in Nova Scotia, and most of them work for Emergency Health Services of the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Through this proposed legislation, our government will establish a college of paramedics of Nova Scotia, which will set professional standards and establish a disciplinary process for non-compliance. This bill, if passed, will increase public safety by making paramedics a self-regulated profession, as it is in other provinces in Canada.

Nova Scotia has a world-class emergency health system and highly-trained paramedics who work in every community across the province. This is just one way our government is supporting the paramedics, and we will continue to work with all health professions to help keep Nova Scotians healthy and safe across the province. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GLENORA INN & DISTILLERY - SUCCESS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, Glenora Inn and Distillery has been brewing single malt whiskey for 25 years in Glenville, just north of Mabou in Inverness County. To mark its quarter-century milestone, Glenora has launched a limited-edition 25-year-old whisky.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are members in this House who enjoy a dram - a “té bheag” in Gaelic. I know they would enjoy a visit to Glenora. Some have, and they know of what I speak. Uisge beatha: water of life.

The company is also launching another new product, Glen Breton Ice - the only single malt whisky in the world that is aged in ice wine barrels. They are having a very strong year, and the company continues to grow. President Lauchie MacLean credits the staff for Glenora’s success. Mr. Speaker, let’s give them a round of applause.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: COMMUN. ORGANIZATIONS - FUNDING PRIORITIES

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, in an op-ed published by the Minister of Community Services, she stated that her department is proud to fund the work delivered by community organizations across Nova Scotia. She goes on to say that she is “putting processes in place to ensure” that the department makes “strategic investments that continue to meet” her priorities.

I wonder how community organizations that had their funding cut by the minister, like the CNIB and the Canadian Mental Health Association, felt after reading this. Does their work not meet the priorities of the minister’s department? Mr. Speaker, I hope that these “strategic investments” made by the Department of Community Services do not continue to slash funding to these vital groups across Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

CORMIER, LOWELL: N.S. SPORT HALL OF FAME - INDUCTION

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Lowell Cormier on his induction into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame, Class of 2015. Mr. Cormier has been a community builder in our local sports teams. His coaching career spans over five decades and includes nine championship teams, including assistant coach of the 2010 AUS championship Cape Breton University men’s basketball and his all-time favourite title, the 1971 Eastern Canadian Bantam Baseball Championship, the New Waterford Kinsmen Rovers.

I am proud to have Lowell Cormier as a member of our community and would like to sincerely thank him for not only his contribution to our sports community but his contribution to all aspects of the New Waterford community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**FIELD, MIKE/PELKEY-FIELD, DARA
- ITU DUATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, Valley couple Mike Field and Dara Pelkey-Field recently represented Team Canada at the 2015 ITU Duathlon World Championships in Adelaide, Australia. This competition will host 1,300 competitors, representing 35 nations.

A duathlon consists of three segments beginning with a run, switching to biking, and then finishing with a run. The couple had successfully competed in a qualifying race held in Riverport, Nova Scotia, to be named to Team Canada.

The goal they set for themselves for this amateur event was for each to beat their personal best for time and both succeeded. Mike came in at one hour and 11 minutes, shaving four minutes off his personal best; and Dara finished in one hour and 22 minutes, three minutes off her personal best.

I wish to congratulate both Mike and Dara on an admirable performance representing Team Canada at this international competition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

LIB. GOV'T. - TUITION CAP: REMOVAL - EFFECTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: The Liberal Government made a mistake when they lifted the cap on tuition. Instead of asking universities to tackle executive costs, the Liberal Government is putting the burden on the back of students: King's College is asking for a 24 per cent increase in tuition, Cape Breton University raised tuition by 22 per cent, and Saint Mary's University by \$1,600.

It is becoming increasingly hard for young people to stay in Nova Scotia. The Liberal Government cut the Graduate Retention Rebate and now tuition is increasing at the highest rate in Canada. This is not the government the Liberals promised they would be.

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

FRASER, COLIN: FED. ELECTION - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, today is a great day. Today I rise to acknowledge a good friend and one of our new MPs, Colin Fraser. Colin graduated from high school in Yarmouth, attended Carleton University, worked in English and French as a tour guide at Rideau Hall and was a guide at Vimy Ridge, France. Then he returned home to work as a bilingual business development officer in Digby and Yarmouth County. In 2003 Colin went to law school in London, England. Colin then continued his

legal studies at Dalhousie University and completed his articles with the law firm Nickerson Jacquard.

Colin has been a leader in the legal community and he has served as the president of the Western Counties Barristers' Society and president of the Yarmouth County Bar and is currently the treasurer.

Colin believes firmly in the Liberal Party's principles and he is proud of its history in building Canada. He also believes deeply in the Canadian values enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I welcome Colin today, on the day of his swearing-in, as a strong Liberal voice for West Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

WESTVILLE: TRANS CANADA TRAIL - CONNECTION CONGRATS.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: On a Saturday morning in August volunteers from the Westville area came together to help connect Westville to the Trans Canada Trail. Volunteers laid down a topcoat of crusher dust, spread gravel and cleaned up flower beds. The loop now connects both ends to the Town of Stellarton and loops around the Acadia Park and through other parts of Westville.

I am deeply appreciative of all those who turned out to help and I was delighted to see RCA Cadets Daniel Roy and Alex Munroe there making their contribution. I ask the House to give them a round of applause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

FOOD BANKS: USAGE - INCREASES

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in a report released Tuesday by Food Banks Canada it shows that food bank use in Nova Scotia has risen from last year - 20,000 individuals required support from a food bank last year. Most concerning is that 51 per cent of food bank users in the province are women, up 5 per cent from last year. In addition, one third of all food bank users are children and youth under the age of 18, and poverty and hunger are increasingly becoming women's issues.

Unfortunately, this news doesn't come as a surprise to me, Mr. Speaker. While the cost of food continues to rise, income assistance rates have been frozen for the past two years by the Minister of Community Services and Status of Women, and it has been suggested that this trend will continue. Women and their children in Nova Scotia,

especially those living in rural areas, continue to face increasing levels of poverty, which is frankly unacceptable. Thank you.

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

NDP BUDGET (2010) - UNIVERSITY FUNDING

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, in 2010 the NDP tabled their first budget, and in that budget they went from a forecast for university funding from \$449.647 million down to \$60.643 million. That's a cut of \$390 million. No wonder our universities are facing structural challenges.

As for the Graduate Retention Rebate, which was supposed to keep people here, I would like to thank the NDP; I was one of the people who was receiving it. That credit wasn't working, Mr. Speaker, and our government put in a credit that will work to keep youth here.

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

THANKSGIVING FARM & FOOD SHOW: SPONSORS - THANK

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to express thanks to the Thanksgiving weekend Farm and Food Show that was sponsored by the Cape Breton Richmond Federation of Agriculture and Celtic Colours. Maureen Murphy for the federation provided farm, fish, and food vendors, chef demonstrations, food sampling, educational booths, 4-H, and a stage for young, talented local musicians. This event will surely be an annual celebration of what Cape Breton has to offer.

It's a true honour to have this opportunity to thank the sponsors for making this premier local food event for Cape Breton, presented at the peak of the harvest season. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: In October 2014, the Minister of Community Services posted on her website that next year construction of Phase I of Bloomfield . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It has been brought to my attention that the honourable member for Dartmouth South has already had her two member statements so we will move along.

The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

**FORRESTER, EILEEN POTTIE/FORRESTER SCH. OF CELTIC DANCE
- ANNIV. (50th)**

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, 2015 marks 50 years of business success for Eileen Pottie Forrester and the Forrester School of Celtic Dance. The Forrester School of Celtic Dance has, for 50 years, supported students' passion for dance and has been a great ambassador for Cape Breton, performing all over the world.

In recent months, Eileen Forrester has been recognized for her leadership, business success, and commitment to promoting Cape Breton's culture. Eileen was honoured at the recent Cape Breton Women in Business gala for her 50 years of business leadership and by Cape Breton University during fall convocation, with an honorary doctorate of letters for her outstanding commitment to promoting Cape Breton's arts and culture.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to congratulate Eileen Pottie Forrester, her daughter Shannon, and the Forrester School of Celtic Dance, for 50 years of success and continued success into the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

KINGS CO. MUSEUM - EXCELLENCE

MR. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to inform members about the level of excellence put forward by the Kings County Museum in Kentville. The Kings Historical Society owns and oversees the operation of this wonderful museum.

The Kings Historical Society, and museum curator Bria Stokesbury, use both permanent and temporary exhibits to provide unique glances into our past. From permanent exhibits like the courtroom exhibit, the Victorian parlour, or the founding cultures display of Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and African Nova Scotian heritage, to temporary exhibits like the current A 'Brief' History of Underwear or the display dedicated to the recent 80th Anniversary of the board game Monopoly, there is something to interest and please everyone.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have this opportunity to give a richly-deserved recognition and praise to this industrious group of people. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**BRUCE, HEATHER: KENNETCOOK DIST. SCH. STUDENTS
- DEDICATION**

MS. MARGARET MILLER: The 2014-15 school year was music teacher Heather Bruce's first year of teaching at Kennetcook District School.

Heather had previously taught at schools where musical instruments were available, so understandably she was shocked to see that the Kennetcook school had only old, unsatisfactory instruments, some of them with missing pieces.

With no funds in the budget to buy new instruments or repair the old ones, Heather searched for music grants and found the MusiCounts Band Aid Program grant. She applied, and on February 2015 Heather was informed that the school would receive a grant of \$5,000 towards its music program. With this money the school was able to buy 17 instruments.

MusiCounts provided an opportunity for the students at Kennetcook District School to privately meet and enjoy a performance by Jess Moskaluke, the 2014-15 female artist of the year, on September 11, 2015. The students also performed for Jess, including an original song written by Grade 3 students.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Heather Bruce for her dedication and commitment to her students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**GRANT-WALSH, MARGIE/CHAPMAN, KAREN:
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS (PICTOU CO.) - RECOGNIZE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and recognize Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County for being granted accreditation for meeting the review standards outlined by the national governing body, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

Accreditation is granted upon approval of agency practices in the areas of child safety, service delivery, and organizational excellence. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County achieved a score of 96 per cent compliance, which falls in the exceptional category.

I would like to recognize the outstanding efforts of Margie Grant-Walsh, the executive director, and Karen Chapman, program manager of the local organization. These two women are the heart and soul of the Pictou County branch and a fundamental reason for its success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

GABARUS LIGHTHOUSE - THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS CAMPAIGN

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the successful campaign that won \$50,000 to help preserve the Gabarus Lighthouse.

The National Trust for Canada and the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society launched a first-of-its-kind competition, This Lighthouse Matters, which gives communities working to save their lighthouses a chance to win cash prizes, raise dollars through crowdfunding, and mobilize support from people all across Canada.

The Gabarus Lighthouse won the High Tide prize of \$50,000. The presentation of the award was held in July at the Gabarus fire hall and Natalie Bull, executive director of the National Trust, made the presentation.

It is with great pleasure that I thank everyone who participated in this contest and all those people who work so diligently to keep the Gabarus Lighthouse in operation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

FLOWER, WALTER - HOCKEY ACHIEVEMENTS

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak of 16-year-old Walter Flower from Lunenburg, who is honing his skills as a hockey player. His hard work has been paying off as late. Recently drafted and now playing for the Halifax Mooseheads, Walter also was honoured with a spot on one of Canada's three teams at the World Under 17 Hockey Challenge earlier this month. The designation essentially names him as one of the top 66 players in the country.

Since playing for Nova Scotia in last year's Canada Winter Games, Walter's hockey career has steadily been on the rise. He is proving that hard work and dedication pays off. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating Walter Flower in all his success and wishing him a very bright future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

STELLARTON POLICE DEPT./CORINA'S ICE CREAM PARLOUR - CHILD SAFETY PROMOTION

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, a partnership in the Town of Stellarton between the police department and the very popular Corina's Ice Cream Parlour, has resulted in some very happy local children. Approximately 200 children were "caught for good behaviour" by the Stellarton police and rewarded with a free ice cream at Corina's. In most cases the children were recognized for wearing proper safety equipment when riding their bikes.

Word of this quickly spread and it was a great incentive for the children to follow and adopt good, safe practices. This interaction between the Stellarton Police Department

and the children in the town was an opportunity to foster a positive relationship between these two important groups.

It is a pleasure to take this time to thank the Stellarton Police Department, Corina's Ice Cream Parlour, and the children involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

STEELE, PENNY - WOMEN IN BUS. AWARD

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Indian Brook resident Penny Steele. At the 9th Annual Women in Business conference and gala celebrating success, held on October 22nd in Sydney, Ms. Steele was presented with the Arts and Cultural Achievement award in her business, Colouratura Fine Art Gallery, located in Indian Brook. The gallery hosts 23 Cape Breton artists and six classical concerts each season. I would like to congratulate Ms. Penny Steele and wish her all the best in the next season. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MARGAREE/BRESSUIRE: HIGHLAND GAMES - TWINNING

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: There are only two French-speaking communities in the world that host highland games.

This year the two communities, on opposite sides of the Atlantic, signed a twinning arrangement. The Bressuire Highland Games in France and the Margaree Highland Games in Inverness County are held in communities that share a common linguistic heritage: French. Both communities have a love for sport and a respect and appreciation for culture. Now that the twinning has taken place, a deepening of the relationship can be fostered.

The Margaree Highland Games evolved out of a family day that Margaree Highland Games President Audrey LeBlanc started a year prior. The games provided funds for St. Michael's Church, and they have established new relationships with the intersection of faith and culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

CREDIT UNION SM. BUS. LOANS: ENTREPRENEURS - SUPPORT

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand in the House and say a few words about some of the hardest working Nova Scotians out there and how our government is supporting them.

Our government supports entrepreneurs in many ways. Acadia University, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency - ACOA - and the provincial government have come together to create a sandbox where students, innovators, and industry can develop and test new ideas that could become businesses in the region's fastest-growing sectors.

Our government has made it possible for Nova Scotia's small businesses to have better access to loans through improvements to the credit union's Small Business Loan Guarantee Program. Government is helping entrepreneurs and businesses to find opportunities to sell goods and services to the public sector at events like the annual Reverse Trade Show, which was held last month at Pier 21.

These are just a few ways that our government is supporting entrepreneurs, and we will continue to work with students, innovators, and industry to help them develop and build bold ideas and move Nova Scotia's economy in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**BEDFORD/SACKVILLE COMMUN. HEALTH TEAM
- LOW INTENSITY EXERCISE PROG.**

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: I would like to take this time to announce the launch of an exciting new program offered by the Bedford/Sackville Community Health Team. This 10-week, low-intensity exercise program is free, and it's planned to begin in January 2016.

This program has proven successful in the communities of Dartmouth and Clayton Park. It has been developed for people who are unable to walk or exercise for longer than 15 minutes due to chronic health conditions. Health conditions include arthritis, chronic pain, or joint and bone pain.

The goal of these low-intensity exercises, under the guidance of two physiotherapists, is focused on improving endurance, walking, strength, flexibility, and balance. This program is not designed as a weight-loss program; it is designed to improve the mobility of the participants, enabling them to do their daily activities at their own pace. Participants of this program are encouraged to set realistic goals and develop a plan to build physical activity into their daily lives.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Bedford/Sackville Community Health Team for bringing a program such as this to the constituents of these communities. Thank you.

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

COUSINEAU, MEDRIC - BOOK RELEASE

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, Medric Cousineau is a retired Sea King pilot from Eastern Passage who suffers from PTSD. After receiving his service dog, Medric decided to turn negatives of PTSD into positives.

He created Paws Fur Thought, an organization committed to bringing awareness around service dogs and their benefits. Thai is Medric's yellow service dog that was trained to deal with PTSD. Medric's life has improved drastically since Thai has come into it.

On November 3rd Medric celebrated the release of his book, *Further Than Yesterday*. This thought-provoking book takes you through the struggles of living with PTSD. I took the time to read through Medric's intense masterpiece and was in awe of his experience and the courage some of the situations must have taken.

Congratulations to Medric on the release of your book. I wish you many successes on your crusade to create awareness of the importance of service dogs in treating PTSD.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMENT: Thank very much, Mr. Speaker, and maybe on a point of order, I know the Premier is going to be a little bit late, as he is taking media questions. Could we hold off Question Period for about ten minutes until the Premier is here so we can ask our questions? I move for unanimous consent.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The House will now recess for a few minutes.

[2:00 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:10 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers will conclude at 2:51 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

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

MENTAL HEALTH - KUTCHER INTERVENTION MODEL

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my first question to the Premier today is about mental health. In addition to listening to the many heartbreaking stories and frightening situations facing many Nova Scotian families who are dealing with mental illness, we've also been reaching out to experts in the field. Dr. Stan Kutcher is one such expert, who has laid out a very compelling model for early intervention with our young people. It includes improving mental health literacy, identification of mental health early, and access to mental health services in our schools. He has previously presented his plan to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he mandate his Health and Wellness Minister and his Education and Early Childhood Development Minister to ensure that Dr. Kutcher's plan for school-based intervention is fully implemented in Nova Scotia schools?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure him that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Minister of Health and Wellness are continuing to work together to deliver and ensure that we have services across our province. He knows there has been an investment made in a number of programs in the public education system dealing with adolescent mental health that actually has been spearheaded by Dr. Kutcher.

When it comes to supporting training for teachers for early identification, when it comes to providing the supports that families will require, we continue to work with them, and we know there is more work to do. I do want to tell the honourable member we've been very pleased, and I think it's fair to say that Dr. Kutcher has been very pleased, with the work and the huge advancement that has taken place in the last two years.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the Premier's answer. He is quite correct that there is good work going on in terms of mental health literacy and identification of mental illness in students early across Nova Scotia. But access to health professionals with mental health training in our schools is still a gap in our system. Dr. Kutcher has proposed a remedy for that, and I will table it for the benefit of the House.

I will ask the Premier, will he commit to ensuring that our schools have someone with professional mental health training available to students who wish to access it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure him that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Minister of Health and Wellness, and the departments are continuing to work together to ensure that those services are in places where Nova Scotians need them. We recognize that we have an opportunity in the public education system, where our children are there for a large chunk of the year, for large parts of the day, that we can provide some of those supports.

What Dr. Kutcher has brought forward has been part of what we've looked at. We've seen some investment in some health programs in schools, health centres in schools. Some are working better than others - we know that - but we are also looking to find the best model to ensure that we have those services on the ground when they are needed.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to you that that is not just an education issue that the Leader of the Official Opposition has brought forward. It is also one where we need to bring Health and Wellness in to make sure that we do have health care providers there when we need them.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent of people who develop mental illness show signs of that mental illness before the age of 25 years old. We have an opportunity to be a leader across the country here in Nova Scotia, in the early intervention and early diagnosis of mental illness among young people.

I know the Premier is on his way to a First Ministers' meeting next week and I am very hopeful - in fact I will ask him if he will raise the issue of adolescent mental health and how we might take on this great cause in a national way with the Prime Minister when he sees the Prime Minister next week.

Before the Premier answers the question I will actually table Dr. Kutcher's analysis of how this can be done on a national basis, and I encourage the Premier to raise it when he gets to the First Ministers' meeting.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I would say that with the work that is taking place we are already leading the country. We need more work though; there's no question there has to be more work.

We do believe the national government has a role to play in that. I'm very pleased that the Prime Minister has the portfolio for youth. He has talked about this, Mr. Speaker. I know we will have a partner under this Prime Minister.

I also want to tell the honourable member that the national Minister of Health - upon her calls around the country, when she was speaking to our Minister of Health and Wellness - has raised this issue and has assured us and I know our Minister of Health and Wellness will assure the members of this House that it will be on the agenda of Health Ministers the first opportunity they meet.

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

**PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF:
MS. YOUNGER PERSONAL SERV. CONTRACT - AWARENESS**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has maintained that there was more to the tape than the short two minutes when his Chief of Staff outlined the path back to Cabinet for the member for Dartmouth East - and we now know a bit more about what is on that tape. Today the Chief of Staff can be heard on that tape suggesting that the Premier's Office could arrange for a personal services contract for Mrs. Younger.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, following the meeting between his Chief of Staff and Mr. Younger in February, did he discuss with the Premier a personal services contract for Mrs. Younger?

THE PREMIER: No.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, last week when we had these questions the Premier said his Chief of Staff had many, many conversations with many people and he wasn't briefed on all of them, which I can understand, but this is a very different kind of conversation. This is a conversation with a sitting member of this Legislature, a member of that government's caucus, and a member who was taking a break from that government's Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, in the tape the Chief of Staff has suggested a personal services contract for the member's wife. I want to ask the Premier, when did he first become aware that that was part of that conversation?

THE PREMIER: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when I heard the tape that was dropped off at Province House. Like all members of this House, I encourage the member for Dartmouth East to release the entire conversation.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier if he can explain why his Chief of Staff would initiate a conversation with the member for Dartmouth East with respect to the idea of giving his wife a personal services contract without the Premier's knowledge, and whether or not the Premier feels that is an acceptable way for his Chief of Staff to represent him with a member of this Legislature and of his caucus?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I said outside this House a few minutes ago, I was unhappy with what I heard in that conversation, but I think it's important that the entire conversation be released to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia and all members of this House. I encourage the member for Dartmouth East to do that and then decisions will be made from there.

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

**PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF: MS. YOUNGER PERSONAL SERV. CONTRACT
- INSTRUCTIONS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, here we go again.

Last week we asked if the Premier's Chief of Staff offered the member for Dartmouth East a path back to Cabinet. Today we learn that Mr. McVicar had more to say that awful day. He said, "... if there's anything we can do for your wife on that side, if there's anything, please let us know."

I just ask the Premier directly: Did he tell his Chief of Staff to say that to the member for Dartmouth East?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, when this all came up two weeks ago, the Premier said when his Chief of Staff speaks he speaks for me - that is a quote from the Premier. If he didn't say that - we have all these recordings. It's become a real Gong Show, and it's actually getting in the way of doing House business now.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that his government is now turning this all over to the RCMP, does he believe his Chief of Staff should step aside until this is all cleared up?

THE PREMIER: No, Mr. Speaker, like all members of this House I believe the entire conversation should be released to the public, to the people of Nova Scotia, to hear the entire content of what actually happened in that conversation.

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

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF: CONDUCT - CONCERNS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, we would be very happy to hear the conversation in its entirety, however what we have is a piece of a conversation, which is very disturbing. It's a very serious matter when the Chief of Staff of the Premier is making an offer for personal services contract to a wife of a member of the government caucus, the Premier has no knowledge of that prior to or after, until yesterday, and the Premier's position is well, you know, I'm just not happy about it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, does he have any concerns with the conduct of his Chief of Staff in this matter, beyond not being happy?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Like all members of this house, I encourage the member for Dartmouth East to

release the entire conversation so members can assess it in its totality and Nova Scotians can assess it in the entire totality of that conversation.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is attempting to deflect the attention away from his Chief of Staff and his office. I want to ask the Premier, have there been any other personal services contracts given to others under circumstances in which members of his government are implicated?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that at times in this House, things get a bit silly, to say the least. Like all members of this House, I would like to have that entire conversation heard by Nova Scotians. At no time have we used the positions for any other reason than to deliver good government to the people of the Province of Nova Scotia.

I want to remind the honourable member that as soon as this tape, this part of this conversation, later came into my possession, I did the appropriate thing, what Nova Scotians want us to do - we turned it over to the authorities.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - VGH: BEDBUGS - ERADICATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: My question through you today Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse at the Victoria General Hospital, it did. Bedbugs have been confirmed; a total of eight beds were infected with bedbugs in areas that house the ear, nose and throat surgery areas along with some of the areas for general surgery.

I understand the beds have been well fumigated, but we also know that it is very difficult to get rid of bedbugs. So my question to the minister is, is he able to assure Nova Scotians and patients at the VG today that the bedbug problem is eradicated? And maybe he can provide us with an idea of what kind of protocol has been used in order to eradicate those bugs.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. This is obviously an issue of concern for Nova Scotians who go to the VG. It is my understanding that as soon as the problem was known, the protocol that they have for dealing with bedbugs, or any other flies and other disease born bugs that could impact on patients - that protocol was put into motion. As the member pointed out, fumigation is the major part of that process once patients have been moved to safe areas of the hospital.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer but we all know that the bedbug problem is only the latest situation at the VG, where we've had problems with the drinking water, we had floods that are also critical issues of late, and there was also the issue of mice in the palliative care unit in the spring of 2014.

Spokesperson Everton McLean said today conversations to upgrade the building are under way at full throttle. On September 28th, following the flooding of the VG, the minister said it's time to replace the Victoria General site, the Centennial Building, he described it as being a very poor building and one that should not be rehabilitated. He said the timeline and the cost of replacement needs to be evaluated soon - and I'll table that news story as well.

So my question to the minister is, where does that evaluation stand at this present time?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that an entire group of people from the department, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and from the VG site involving clinical teams have been very, very hard at work. They have had some long hours to put into the planning process that will look at the replacement for the Centennial and VG sites, and during this session of the House I think we'll be here long enough to be able provide Nova Scotians with indeed the first phase of planning that is required for moving those services to the proper site.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

PSC: NEW POSITIONS - STATUS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, with much fanfare, the Minister of the Public Service Commission announced an initiative to make public service positions available for young people. (Applause) I wouldn't quite clap yet.

He said it was a way for young people to begin their careers in the Public Service. Can the minister please tell us how many of these positions are actually full-time positions and which ones will provide more than one-year experience?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, all of the positions are full-time positions. Some of them are contract, other ones will continue on in their career. I would also like to add that in the last two years the Public Service Commission has added 1,000 FTEs that are under the age of 35, with little to no experience.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the minister understands what a contract position is. The minister has boasted about the creation of these jobs, but only 40 per cent of the jobs posted on Tuesday are actually term, and I have the documents showing that.

The job postings close December 1st and these term positions end in October 2016. That isn't even a full year of employment; in fact, some will only last six months. My question is, will the minister admit this program is nothing short of political window dressing and the program is not exactly as he led the public to believe?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I do know what a contract position is and I do know what a term position is. As I said before, there are 1,000 new people working in the Public Service Commission under the age of 35. When this announcement was made, this announcement was not about what we're going to do. This announcement was what we have done, and we have taken away the requirement for anyone applying to the Public Service Commission to have two years of experience.

Another thing I can say is that I have met many of these new employees in the Public Service Commission, and you know what they tell me? Under a previous government, they wouldn't have had their opportunity.

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

PREM. - DEP. MIN.: TAX BREAK DETAILS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. In August the public learned that the Premier's Deputy Minister of Policy and Priorities, Bernie Miller, is taking advantage of a special loophole to avoid paying his fair share of provincial income tax.

At a time when students are being asked to pay more, when health care workers are being asked to make do with less, and when screen workers are being forced to move away after the loss of the Film Tax Credit, the public is disappointed by this double standard.

So my question to the Premier is, why is his deputy minister receiving a special tax break at a time when the Liberal Government is cutting programs and services across the province?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure all Nova Scotians that he is not receiving a tax break. He is paying his taxes in the Province of Nova Scotia and I also want to remind the honourable member that it was this government that changed the tax position that was there to recoup over \$20 million from those who were being paid through stock options directly, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to work with Nova Scotians who are investing in our communities.

I am very pleased with the work our government has been doing to ensure that all Nova Scotians are being treated fairly.

MS. MACDONALD: According to economist Lars Osberg, Mr. Miller is able to save over 30 per cent on his taxes because he is registered as a corporation. I will table that, Mr. Speaker. According to the contract between the Premier's deputy minister, a company called Bernard F. Miller Services P.C. Inc., which I'll table.

My question to the Premier is, can he please explain how it is acceptable to have his deputy minister registered as a corporation and not pay taxes, his fair share as a civil servant?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that the premise of her question is completely wrong and inaccurate. Mr. Miller is paying his taxes in this province and will continue to do so.

I am very pleased with the work he has been doing on behalf of Nova Scotians. When you get high-quality individuals who want to come and provide some level of public service but not join the Public Service, it's a shame when Opposition members only criticize those hard-working Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENVIRON.: LAND PROTECTION - PERCENTAGE TARGET

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. With the end of 2015 fast approaching, so too is the provincial commitment to ensure by law that 12 per cent of the land in the province is protected and by policy, 13 per cent.

On December 11, 2013, the Minister of Natural Resources, the member for Yarmouth, stated in this House, "We've settled on a 13 per cent target, that is a target that this government remains committed to, unequivocally. . ." Mr. Speaker, will that target be met by December 31st?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Thank you to the member for the question. The commitment to our EGSPA goal of protecting at least 12 per cent of the land in Nova Scotia is still on target. Thank you.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the other day in the Legislature the Premier reassured members that his new mandates reflect the Party's election promises. On October 1, 2013, the now Premier wrote: We voted in favour of the amendment in 2012, which stated at least 12 per cent shall be protected, and now that target has reached 13 per cent and we fully support that measure.

Mr. Speaker, will the 13 per cent be met, and when?

MR. DELOREY: The 13 per cent - just to clarify for the members of the Legislature but also for the members of the public - the difference between the EGSPA goal of 12 per cent and the 13 per cent being referenced is actually a reference between two different documents. The EGSPA legislation, which dictates at least 12 per cent by the end of 2015; the 13 per cent came from a document, a report, a plan prepared jointly between the

Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Environment. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work on that plan. Thank you.

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

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF: MEDIA QUESTIONS - AVAILABILITY

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The Premier defends his Chief of Staff by stating that we have only pieces of two different conversations. That is correct, although it is all we have to go on at the moment.

The member for Dartmouth East is here and has been answering questions, I know, about his side of a conversation that included two people, the member for Dartmouth East and the Premier's Chief of Staff.

I'd like to ask the Premier, to clear this all up will he bring his Chief of Staff over to answer questions from the media today about his role in those conversations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Like all members of this House, I encourage the member for Dartmouth East to release the entire conversation and I am sure the Chief of Staff will be able to respond to the entire conversation.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason why the Premier's Chief of Staff could not come over here and clear this all up right now by explaining his role in this conversation that included two people. In fact, the Premier has said that the Chief of Staff speaks for him. Why won't he let his own Chief of Staff speak for himself?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank him for the support that he provided to ensure that the honourable member for Dartmouth East provides the entire conversation so that all Nova Scotians get a chance to look at it in its totality.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ENERGY - NSP PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: FAILURE - FINES

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Energy. If Nova Scotia Power fails to meet performance targets, they could face a fine of up to \$1 million. For context, the company made \$125 million last year. My question for the minister is, how did the minister determine that the threat of a fine of up to \$1 million was appropriate for Nova Scotia Power?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: The fact is that after we were elected, we undertook a review of our electricity system in which 1,300 Nova Scotians were able to tell us exactly what they wanted to see for an electricity plan moving forward. Four themes came out very clearly: predictability, stability, innovation, and accountability.

On the accountability side, Nova Scotians clearly said they want to see Nova Scotia Power have clear performance standards, and if they are not able to provide those performance standards, they should face a penalty. Mr. Speaker, prior to this, there was no mechanism of putting that type of penalty in place. I think Nova Scotians will find it significant that the company could be faced with a bill of up to \$1 million a year if they do not meet performance standards.

MR. HOUSTON: I absolutely agree that they should be facing performance standards, and they should be compelled to meet them.

I'm just questioning how the \$1 million was determined by the government because there's still a lot of questions around this. It's not clear if the \$1 million is per incident or per year. It's unclear where the money will go once it's collected. It's unclear what the penalties will even be in the first place. It could be up to \$1 million. We need a few more details.

My question for the minister today is, can the minister answer these types of questions today, or are we all making it up as we go along?

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, we released a 25-year plan that outlines all of this, so if the member hasn't had a chance to read the plan yet, I would certainly encourage him to do so. It's available online, and he can see it for himself.

Not only are there accountability standards that will be put in place, but now the Utility and Review Board can fine them up to \$1 million a year if they don't meet performance standards.

Here's what's most important: that \$1 million will be paid by shareholders of Nova Scotia Power, not by ratepayers. Not only that, that \$1 million paid by the shareholders of Nova Scotia Power will be put towards the fuel charges of the utility, which will then be passed on as a savings to Nova Scotia ratepayers.

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

LAE: SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE - LEGISLATION

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Sexualized and gender-based violence is an all-too-often occurrence on our post-secondary campuses. It's a reality that creates barriers for students to learn and fully

participate in their classrooms. It's also a reality that deserves the full weight of the law to combat effectively.

I'd like to ask the minister, does the minister agree that enshrining measures to combat sexualized violence into legislation is an appropriate action to demonstrate how seriously we take this issue?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I do want to actually take a moment to give credit to the students across this province who this Fall ran a number of different programs that would help young people when they landed on campus realize details around what consent means and gave them an opportunity to actually learn about sexualized violence.

What we do want to be very clear on, Mr. Speaker, is that there are laws around sexualized violence, and it's called the Criminal Code.

MR. DAVID WILSON: We know in recent meetings the minister has had with students and student organizations that it's her will to move that into the MOU that will be coming forward.

I have correspondence from over 1,584 Nova Scotia students who completely disagree with that approach of the minister, and I'd like to table those for the House today, Mr. Speaker. They've been telling the minister for months that the upcoming university MOU is not an appropriate place to address sexualized violence. Students are concerned that the issue will be marginalized if the only language that speaks of sexualized violence is contained in a document, like the MOU, which expires.

If students are telling the minister that legislation is most appropriate, why is she refusing to take advice from the very people who are on the front line of dealing with sexualized violence on campus?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to thank him for bringing that bill forward. I think we all want the same thing at the end of the day.

I do have some concerns about the bill, which I have articulated to the students. One of the things they've asked, for example, is that they would like mandatory online reporting. What's very clear, from what I have heard from officials in the Health and Wellness Department, for example, is that when you have that kind of reporting, you can often identify people if it's in a small jurisdiction.

I've articulated that to the students. I understand they may disagree with me on that, but I have to do what I believe is right. I don't want to put any more young people in jeopardy. I want to thank you for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Just to provide clarification, Question Period will conclude at 3:01 p.m. I gave the incorrect time earlier, so 3:01 p.m.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - ORAL CANCER DRUGS:
PROV. FORMULARY - UPDATE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess sometimes questions in this House are about the long game. In the last two sessions of the House I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness for an update on the province's coverage of at-home oral cancer medications. To pay out of pocket for these medications is impossible for many families, and it adds additional stress and hardship for them after a cancer diagnosis.

Last Fall, the minister told the House that his department was conducting a cost analysis on providing coverage for at-home oral medications for cancer. Last Spring, the minister said that there were oral cancer drugs that they would be putting on the provincial formulary.

Can the minister provide an update on the cost analysis performed by his department and a timeline as to when cancer patients can expect this coverage?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that in our province those who need oral cancer medications do have a number of programs that provide coverage, and that meets the requirements of many of our patients. There are occasionally those who do have a little bit of trouble accessing the full coverage.

We're also very, very fortunate that the vast majority of the companies that make these medications also provide some compassionate relief. In terms of the full cost that it would need for the province, we would be in the \$40 million to \$50 million range if we were to cover all of the oral medications today.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer, but at the same time, there are families and individuals in this province who can use that kind of treatment. It not only helps them at home and helps them with their cancer, but also keeps them out of the hospital system, thus saving some money.

Recently a father shared a story of his daughter's struggle regarding coverage of her oral cancer medication. His daughter is a university student and is having great success with her medication. She receives coverage, as the minister says, through her university plan, but fears that once she enters the job market she will no longer be able to afford her medication. They fear that her health will suffer as a result. What father wouldn't fear for their child?

What assurances can the minister provide families in this situation? When can Nova Scotians expect coverage for medications like oral medications for cancer?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the subject that has been raised by the honourable member is very important. I'm very aware of the case he has referenced here, and knowing her future occupation, coverage will be there for her as well.

In terms of that global way of dealing with oral medications, there are a couple of provinces in Canada that do cover them now. It's one of those topics that I know will get further debate at the national level, now that there's a strong interest in those issues.

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

**LAE - UNIV./COLLEGE STUDENTS:
MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - ADEQUACY**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Studies have shown that the first symptoms of mental illness often present themselves in adolescents. This is a critical time, because it's the age that many young Nova Scotians leave home and attend universities and colleges. We know that the mental health needs of university and college students can be different than the needs of junior high or high school students.

So my question to the minister is, what steps is the minister taking to ensure adequate mental health services for university and college students, and is she currently working to have all Nova Scotia universities and colleges provide appropriate support such as a transition resource developed by Dr. Stan Kutcher and his team?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. Yes, indeed, this is an issue that I've been hearing about, not just from students themselves, but in fact as I have been making my university rounds, I've been hearing about this from faculty. They've indicated to me that they are seeing far more mental illness among the student population than they have ever seen before. That's why this is one of the elements that we're working with the university presidents in the MLU. Thank you.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders than any other age group - and I can table that article. If untreated, symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse disorders that present themselves in adolescence can lead to even more serious problems down the road.

My question to the minister is, could the minister inform the House how much funding is directed towards treating and supporting young people with substance abuse issues in Nova Scotia's colleges and universities?

MS. REGAN: I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. I don't have the numbers at my fingertips, but I would be most happy to get it for him. I would also like to say that I have a great deal of respect for Dr. Stan Kutcher and it is my hope that in the future we would be able to work with him on something of this nature. Thank you.

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

EECD - INFO. SHARING: EMBARGOES - EXPLAIN

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The Auditor General's Report released yesterday noted that her department sometimes requested information that is shared with board management be embargoed and not shared with the governing boards for several months. This government's promise to be more open and transparent appears to be rather hollow.

My question for the minister is, why is her department sharing information with unelected bureaucrats while keeping information secret from elected boards?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. I think it's important for all of us to recognize that we have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality and privacy with the student data until in fact it is ready to be shared with the parents. We want the boards and the senior staff to do their diagnosis of the results and to look at how that will impact the delivery of services in our schools, and when that information has been assessed and when it has been identified to what the next steps would be, then that information is shared with the elected board, but first of all it's shared with the parents.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, so I'm to take from that reply that it's only to do with the children and nothing else that is being kept from the elected board members, so I would suggest that they perhaps look into that themselves.

The minister has admitted, and I quote: "It is an unfortunate, accepted truth that we have fallen behind in educating our children in Nova Scotia. And they, in turn, have fallen behind their peers, nationally and internationally." And I'll table that, Mr. Speaker. Yet, yesterday we learned from the Auditor General's Report that the minister's department has not established education performance standards for school boards or performance targets for provincial assessments. Therefore my question for the minister is this, if she knows our students are falling behind, why hasn't her department established standards that outline where our students need to be?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I think it would misleading for anyone in this House or anyone in the public to accept a premise that we do not look at and try to improve student outcomes across the board. I would go on to say that one of the ways that we are doing that is to reinvest \$65 million that was cut by that crowd over there and programs were taken away from them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

LAE - CARE WORKERS: INJURIES - REDUCTION

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, at a recent meeting of safety leaders of the province, concerns about the high rate of injuries among health workers in Nova Scotia was raised. Recently a nurse and several security guards at the Hants Community Hospital, in Windsor, were assaulted. I would like to ask the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education what her is department doing to reduce injury among health care workers.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. I was at that particular safety meeting, and I would like to commend Janet Hazelton and Ms. Jessome for bringing up this particular issue. There is no doubt there is a high rate of injury among health care workers, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last couple of years, we've been focusing most of our efforts around industries that had a high rate of death. We're talking things like the fishing industry and the construction industry. We've been working to do targeted inspections and that kind of thing to bring down that rate.

We are now beginning to focus on the health care sector. It's a big sector, and there's a high rate of injury. I thank the honourable member for the question.

MR. PORTER: I thank the minister for those efforts. There has been some rumour that there will be a change in the way security works around at least that facility, is that correct, or is there a general plan across the province to change security? That has been changed. I think a few years ago - then the Commissionaires were in place at one point at some hospitals if not all - we went to private security at the Hants Community Hospital some years back. Is there a change or some consideration for a change afoot?

MS. REGAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think that part of it might actually come under the Department of Health and Wellness, but I do want to assure the honourable member that this is something that the department takes very seriously.

We know that a lot of the injuries in the health care sector are from lifting, et cetera. But we also have to be cognizant of the fact that some of our health care workers are at risk

from the public. There is going to be a concerted effort around education and a variety of different measures to make sure that this is dealt with. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR - CRANTON BRIDGE (MARGAREE): REPLACEMENT - STATUS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. On November 12th last year, I asked the government about the Crowdis Bridge in Margaree Valley, about whether they would consult with local people about replacement of this bridge. There was no consultation. Consultation would have revealed the importance of Cranton Bridge, another crossing in the area. There are over 20 organizations that will be affected if that bridge closes.

If this government is not closing Cranton Bridge, why won't they maintain this asset?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. I certainly wouldn't agree with the idea that we haven't consulted on the Crowdis or Cranton Bridge. I know Steve MacDonald who represents TIR at the very local level there, who the member has a good relationship with, has been well apprised of the situation, well apprised of what's required from the transportation needs in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, we've invested a significant amount of money in the Crowdis Bridge. We've indicated, as recently as a couple of weeks ago that we wouldn't be closing the Cranton Bridge and that we would be looking at the necessary repairs. We're just looking at the costing and the estimates that will go into that, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard loud and clear from the community that they don't want the Cranton Bridge closed. We respect those wishes, and we'll do what we can to keep it open and do those required renovations.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for the answer. It sounds positive.

Many in the community have indicated that they would have been satisfied to see Crowdis as a one-lane bridge. That would have saved government money which could then be used to maintain Cranton Bridge. When governments listen, better decisions are made. Infrastructure feeds the economy, but so do businesses that depend on that infrastructure, and I think consultation would have revealed that.

My question is, will the government accept responsibility for not consulting with the people of Margaree and regularly budget funds to maintain Cranton Bridge?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, when I went to the Crowdis Bridge with Laurie Cranton and with the member opposite, I think that's a pretty reasonable amount of consultation. We had the MLA and we had someone in the area who represents the wishes of the people, in my opinion and from what I know about Laurie. We talked about the Crowdis Bridge. I don't recall a specific mention of an idea that it would be one lane. What's invested in Crowdis is good work. It's being completed.

We're working on the plan for Cranton Bridge. We understand the impact on the community - the fire department, the local businesses who need this to be open. We're listening loud and clear. We hear the wishes of the community. We're going to fulfill our obligation to do what we can to help the community.

I'm not sure what more we can do, but I believe that when I'm there on the ground and seeing these infrastructure pieces in place, I think that's pretty good consultation. Thank you very much.

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

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER MARKETING
- GOV'T. LEADERSHIP**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: My question now is to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. As lobster season is soon to get underway for Districts 34 and 33, efforts to coordinate marketing Nova Scotia lobster has been undermined with poor coordination, some confusion and a lack of leadership.

My question to the minister is, why has the government fallen so far short in providing leadership and support to the lobster industry?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Indeed, we have not fallen short. We have record sales of live lobsters, very high prices in China that have never been seen before, and we will continue to promote that market and other markets as we move forward.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well thank you very much. Credit can be given to the industry for doing some hard work to make sure that they are opening up markets while this government continues to not do a levy, not talk to the people who they are supposed to be talking to, not doing the work they need to be doing.

My question really revolves around the Premier going to Asia and those places while the government has failed to show leadership locally. So when is the levy going to be put in place? Is it not going to be put in place? The community itself is still wondering what the heck is going on.

MR. COLWELL: As the member will recall, this Legislature passed - and I believe your Party voted for it as well - the law that allows us to collect a fee or a levy, whatever you want to call it, and indeed the industry has the ability now to move forward and contact us if they want to move forward. There's a lot of discussion in the communities about that and we will continue that discussion. Until we do that and the industry is ready, it's up to them.

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

PREM. - UNIV. TUITION: UNCAPPED - CONFIRM

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education stood on the floor of the House and flatly denied that university tuition is uncapped. She said, "Tuition is not uncapped. That seems to be a myth. . . They are not uncapped." I will table the Hansard.

I want to ask the Premier, does the Premier agree with his minister that tuition in Nova Scotia is not uncapped?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell her that I agree with the minister and the great work she is doing on behalf of students across this province. We are very fortunate to have the post-secondary institutions that we have in this province. It's amazing to me to watch not only the people who work at those institutions but students who attend and celebrate the fact that we finally got rid of a government that didn't respect public post-secondary education to one that has invested.

We're continuing to see the student population grow at those universities. We brought in public policy positions that will allow those young people . . .

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

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with students and faculty who work at those institutions, to ensure that those young people who bet on Nova Scotians by showing up here to go to university and stay here to go to university. We'll work with them to arrive and make a future in this province, one quite frankly that was ignored by that crowd.

MS. MACDONALD: I wish the Premier was half as angry about the rising tuition increases in the province and the impact that is having on students, Mr. Speaker. NSCAD tuition is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party has the floor.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. NSCAD tuition is scheduled to increase by as much as 37 per cent. Saint Mary's raised their tuition by more than \$500 annually, Kings College is eyeing a \$1,000 tuition hike, St. F.X. has increased their tuition by \$500, Cape Breton University has seen more than a 20 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier if the tuition cap is still in place in Nova Scotia, can he please explain what is going on in our universities?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what's going on with the question. She asks the question in Opposition, as good a Finance Minister as she was when it came to telling whether the books were balanced - the reality of it is universities across this province are continuing to provide good quality education not only to our sons and daughters, but sons and daughters . . .

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

THE PREMIER: . . . the sons and daughters across the globe who are betting on this province by showing up, going to university, wanting to stay here to create and grow good jobs. They finally have a government that is bringing in public policy that says we're prepared to work with you, we're prepared to help you grow an opportunity for yourself and to grow opportunities for other Nova Scotia children and to grow the economy. We invest in the very things that Nova Scotians told us they want us to invest in.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: 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. 122.

Bill No. 122 - Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 122 be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to outline the changes to this Act that are being presented here today. The amendments will clarify the process for Nova Scotians dealing with child and spousal support orders between provinces and territories. It will prevent an unnecessary notice requirement that would increase case processing time and the cost for parents and children looking to collect support payments.

These amendments essentially formalize our current practices around notification and confirm the original intent of the legislation. While these are housekeeping amendments, they are an important step to prevent delays in case-processing times and increasing costs. The existing legislation was silent on whether there was a requirement to give notice. As a result, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal found that unless the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act expressly stated that notice on the out-of-province applicant is not required, then notice should be provided. Providing notice complicates the process and is unnecessary because the applicant initiated the process and already has the information.

I would like to go through an example so the members of the House can fully understand how this works. So, as an example, let's say a father, living in Nova Scotia, and a mother, with children, living in Ontario already have an existing support order in place. The father's income has changed and the mother wants to make an application to vary their child support order. The mother completes forms in Ontario where she lives and submits the application to the Ontario court. The Ontario court then forwards this package to a Nova Scotia court. A court date is scheduled and a notice of hearing is prepared for the father who lives in Nova Scotia. All the information is given to the father so that he can appear in court and he knows what is required for him to submit. The father then appears in court and ideally files the requested documents and the judge renders a decision.

All simple and straightforward and consistent with what other provinces and territories do; however, if these amendments are not made, the Nova Scotia court would have to collect all of the father's documents before the hearing could take place and make arrangements, which would take a lot of time and money to notify the mother of the hearing, which she would not have to attend because her original documentation already outlines her case. She actually initiated the case. It is also important to note that the Nova Scotia court would have to hire a process server in Ontario to serve the documentation to the mother.

This would complicate the process because the court date would inevitably be delayed in an effort to ensure that the mother in this case received the notice. The parties involved in the case can continue to request information and receive a status update on their file at any time. So in this example, the mother who initiated the request to vary the support order can contact the Nova Scotia court to find out about that status of her

application at any point during the process. By making these amendments, we are preventing what could be a lengthy, costly, and unnecessary process that would place an additional burden on Nova Scotians dealing with child and spousal support orders.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this legislation, as it brings us in line with best practices in other jurisdictions in the country. With these amendments, justice can be served with the least delay to the justice system and, more importantly, to the persons who are seeking enforcement of a family support order. Just as importantly, it ensures that these orders are recognized and enforced efficiently, so that children and families receive the necessary financial support in a more timely manner.

This bill provides Nova Scotia with much-needed practical amendments that are responsive to the needs of families navigating through the system, which can be complex and challenging. As well, it helps address the issue of mobility and interjurisdictional matters. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this bill. We think about people who are affected when maintenance payments aren't made to spouses who are awarded them by courts. We think about people who are single parents, mostly single moms. They are dealing with situations where they are incurring debt trying to look after their children, because payments that are supposed to be being made to them aren't being made.

This is resulting in some people having credit ratings spoiled. It's having a lasting financial impact on families. People who are not getting their support payments have to deal with the stress of money problems on top of the challenges of raising a family, usually by themselves. We're pleased to support legislation any time that will improve conditions for these people.

I know that the Office of Maintenance Enforcement in government was moved to New Waterford, and I know that there were some challenges with that. The office was not fully staffed for a period of time. I believe that things have improved, but I know that added stress to people who were hoping to get their payments. I'm hopeful that that matter has been resolved, and that the office has the resources it needs to enforce payments.

The other thing I want to mention is that the Nova Scotia Law Reform Commission did a report this past year, and they came out with 56 recommendations for improving maintenance enforcement. We do look forward to seeing the government take action on these other items to improve the maintenance enforcement payment system.

Mr. Speaker, I think I will save any further comments I have until after we have a chance to see if people do come to Law Amendments Committee and share their thoughts on this bill. We will have another opportunity to speak again on third reading. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to congratulate the minister on introducing this amendment. I think it is excellent. I have personally practised in this area of law, and I know very well the challenges that applicants have faced.

We're an increasingly mobile society. There are challenges even in different jurisdictions, and different processes in dealing with this Act, so the more consistency we can get, the better. Increasingly, we see mostly single mothers who may have had a maintenance order here in the province when both of the parties were living here. It's certainly not uncommon to see people move, especially to Alberta, and incomes change significantly, so there's usually a very legitimate reason for making an application to vary the child support order. This will significantly assist, as the minister has already referred to, so I am pleased to indicate that I am supportive of it. I, too, look forward to a further discussion at Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I will just speak briefly on this bill today and I want to begin by commending all the Parties of the House for coming together to support this necessary legislation. Like the member for Dartmouth South, I do have a fair bit of experience practising in the Family Courts in the province that actually spans back prior to the introduction of the original Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act. At that time we were in an essential gridlock with respect to applying to vary maintenance orders between provinces where parties lived in different provinces.

The fear here that is being remedied by this legislation is that we would return to a similar situation if the requirement that parties in other provinces had to be given notice of a hearing under the circumstances that exist prior to these amendments.

I think this is a necessary piece of legislation that is in the interests of children across the province, and actually across the nation. When similar amendments are made in other jurisdictions, it will speed up the variation process and mean that the necessary maintenance will get to children quicker. I commend the minister and her department for bringing this forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 122. I did want to say just a few comments as well. I also appreciate the support of both the Opposition Parties as we move forward with this. As I said, it is clarifying what we do already but there was a risk that in not making this amendment, we would then have quite an onerous process that would ultimately hurt the families and the children who rely on our court system to support them on these interjurisdictional orders.

I am really pleased to see that we will be able to move along and make this change, which I have been assured is required. Mr. Speaker, it's a subject that is very near and dear to my heart. The member for Inverness raised the issue a little bit so I thought I might speak just a little bit about the importance of maintenance enforcement.

This bill before us relates largely to interjurisdictional orders and that is one of the most difficult areas of our maintenance enforcement system to enforce. When one or the other of the parents live in different provinces, it just becomes more difficult for our enforcement staff to reach out and work with the enforcement staff in another jurisdiction and actually see that the court-ordered payments are made as they should be made.

We know there is a higher level of default or arrears among families where there is an interjurisdictional order so it requires all of our attention to make sure that we streamline and make the system as responsive and as effective as possible.

Mr. Speaker, while we talk about maintenance enforcement and interjurisdictional orders, I think we should all remember there are 19,000 children, approximately, who are covered by these orders that are being administered through maintenance enforcement alone and that's roughly 15,000 families. Any changes we can make that improve or strengthen these systems that we have in place for maintenance enforcement are very important and I appreciate the support of the House as we move forward with this particular one. As I say, I expect we'll see some improvements as a result because there was a great risk otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other points raised was the move of all our maintenance enforcement staff to a single location, which happens to be in New Waterford. I wanted to assure everybody in the House that first of all, that was very difficult and a process that impacted the service we could provide to those 15,00 families and 19,000 children. In fact, there was a 70 per cent turnover of staff from the other regional offices as we combined in one location in New Waterford.

That process began in 2012. It was an initiative of the NDP Government of the time to put everybody in one location and it had a tremendous impact on service delivery when 70 per cent of the staff that were in offices like Kentville and Yarmouth didn't choose to move.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't easy to move families nowadays. It might seem good when you just look at a piece of paper and say, we'll move these staff to another location. But as we know, virtually everybody - if you're married, your spouse is likely to be working. You have children in school. You have connections in your community. You might have parents that you're looking after or that you're supporting in one way or another. People can't just uproot and move easily.

That was very evident in the huge turnover of staff that we had. The majority of people who stayed, I think, all came from the Sydney office, and they didn't have to move houses. They simply drive to New Waterford now to go there.

But I have gone twice now to New Waterford to visit the staff there, and just to go to the point of the member for Inverness, I know they've rebuilt the staffing. The staff there have had a couple of years now to become experienced in the program again. You can appreciate that it's a complex program - no two cases are the same - and therefore they had a lot to learn in order to be able to do all the things that the Act allows them to do in enforcement. I'm reassured that people are now back to a level where we can provide better service.

I think that it has lots of opportunity now for improving the processes, improving the systems, and getting better results. It's one of my key goals, really, as Justice Minister, to make sure that we make a difference in that area.

I know the Law Reform Commission was referenced. We did a study ourselves in the Department of Justice. There are 29 recommendations, I believe it is, and we've accepted them all, and more in addition. We've committed to more action beyond those. So we will be seeing some changes coming in the next few months there as well.

But going back to Bill No. 122, I want to just thank the members opposite for their support, and again, I look forward to seeing if people come to Law Amendments, and also to seeing this bill pass through the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 122. 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 124.

Bill No. 124 - Social Workers Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 124, an Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 1993, the Social Workers Act, be now read a second time.

Yesterday, I introduced an amendment to the Social Workers Act on behalf of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers. Community Services, as the largest employer of social workers in Nova Scotia, considers the association to be an important partner.

This bill will enable the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, a self-regulating body, to better regulate the practice of social work in the province. Specifically, the amendments include changing the name of the organization from “association” to “college”; placing appropriate emphasis on the protection of the public as the primary responsibility of the organization; updating the definition of social work; and improving the complaints process to make it more transparent. These changes will bring the profession in Nova Scotia into line with other provinces and reflect current social work objectives and focus.

The province is committed to working with social workers to support their profession and provide the tools they need to help protect vulnerable families. Thank you.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I am pleased to rise today and speak to this bill. Social workers play a very important role in our society. They have expertise in so many different areas and are responsible for the well-being of Nova Scotians at various points in their lives.

We know that social workers often have incredibly heavy caseloads, and they face many challenges as they do their job to provide guidance, protection, and care for the people in this province. We recently learned that many social workers are dealing with caseloads that are double the standard. Work must be done to ensure the caseloads are appropriate to allow these hard-working Nova Scotians time to deliver the best possible care. We hope that the Association of Social Workers is pleased with this bill, as they know best what the needs are for their industry.

Now, I went to the briefing the other day and this was a very important item for me, to have these social workers be a part of this bill from the very beginning. A year and a half ago, they issued a draft piece of legislation themselves with the changes that they hoped to see adopted. We know that this bill is a first step toward these changes and we hope that progress is made to fulfill the rest in the near future.

We're very much looking forward to hearing feedback on this bill from Nova Scotians and the social workers at the Committee on Law Amendments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to speak to Bill No. 124 an Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 1993, the Social Workers Act. Social workers are one of Nova Scotia's most valuable human resources as they provide invaluable care to individuals and families across our province.

The Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers is comprised of 1,600 dedicated members who practise in hospitals, schools, within the Department of Community Services, community organizations and in private practice. Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems.

Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems, but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence. Human rights and social justice are the philosophical underpinnings of social work practice. The uniqueness of social work practice is in the blend of some particular values, knowledge and skills, including the use of relationship as the basis of all interventions, and respect for the client's choice and involvement.

The amendments within Bill No. 124 will change the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers to the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers, bringing Nova Scotia in line with many provinces across Canada. In addition, the amendments aim to improve the complaints process so that steps are reasonable and transparent.

In 2014, the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers put forward their vision for a new Act to regulate the practice of social work, which was a very comprehensive document. The Department of Community Services states that they are delivering these amendments on behalf of the NSASW; however, they have said that only these four amendments are workable at this time.

I look forward to hearing from the association in Law Amendments to hear if their view is shared between all parties. I look forward to hearing from all stakeholders at Law Amendments on this important piece of legislation. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up and speak to the amendments to this bill. I feel like I'm going to be echoing a lot of the comments that have already been made by the members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working with social workers to support their profession and provide the tools that they need to help protect individuals and their families in their times of need. Any of us who have had to work with or have the support of a social worker in our lives for whatever reason, realize the special importance and the role that they play in helping support us through our times of need.

I can speak pretty freely on social work. I have a very vocal, hard-working, and dedicated social worker in my family. I hear the good and the bad of decisions that we as a government make from her on a regular basis, and these amendments in particular are something that I can say we stand behind, and are really going to be rolled out in order to help social workers do the job that at times can be very difficult.

When you have legislation that governs any profession, it is very important and it requires careful consideration to ensure that the interests of the public and members of the profession are upheld. These amendments are being introduced to highlight our government's commitment to social workers and their profession. Again, if this was not the case, I certainly would hear about it at home. With that I will sit. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Community Services

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the House for their comments surrounding Bill No. 124. I would like to address the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley on the standards of caseloads for social workers, particularly in child welfare because it's something we recognize.

In the Department of Community Services the standard is actually 20 and they are monitored almost weekly, in terms of caseloads. The average over the past couple of years has been between 13 and 16 cases per social worker, because we never really want to get near the 20-caseload standard. We feel it's very difficult, emotional work and we really want to support the amazing social workers who work within the child welfare system in Nova Scotia.

I just wanted to clarify. I know those comments were made the other day and I just wanted to reassure the member that within the department that's the standard we abide by.

I look forward to this bill going to Law Amendments Committee and I'll be pleased to hear from the community. With that, I move second reading of Bill No.124.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 124. 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, will you please call Bill No. 123.

Bill No. 123 - Paramedics Act.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 123, an Act Respecting the Practice of Paramedicine, be now read a second time.

This bill would replace the Paramedics Act that was passed but never proclaimed in 2005. The bill would increase public safety by making paramedics a self-regulated profession as it is in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

There are about 1,400 registered paramedics in Nova Scotia. Most of them work for Emergency Health Services or the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Under this legislation paramedics would join 21 health professions that are already self-regulated in Nova Scotia, including physicians, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Mr. Speaker, governments of all stripes have talked about self-regulation for paramedics - our government is making it happen. Through this legislation we would establish a College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia, which will set professional standards, hold the members to those standards, and establish a disciplinary process for non-compliance.

The legislation provides for the government to appoint an interim council for the college. The initial interim college will consist of eight paramedic members; the provincial medical advisor, Dr. Andrew Travers; four public representatives appointed by government; and a representative from both the College of Registered Nurses and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The effective date of April 1, 2017, will give the time needed to ensure that the college is established and that the regulations, bylaws, and policies and procedures are ready. Essentially this time is needed to ensure the college is ready to take on the role of regulating the profession.

Our government will provide a \$350,000 subsidy over two fiscal years from our existing budget for regulating paramedics to help establish the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia, after that the college would be financed solely through its dues collected from paramedics.

Nova Scotia has a world-class emergency health system and the highly trained paramedics who work in every community across Nova Scotia are vital members of a collaborative health care team. We want our paramedics to have a strong voice in the opportunities available to their profession. Self-regulation reflects the key role they play in Nova Scotia's unified health care system, their high level of professionalism and their principles of self-responsibility and accountability.

I think this would be a good time for all of the members to recognize two of our own who were paramedics before entering politics: the members for Sackville-Cobequid, and Hants West. On that note, I look forward to hearing the comments from the other members gathered here today, and now I look forward to those remarks that other members will bring to the floor.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. The practice of paramedicine is something that has changed dramatically, I would say, in this province over the last 20 years; I guess if we look back 20 years when I had the opportunity to be a firefighter and hanging out with a few of my friends at the Yarmouth base - well, it really wasn't the Yarmouth base, it was actually the amalgamation of two funeral homes that took their ambulance drivers I guess at the time, got them all together and started an ambulance service. That ambulance service got moved into the modern age, after a lot of work by successive governments, to the system that you see today.

The practice of paramedicine is what it's called today, and for a good reason. It's a very important professional health group who have a set of skills that are well needed in the day-to-day operation of our province, the day-to-day lives of every Nova Scotian who in one way or another has an accident, has a health scare, is probably at one of the lowest points of their lives, one of the scariest points of their lives, and they interact with a paramedic. That paramedic keeps them safe to the best of their ability, makes sure that they are comfortable, practises their scope of practice on them and gets them safely, hopefully, to a hospital where they can access a world-class health system.

This issue, I guess of self-regulation, is one that is talked about by many other health professions. I forget how many self-regulated professions there are in this province, but it's really starting to add up because it is those professions that are truly taking control of what they are, how they are regulated, how they practice, and how they discipline one another in the case of something going wrong.

It's good to see that the bill has truly looked at what it needs as an interim, because I think that maybe was what was missing in previous bills. This happened once before I believe, I think it was somewhere in 2005 when the government worked with paramedics at the time to self-regulate and it really never came to fruition - and I'll let others come up with the reasons why it didn't come to fruition there but I do believe it has a lot to do with how to get it going, how to fill in the interim - how much money is it going to cost? What kind of expertise are you going to be able to get from those other self-regulated professions, those other colleges that are there?

So it's good to see that not only are there dollars and cents available from the department, but also to see that the nurses will be there to support, physicians will be there to support, and of course trying to pull together all those best practices to make sure that it is the best self-regulated profession, the best college that they possibly can pull together.

The dollars and cents of course, I think it is around \$300,000 that it's going to require over a few years to hire the individuals that they're going to need to do this, because not only does it need paramedics sitting at the table, they also need to have disciplinary people. They need to have lawyers; they need to be able to call on those kinds of people. So, it's not easy to sort of squish this all together and get it running the next day with a phone number. It truly is bringing a whole profession along, that this is the way it's going to work.

I want to finish off quickly by saying thank you to the men and women who are paramedics in our province providing this service. For those of us who had the opportunity to utilize the service, we thank them even more, because they are absolutely phenomenal. Whether you are at the base in Yarmouth, or the base in Pubnico, the base in Woods Harbour, the base in Barrington - which are mine - North Sydney and Pictou; we can go along with all the paramedic bases that we have and all the paramedics that work within them, new and old, because we have some great new recruits and some veterans that have been providing service for many years.

We do have two veterans in this House, even though today, as much as it is great to have the member for Sackville-Cobequid and the member for Hants West, you know I don't know how much training, or how up to date they are but it's great to have them here when things do happen (Interruption) - and it depends on who's sick. (Interruption) Listen I've seen things happen in this House, when people have gone down for one reason or another, they've jumped up quicker than we would expect them to get up, because they're here, they're caring individuals. That's why they became paramedics and of course, that's why they became MLAs, because it is second nature to them to help one another.

With those few words I thank you for the opportunity again. I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward and of course, I look forward to seeing the full implementation of the College of Paramedics, thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for bringing forward this piece of legislation, and for the kind words. It is an important piece of legislation and one that I spoke on in a different form in the past. There has been quite a bit of a history for us to get to this point today, to recognize a profession that has been transformed immensely over the last 20 years.

Yesterday we had the honour and privilege to have a former member of the House here in the gallery who really has been instrumental in ensuring that the transformation of EMS in Nova Scotia went in the direction that best serves Nova Scotians and the communities throughout our province. That, of course, was the former minister, Dr. Ron Stewart, who was instrumental in the early 1990s in ensuring that we moved as a province in a direction that recognized a gap, or a void in delivery of emergency care in Nova Scotia.

Of course, Dr. Ron Stewart, I respect immensely and I would consider a friend, even though he's not in the same political Party, or wasn't in the same political Party. I don't know if he belongs to a political Party now, but definitely has supported me as a new MLA throughout the years and of course, when eventually I had the great honour to be Minister of Health a number of years ago, I received a really nice supportive letter from Dr. Stewart who I think recognized the challenge that was in front of myself, as a Minister of Health.

Ironically and interestingly enough, yesterday my friend next to me in the Progressive Conservative caucus mentioned that yesterday at that point for the introduction of this bill there were six former Ministers of Health in the Chamber, on the floor and in the gallery, which is ironic, and I mentioned to my friend that I guess it's not the kiss of death to be the Minister of Health, politically, to be the Minister of Health and Wellness. I truly believe that once you get into that role, you recognize how important it is, and you try your best to ensure that you leave something that improves health care delivery.

I know I'm very critical of the current minister, and I hope that that minister soon recognizes the importance of the need to improve health care services in our province. It doesn't matter which political Party you come from, that should be the end goal. Dr. Stewart definitely did that in his time here as Minister of Health.

I see the transformation is amazing in just a short 20 years. I had the fortunate opportunity to attend the School of Emergency Health Services, which was located at the VG Hospital, within the Bethune Building. It was a great environment to learn in because it was a hospital setting. You weren't in some building in a school out on the outskirts of HRM or wherever; you were actually within the environment that really gave you the most to improve and hopefully have a successful education. I appreciated having that opportunity.

It's unfortunate that a number of years after I graduated in 1996, the school did close. At the time, a lot of the allied health professions were housed within that school - things like psychology, X-ray technician, ultrasound - a number of allied health professions, where students were able to be successful because of that hospital setting. It's unfortunate we don't see that today.

We do see it, I must admit, through the medical students in the medical courses we have through Dalhousie, because most of their learning revolves right around the hospitals at the QEII. I think there's something we can learn from that, and we should encourage those opportunities for health care providers, especially students who want to be health care providers, to be immersed in an environment that really contributes to your education. I know the fact that that is no longer there is unfortunate.

But paramedicine has changed immensely, to the point today - and for a number of years now, we've had the ability to say with no question that we have one of the best emergency health services in North America. We should be very proud of that. I think Nova Scotians should recognize the importance of that. Paramedics bring the emergency department to your house in an emergency. They bring the emergency department to your car if you're in an accident on the side of the highway.

It's amazing to see the scope of practice that is now being utilized to help our citizens, our fellow neighbours, and our family members. We need to continue to improve on that and look at ways we can be innovative, how we can improve the delivery of emergency care throughout the province.

I have to tell you, the paramedics of this province, the men and women who are on call seven days a week, 365 days a year, are more than willing to take up that task. I never at any point in my career as a medic or as an elected official or as Minister of Health and Wellness heard from paramedics that "we don't want to do that service; we don't want to provide that care; it's beyond our scope of practice." Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker. I continue to hear, and I've always heard, that they were more than willing to add to their scope of practice, to look at new techniques and new medications that can improve the outcome of the emergency situation that they're called to assist on. We did that when we were the former government, and I hope that the current government continues to recognize the need to continue to move that forward.

We have paramedics now who, over 20 years ago, really had one job. It was load and go, as they would call it. That was you would respond to an emergency, you would grab that person and get them in the back of the ambulance and get him to the nearest hospital.

Through people like Dr. Ron Stewart and others, they recognized - and Dr. Ed Cain who was here yesterday, also Dr. Travers - the importance of how we improve the outcome at the end of that medical emergency. How do we ensure that people survive the accidents

they may be in or the heart attack they are having, or whatever medical emergency they have? By ensuring that the scope of practice continues to expand and grow - that's exactly how we do it.

In the early days of EMS here in Nova Scotia there were paramedics, but they weren't called paramedics; we've kind of done a transformation. When I graduated our designation was an EMT - emergency medical technician. Before that there were EMAs, I believe they were called at the time. In the early days communities recognized the need to have some kind of emergency support system to get people to the hospital, and that was the birth of the EMS.

Most often in those early days there was a two-week first aid course and then you were given the green light to get in the ambulances and away you go. At that time many of the men and women who worked - if you called it work - in those times rarely got paid, or got paid very low. Often those medics would be on call overnight and unless they got a call they wouldn't get paid. So when you were in those more quiet areas of the province, in rural Nova Scotia, for example, you often didn't get paid unless you had a call. That's unfortunate to see that and I'm so glad that we're in a different period now where that doesn't determine what you take home at the end of the day as a paycheque.

The transformation has been amazing over the last 20 years. We know one of the things and the components that was missing, or many paramedics knew what was missing was this idea of self-regulating. We see it with the nurses, we see it with the physicians, we see it with other health care providers and professions in Nova Scotia and around Canada.

There was a lot of work done, I would say, in the mid-to-late 90s to try to get the interests of paramedics to recognize the importance of having a self-regulating profession. It was hard at first. I had the great privilege, to be honest, Mr. Speaker, to sit with colleagues of mine back in the mid-to-late 90s to discuss how do we move this forward. We had a lot of support from an organization, the Canadian Paramedic Association. It was quite active at the time nationally to try to get recognition across the country. They did a lot of advocacy and advocating on behalf of paramedics across the country, in Ottawa.

I know that friends of mine and colleagues of mine who participated on a national level to try to encourage the federal government to move forward with ensuring that paramedicine was recognized and was treated as an equal in the health care professions. For so many years that just was not the case. Paramedics were not treated as equals.

I heard it often, especially in the early days, that paramedics shouldn't be doing some of the things they do. I remember hearing when intubation was introduced to the profession - the ability to breath for somebody, Mr. Speaker, putting an endotracheal tube down into the lungs so you can breathe for them. There were physicians out there who pushed back, there were health care providers who pushed back and said oh, I don't know about that; that shouldn't be allowed. I think there was this fearful opinion that they weren't

trained enough. Many of them didn't recognize the transformation in the qualifications and the education component to becoming a paramedic, and there was pushback.

We had to fight hard to be recognized - and I say "we" and I was part of that - we fought hard to be recognized and I've said it so many times on the floor of this Legislature - that's why I'm here today. I felt at the time, especially in the 1990s, that the recognition was not there from the government of the day and ultimately, here I am, 12 years going on 13 years later after making the decision to run for public life and trying at every corner to not forget about the days when we weren't respected and we weren't considered an equal within the health care sector.

I am glad to report that has changed. A number of things that have changed are the men and women who worked every day, not only providing care for people when there was an emergency, but doing other things to try to promote the profession, to try to educate people that paramedics and paramedicine was extremely important and that the education and the changes that were made under the education of paramedics were to improve the services, and we did just that.

There were a number of people I met with early on, and it probably would have around the late 90s that we got together and we tried to figure out how do we move that forward, and we created the College of Paramedics for Nova Scotia. If you go back, we registered the name, and at that time the goal was to get our colleagues, our brothers and sisters in the paramedic profession, to recognize that what we were doing was not circumventing the union's work, which was extremely important and something that every medic wanted to move forward on because at the time and the wages that were being offered were quite low.

So we have seen this transformation with the education component but at the time we didn't see the transformation of how they are paid, how they are recognized by government and part of what we did is we did outreach. We created the college. We tried to make sure that our fellow paramedics knew that this was not a negotiation organization that talked about how much paramedics got paid because we had a union to do that.

We wanted to ensure that scope of practice for paramedics continued to expand. We wanted to get the recognition not only from the government but other health care providers and really, the citizens of the province that paramedicine was definitely viable and something that should be recognized.

I had the great honour and privilege, with a number of my colleagues, to present to the Romanow Commission back in 2001. I believe it was at the Westin, or it might have been called another hotel, and interesting enough I was just sent a picture of our delegation just prior to that. Of course that was the commission on the future of health care in Canada and Roy Romanow, former premier from Saskatchewan, was the commissioner of that and went around the country to try to see where we needed to go as a country.

Our submission was definitely one that supported paramedics, supported the work that we did and I was very, very glad and privileged to be part of that and I was glad to receive the picture a number of months ago.

There are a number of medics who have been involved in that and I was going to name them all but I know that since I haven't been on the trucks for some time, I will forget a number of them, but there is one paramedic that I know worked extremely hard on that was Craig Desjardins, who passed away recently. I was at his service and when I ran into Mike Kellogg, he provided me with the picture and I appreciated that.

Craig was very passionate, back in 2001 when we made the submission to the Romanow Commission, but he was also very passionate right up to his untimely death back earlier this year. He worked hard on the things that medics knew were important and that was trying to promote our profession as one that is highly regarded and I think that he achieved that and I know that some of the members on the government side knew Craig and offered their sympathy on his passing.

With Bill No. 123, I think we're at a point now that it's quite appropriate to move forward and actually establish the college. As the former speaker noted, I believe it was 2005 - I don't have the exact date - that the former Progressive Conservative Government brought forward a piece of legislation similar to this to create that college. At the time, there was some significant work that needed to be done to get it to the point where that would be up and running.

I don't think that the paramedics, the men and women who serve here in Nova Scotia, were ready to associate themselves with the active, ongoing college at that time. Part of the reason is that there is a cost to this. It's no secret. We knew back in the late 1990s, when we started to advocate for this, that there would be a cost associated with it, because of course, like any regulated body that we see, the members pay for that college. The nurses pay a yearly fee to belong to the college, the physicians of the province pay to belong to their college, and I know it's no different in this piece of legislation. Paramedics will have to pay to belong to the college.

I think in the mid-2000s, and pushing toward a little later in the 2000s, medics at the time still had a fight on their hands on the other side of the coin around wages and benefits. That was the high priority for many of the paramedics, and that was where the time and energy were allocated - to try to get improvements in wages and benefits.

I know today, going through being minister, being in government, some of the things that we brought forward to improve on that wage and benefit package. I remember it well. It's not an easy thing to do, to negotiate with workers, especially health care workers. I know that. That's because they are so passionate about their work. They know how important it is, and the importance of the services they deliver to Nova Scotians, and they want to be compensated fairly.

Even when I was minister, even though I thought at the time that the package presented to them was a very good package - I still believe and I still support it - there were some who felt it didn't go far enough. I was very glad to be part of a government that offered, and I think took away some of the things that paramedics felt that they weren't being treated as equals within the health care sector.

Of course, that's referring to the defined pension benefit. Paramedics were the only sector within health care that did not have a defined pension benefit package. That was unfair, and I'm very glad that that has been changed, that we brought that forward - with a significant investment, I might add. A paramedic who works 25 years knows that at the end of the day there's a pension there, and it's defined, and it's not at the whim of the markets that we have seen, that have been so volatile since 2008, really, that has wiped out a lot of the savings that employees are going to rely on when they retire.

The profession itself is a very difficult one. It's hard on an individual. Hopefully people will think about the work they do, the environment they work in, the situations and the danger that they are placed in every day. I often said this, that I feel privileged to be a paramedic and to have been a paramedic, but also to have been given the opportunity to step away for some time. I was a medic for almost eight or nine years, and at that point it was tough to put those eight years in, especially in the early days, when my two-week workweek was 168 hours for two weeks. That wasn't a month. That was two weeks, and that was for a couple of years. So you worked two years as a paramedic back then and it was like working about seven years in other professions, with the sheer number of hours you put in. And I did it all for \$28,000 a year. I enjoyed every single minute of it, and I wouldn't have changed anything. Well, if I could have changed, it would have been nice to get paid a lot more than the \$6.50 an hour that I made, but I did enjoy it.

I'm giving that example because it's a tough profession. It's tough physically on the men and women who are doing it today. I don't know how - in that type of profession you will have someone last 30 or 35 years working on the trucks, going to those calls. It would be tough on you.

I'm so glad to also report that, because of the transformation we've seen over the last 20 years, there are so many more opportunities for paramedics now in the province and for employment other than getting on the trucks and responding to calls. We have dispatch, for example; that is an opportunity to work. All of our 911 dispatchers who are with EHS - because we of course have 911 dispatching - as soon as it's an emergency for an ambulance, that call is diverted to the emergency call centre in Dartmouth, and that is all staffed by trained paramedics. They know what it's like to provide care and they are trained to do that. That just improves the system we have, that if you ever have to call for an ambulance, the person on the line is actually a medic who can give you some assistance.

So, we've come a long way. And that defined pension benefit, I think, would help, knowing that at 66 or 62 years old, you don't need to be on the trucks; there are other opportunities. We know it has opened up the door for many, many other professions.

I was glad to be part of getting into the Legislature and opening another door that paramedics should look at and consider. I would hope that they would consider running in the future because it's important to have voices from front-line health care workers here on the floor of the Legislature. I hope that they run for the NDP, but that's okay. My friend and colleague from Hants West chose to run - I believe it was 2006. I was glad to see a fellow medic here on the floor of the Legislature.

I encourage not only medics but health care providers to really get involved because we do need more voices in the Legislature who have a background in health care, especially front-line health care. It's extremely important to do that.

With Bill No. 123, Mr. Speaker, the importance to have this - I think we're in the right environment. I think with some of the improvements that we've seen over the last number of years, not only on the wage side and the pension side and the benefits side but on the side of being recognized - it's time for this. It's time now for us to see this piece of legislation, and I'm encouraged by it.

It's my hope that the reason we see this today is because medics themselves have asked and pushed the government to do this. I hope it's not just something that has come from within the department because I truly believe that this needs to be pushed forward by the medics themselves, that there has to be widespread acceptance of what is entailed in this legislation.

I'm glad to see that there will be some time, between now and the end date when this comes into effect - I believe the minister said 2017 - that they can educate themselves, so that they can get behind this piece of legislation and really make sure that that step and that void that we've had for so long in the profession, is filled. I really hope that I will hear from people around the province about that.

We know we had a number of paramedics who were here yesterday in the House. Many of them I've had the privilege and honour to work with, many moons ago now - it seems like yesterday, Mr. Speaker. But I hope that we have the widespread support of the paramedics for this because they need to ensure that they understand what this is about and they understand what's entailed here, and I hope that the department continues on with consultation to make sure that the medics who were not in the House - we might have had a dozen or so, but we have well over 1,400 paramedics in the province - that they understand this, and they go through it and they buy into it.

That is the key; the key is that the medics buy into this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. We know that in the coming months and a year or two when this comes forward,

that that has to happen. And I think paramedics will get behind it, and I look forward to talking with them. I look forward to engaging them to make sure that this is where we need to go and, if there need to be changes that the government is willing and open to look at changes.

We know through the process here in the Legislature we'll have an opportunity to go to Law Amendments if it passes today or tomorrow - it'll be probably Monday - and I look forward to seeing if there's anybody who comes forward with concerns, or even just support for it through the Law Amendments process.

One of the things I know and I read through the bill, and I hope that the end result of this when it is proclaimed, when it does come into effect, is that paramedics and those involved in the college will now be able to be looked upon as providers who can look at other organizations to support their expertise on - and I say that because in here the makeup, and I believe the minister mentioned this in his comments, the makeup of the committee and the board indicated a number of people. I believe there's going to be eight people and it's an oversight committee to look at things - definitely one would be the Medical Director of the province, which is understandably a position that needs to be there; there's a layperson, or a regular Nova Scotian who will sit on that board - I believe there are four of those; and there are people within the profession themselves, but there are also other professions that we highly regard that are on the committee, those are the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and of course the College of Registered Nurses will also have a seat on that board.

So, I hope the government looks at other colleges and other pieces of legislation that the paramedics can be added to as a resource, as expertise in health care delivery, and that someday we will see on the College of Registered Nurses, members of the College of Paramedics on their board and vice versa. I truly believe that is where we'll end up and I think that is at the betterment of not only other professions, but the self-regulating body that we provide in other areas will be able to rely on the expertise that paramedics have.

So with that Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate this opportunity to just talk once more about a profession that is dear to me, that I miss immensely on a regular basis, and that I know Nova Scotians respect and depend on because, as I said some time ago, we have the best emergency health services operation in Canada, if not North America but around the world. We've been recognized as that and I want to continue to move that profession forward, and I know that this piece of legislation does that. I look forward to future exchanges and future possibilities to improve the practice of paramedicine here in Nova Scotia.

So, thank you Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great privilege to stand up and talk about this Bill No. 123. It's excellent to hear that 1,400 paramedics in Nova Scotia practice this profession, and a very noble practice it is. Two of my best friends, Derek Desaulniers and Peter MacDonald, are both paramedics and have worked in this industry for a long time. And it was interesting because I also started my career down the paramedic road as EMT out of New Hampshire, where I started my practice and studied there as a paramedic, primarily in the back country, rescue, high-angle rescue, the big long rescues (Interruption) Thank you, I will have that stuffed. A typical rescue would take 12 hours instead of half an hour to an hour. That was where I was headed when I was younger, until an accident happened and I no longer was able to study that.

With that in mind, and watching my best friends Derek and Peter go through this process of paramedics and hearing their stories day in and day out of what they do, this province owes it to them to have this discussion with this bill. We owe them the ability to have self-regulation, like the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act and all those other ones. Allowing this to happen gives them the self-regulation that they need. This Paramedics Act in 2005 will be repealed and replaced with this new legislation. I guess with that, it's going to continue to grow our paramedics, continue to grow our world-class group of dedicated paramedics.

When I spoke to one of my friends about this piece of legislation, I wanted to have an understanding from him, does this piece of legislation matter to you? His comment right away was, oh my God, yes. This is something we've been looking for, for years. We want this bill to happen because we want to be self-regulated. We understand the costs that are going to be associated with this, but we want to have the ability to better control what happens on the buses, better control ourselves and actions that occur within the field, to make sure that things run smoother and that there's a better process within education.

Now it's funny because I stand here and speak about this and talking to Dr. Stewart long, long ago about this profession, it has come almost to a full circle for me. Though I am not part of this industry, I do feel very connected to it with my two friends.

I don't want to speak very long on this. I just wanted to say a few comments on this bill, the Paramedics Act. We are looking forward to it. It will take effect April 1, 2017, and this time is needed to establish a new College of Paramedics and to encourage college bylaws and policies and procedures are in place so that there is full engagement with paramedics. With that, I don't want to speak long on it.

I just wanted to speak for that quick few seconds about the importance of this bill and acknowledge my friends who are in this industry, who day in and day out put their dedication to this job and who are leaders. The two of them, Derek and Peter, are leaders in my eyes, to this community being paramedics. With that, I take my seat. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I too just wanted to take a few moments. I also had on here to identify the two paramedics in the Chamber, the member for Sackville-Cobequid as well as our member for Hants West.

I think this is a fantastic piece of legislation. I know that it has been ongoing for a number of years. It has been mentioned that there are 1,400 paramedics in Nova Scotia, and they are very, very highly valued. I know I have a lot of respect for them. They're continuously providing efficient levels of care.

I know one of my first experiences with them was in 2002 in a snowstorm, having my son Jack in the Antigonish hospital and both of us having to be rushed to Halifax and being put in two different ambulances, obviously within an hour of having him having to be separated from him. I begged not to be separated, but they reassured me that we should be separated in the storm and took us both. We both made it safe and sound.

But the thing that I found really interesting was the compassion that they showed me in the ambulance. I also find that many of the individuals in this profession have great compassion and are able to talk you through a very difficult time that you're dealing with, in a lot of cases, tragedies.

So it's fantastic to see the paramedics join the 21 health professions that already exist and are self-regulated. I'm also very happy to see that this can allow paramedics to operate in more non-traditional roles, such as how pharmacies can now hire paramedics to come in and give flu shots. You know, when we look at this, this has the potential to create jobs, which is something we all know that we try to create here in Nova Scotia. No doubt this new piece of legislation will enable more community paramedic programs as well, which in turn will educate all demographics to have a better understanding of what services they actually provide in their community.

I want to just personally take this opportunity to thank all the men and women in this profession in Nova Scotia, as well as the amazing paramedics that we have in Pictou County. I feel very blessed and very safe with their presence and their knowledge. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat. Thank you.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to echo a few of the comments by some of the members here in the Chamber about the importance of Bill No. 123 in allowing the paramedics to self-regulate. Being a member of a self-regulated health care profession - as the member said earlier, if the members don't realize, there is a cost associated with that, but I can guarantee the members that that cost is well worth it. The ability to self-regulate in areas of education, in areas of discipline - self-discipline -

requirements needed to further the education they get so that the patients around this province receive the best possible care.

If you ever had the unfortunate incident - and I say “unfortunate” because paramedicine is a profession that we all want to see available but never, ever want to use or have the ability to have them called upon. Even as early as last weekend, I had a friend of mine call me who was having some difficulty, and when I went to his house and I realized what could be happening, I called the paramedics.

To see these guys come into a situation where they don't know what they are getting into, they don't know the layout of the land that's there, the danger that they may face - but to see these guys come in and deal with a situation calmly and coolly and to take that person and ease his mind about what was going on, and how they could help him, and what they did to get him out of the bedroom and down the stairs and into the ambulance. When I got to the hospital with this particular gentleman, he told me that the paramedics were in the back of the ambulance. They even put the IV in, and it was the best he has ever had an IV put in. He never felt it. But he was in a moving vehicle. It kind of scares some people to think that.

I can remember back when I first started in the health care field, oh, probably over 20 years ago now, a young doctor by the name of Ron Stewart, who is from Sydney Mines, who was working in California at the time - at the time he was - I don't know if you'd call him the “adviser” . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: The set adviser.

MR. ORRELL: . . . the set adviser for a show that used to be on TV by the name of *Emergency!* I can always remember Gage and DeSoto, who were the two people who worked on the ambulance or in the fire department at that time. (Interruption) I am showing my age - and the situations that they dealt with were situations that Dr. Stewart came up with.

He brought that knowledge to the Province of Nova Scotia. At that time, if you called an ambulance - unfortunately I had to do that at that time, too - you got either a taxi driver or you got a person who owned a funeral home. They would leave their post at that time and go pick a person up, with no real medical knowledge, and put them in an ambulance and take them to the hospital. Time at that time was of the essence.

Now to see them come into the home with heart monitors and blood sugar monitors and EKGs and all of the equipment and knowledge that they bring, they really set the person's mind at ease. When you see that level of expertise and you see that level of professionalism, it's good to know that these people are on call here in our province for our safety and our protection. If you don't think that they're an extension of the emergency room, to see them operate, especially in conditions where there might be a cardiac

emergency and they can administer medication and drugs that will save people's lives - it's really something to see. It's really something to be able to have and congratulate them for being the people who are on the front line of care for us, and to have the ability to self-regulate so that they can provide the best possible care to the people of this province.

It's a real eye-opener when you get to the stage that the regulations that people are abiding by aren't the ones that come from the members, or aren't the ones that come from professionals who teach the course. You want to make sure the people who are on the ground have input.

I know that the 1,400 paramedics here in this province are well trained, they train in difficult situations. To see those paramedics in the emergency room when they're still in their training and the level of nervousness and the level of uncertainty, and to see them when they're finished and working under the stressful situations they work in, it's a real honour to say that I'm a resident of the Province of Nova Scotia here and these people are the ones that look after our sick on the front line. Without them there would be a lot worse situations developing here in this province because they are on the highways, they're in the emergency rooms, and they're taking people from our guest homes.

I know over the last number of years some of the legislation that has been passed and some of the stuff that has been passed allowed them to do more and more, but at least as a self-regulating body they'll be able to propose some of the procedures that they're able to perform. Some of procedures in the emergency situations they get into, they will allow themselves to make sure that their paramedics are kept up to date, that their educational requirements have to take place at a certain time and for a certain length of time, and how many hours they have to have to make sure they stay current on all situations and all of the new things that develop in health care in the province. When you see that and you allow them the ability to make sure that they can regulate themselves, it's a good thing for our province and it's a good thing for the people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say I'm glad to see the government has brought this forward and I'm glad to see that the paramedics are behind it and that they're going to be able to do what they need to do best for their members and for the people in the Province of Nova Scotia. I applaud the government for bringing this forward and I hope that in the future these paramedics realize it's a great thing for them, as well, because they can now know that they're going to be regulated so complaints and other things that can come in through them first, they can deal with them that way so that we, as Nova Scotians, receive the best possible front-line care. With those few words, I will take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand in my place today for a few minutes and talk about Bill No. 123, an Act Respecting the Practice of Paramedicine.

For those who might not know, once upon a time in another life I spent a lot of years as a paramedic in this province on the streets. I had a lot of fun over those years and had a lot of hard times, too, and it's hard to believe that the bill is before us. I remember talking about this a long, long time ago and how this would one day evolve.

It was interesting yesterday when the minister introduced a number of people in the gallery of whom I think I knew all but two over the years and knew well. One gentleman, Darrell Bardua was not only a colleague, but a partner of mine for a number of years way back in the Arsenault's Ambulance days. As we would probably also know, the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid was a former paramedic and student and partner of mine a long, long time ago it seems like now, but we had a lot of fun in those days. It's interesting how far we've come and reached this bill, although this bill is a little ways from being finished and proclaimed and the actual Act being put into place and the college set up, that's going to take some time as well.

A lot of this speaks to, when I look through it, the process more than anything else how this will all really line itself up and the details around that, not so much about what paramedics do or have done, or where they've come from and how we got to where we are today. I think it's important that people in the province realize just exactly how this industry and this business has evolved over the years.

In 1990, I was hired by Arsenault's Ambulance full time; I had worked casually for some time and part time prior to that. I was hired by Arsenault's Ambulance on June 15th, and it was interesting how that went. You needed almost nothing to work - a Class 4 driver's licence, which was equal to a taxi licence at the time. There were no rules in place, per se. I took something called an EMA course in those days, two weeks of training and a Class 4 licence. There was nothing more than that. You needed to know how to drive fast, keep it on the road, get there and get back.

That's sort of where it started and it's strange, you know, people laugh about that, but it's true. In those days, as well, your wages weren't the very best - \$3 a call in town, and everybody loved a trip to the city because it paid \$25. The guys on salary made a couple hundred dollars a week, and in those days we were working 168 hours in a two-week pay period before you worked overtime.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was overtime, if you can imagine that, in the time that was left - 72-hour shifts were the norm when I started working in Windsor in those days, and not a lot of sleep was the other norm because we were busy, very busy unfortunately in those days. People would probably never understand that unless they worked it and they came from that era. Thankfully today, we are a long, long way from that.

The job today is a career, Mr. Speaker, which is a wonderful thing. The wages, some would argue, are still not adequate, but they are a lot better than what they were. The training is second to none. We have been accredited, as most people know. On the street,

in the ambulance business on the road, internationally, we are one of the top, if not the top, in North America. You will find no care anywhere that is any better, and it's not the system, it's the people who have made that happen - the people. There were people in the crowd yesterday who have been around a long time.

I think about Dr. Ron Stewart and I remember sitting in that dungeon - I called it the dungeon where we were - our ambulance base in Sackville was the basement of the office. There were a few beds in one room and not much in the other, and that's where we responded from. I remember sitting there with Jeff Keefe - he was my partner at the time when I came to Sackville - and we were watching this very thing, this debate in the House, and Ron Stewart talking about where we would be today, if you can believe that. How interesting it was to see him yesterday in this House when that bill was tabled - very, very interesting.

That just goes to show how long ago this really all began, because it was a previous Liberal Government that brought that to the floor of this House, and thank God for that. You know, politics aside, somebody, and who better than Ron Stewart, whose background certainly said - we know it's got to be better than what it is today. We know it can be better; we know it will be better, and we know it takes time.

Ed Cain, who was also in the gallery yesterday, a man I've known for a very long time, was the beginning as well. When you think about it, he was the medical director for a lot of us who worked in the area and allowed us to do a few extra skills and taught us a few extra skills. That was even prior to designation credentialing. We were EMAs and then you had this thing called a P1 and 2 or intermediates or something. There were a lot of us that were classified as 2s because we were doing a little extra. We were doing some IVs, some drug therapy and defibrillation at the time. I think that's really the only reason the P2 was developed, was because there were a lot of people in the middle.

In those days, Mr. Speaker, there was only one paramedic group and that was at the VG Hospital. If you didn't work there, you really didn't get a chance to wear that tag that said paramedic, or that jacket, or any other kind of credential, you were just an ambulance driver. You can see where that evolved from because there were a lot of ambulance drivers in the day. I guess I would have been classified as one of those. The only scary part was some could drive and some couldn't, and the scarier part was those who thought they could drive and couldn't.

A lot of us are probably lucky to still be around, given the situation we were in in those days, so again, how far this has really come. It's hard to believe and I want to say it has been almost 20 years since that first change that Dr. Stewart would have made in this very historic Chamber, putting it forward.

I remember Ron coming out to Bedford in - it would've been the Sun Tower I think at that time - and hosting a meeting and kicking this off, and we were all attending and sort

of learning how this might unfold. No one would have ever thought it would have been all these years later that we would be just discussing this very piece of how important that credentialing is, and the governing part of it and we now have reached a point where we would have a College of Paramedics here in Nova Scotia - hard to believe, after all that. We always answered to somebody else, always answered to someone else, always answered to someone else - a doctor? Not so much, but more the nurses.

Nurses, in my own opinion - God bless all of them, they work hard. They weren't really happy with some of us when we started doing extra care, it almost seemed. You felt like, oh maybe we shouldn't be doing that; we're not qualified to do that. You know in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, we probably weren't qualified to be doing it. We had no real formal training.

That evolved because of people like Dr. Ed Cain, who was here yesterday. He's the guy who said you have to do this, this, and this, and you have to be not 75 per cent - you need to be 100 per cent or darned close because that's what's expected. You can't make mistakes when you're doing more of this kind of care, advanced care. He has been a huge, huge part of making all of this happen.

Dr. Andrew Travers was here as well. Andrew has been involved long since before I left, which was almost 10 years ago now - hard to believe - since I've been working for EMC and EHS in those days. Yes, it has to be 10 or 12 years since Andrew Travers came on the scene or more. He has picked up sort of where Ed backed off. He has carried the torch by way of medical control and signing off on who's able, who's not able, who's qualified; putting in place procedures and policies that allow paramedics to do the work that they do.

The schools now - we have Holland College still, as far as I know, training paramedics, or other areas around the country and around North America where you can train and come here and be recognized.

Unfortunately, we've had a number of paramedics who have moved on to other things like LifeFlight in other provinces. I think about Mark who has gone to Ontario now and Greg in Ottawa - people who we've worked with over the years that we know and know very well, who started their careers here and who are very successful. Many of the people who I've worked with over the years are now managers or in the management team - supervisors or executive people who have been working their way all the way up through from those old days that I started. They have also been a big part of developing this industry.

I think about Bob Brown who hired me way back, who's no longer with EMC - he's retired - and other guys, Craig Popwell, John Lewis in Cape Breton, guys that I got to know, Dale Bartlett and a number of these fellows who have been in the system a long, long time have really been a big part of that.

But there was one guy missing yesterday that I really would have loved to have seen in this House in the gallery, and that was Mike McKeage. Mike was a guy who believed wholeheartedly in all that these people have been doing. Although he was - I don't know what his title was. Dave, what was his title? Director of operations was Mike's title for the years that I hung around there.

If there was ever a guy at the senior level who was always in trouble, it was probably Mike McKeage because he wasn't the norm. He's the guy who stepped out of the norm to make sure it got done, to support the paramedics, the guys and gals that needed it.

HON. DAVID WILSON: He's in the Yukon now.

MR. PORTER: He's in the Yukon now, and I actually still am back and forth with Mike every once in a while on Facebook, and it's good to hear from him.

Mike was a guy who was a driving force in this province, as well, who worked with the government, worked very hard with the government of the day, to help keep that moving, whether it was the contract part of it or just the starting up and the evolution of this thing. Around 1997, I think, for us in Nova Scotia was when EMC sort of came on the picture. There was this great evolution of we're going to form a body that everybody would join, and we would all become one at some point. Those transitions carried on and carried on and carried on.

That was all due, as I said, to a previous government - the previous Liberal Government at that time - and to guys like Ron Stewart, who knew how that had to happen because they had been part of it in other places and other lives. They knew full well that it could happen.

Along with those people, we saw equipment - and I've always been baffled by how we can't do things better when it comes to a small province. We are a small province, generally speaking, when you compare us to the rest of the world or the rest of Canada, Ontario and other places. But it doesn't matter where you go in this province, you can get in an ambulance in Sydney or in Yarmouth, and you can find the same piece of gear and the same looking vehicle, exactly the same cabinet - no problem.

In other parts of the circle of health, we'll call it, those consistencies don't exist yet. But I believe they can. Part of the reason I support the one health board wholeheartedly is consistency across that board - the ability to purchase and act, and policies and procedures. Why should people be treated differently in Truro as they would be in Yarmouth or Sydney or Halifax? They shouldn't be. Why would the gear be different in those places? They shouldn't be. It should be simple.

The ambulance business has actually become very simple in that respect. We have safety now that we never had. We have things in place to help with those that have been

affected by certain calls, and that's a good thing, because that did not exist in the days when we were out there. You just did the calls and you moved on. That's okay. That's all part of that evolution of a great business. People always said, Oh my, I don't know how you do that job, but you know, it was the most fun job I ever had, because of the people. It was a lot of fun.

Situations weren't always great. Living quarters weren't always great. Vehicles weren't always great. Sometimes the equipment wasn't always great, because we never had much. I remember going into hospitals - and the member for Sackville-Cobequid may or may not choose to back me up on this, but we would go in with a patient on the stretcher and you would swear when we came out, perhaps, there was a patient still on the stretcher. We borrowed gear from here and there when we had to, to get by, because you know what? It was tough. There weren't gloves supplied on every call. I remember washing gloves off so we'd have a pair to use the next time. That's the truth. That's how hard it was in those days, when you look back - albeit really good, a great job.

The best part of that job was you dealt with somebody new every single day. If you like working with people, as I did, and many others, those that stuck it out and stayed around for years - because there was a turnover. Six years used to be the average for someone working in that industry in the Province of Nova Scotia, prior to these changes coming in. Six years isn't a very long time. A lot of good people came, and a lot of good people that could've stayed went. They went on to other careers, because of ways they were affected in this business. This business of being a paramedic is not for everyone, I am the first to say that, and there's probably many I would encourage not to go into it in those days.

There probably were people we encouraged, go find a real a job, one where you are not dealing with what we are going to deal with, or what we deal with on a regular basis. It wasn't just about the conditions that you worked in. We stayed. We stuck it out. The conditions were not the most important thing. It's what we were doing that was the most important thing. When you see recognition by way of a bill like this, that's a great thing for all these people that stuck it out over the years.

For all these new people, I always said, when this started to come together, even in 1997-98 when things started to unfold - wow. One of the first things that happened in 1997, we were moved out of the dungeon, automatically went to new quarters. It was apartment housing that we got moved into at the time, I think. The hours were cut in half, and we were saying "what do I do now?"

Well, I can tell you what I did now, at that point. Communications at Nova Star were firing up, which is now known today as the provincial ambulance communication centre. I went to work there, and I worked a full-time job at Nova Star, and I worked a full-time job in the street, and that was great for a few years.

When EMC and EHS all came together and they ended up taking over Nova Star, they figured it out after a little while. The director of human resources at that time, I got a call one morning. I was at work, and she said, can you come to my office? I said sure, and she said, there is something kind of odd about you, and I thought, well, you have to know me and you'd agree, we all agree with that. She said, you're drawing two full-time paycheques from one company, you have to make a decision. I said, oh okay. I made a decision and I stayed at the communication centre as a supervisor at that time. I had worked up through, and that was a fabulous job as well, in communications. I spent a lot of time in there, as well as in the street.

It was all part of trying to get us into what this actually represents today, away from 168 hours every two weeks, into something more normal or what was considered in labour to be more normal. A forty-hour week is not a normal week for a paramedic. We still have some folks that are working - I think forty-eight is perhaps now the most, and you're limited. You have to have so much time off. It is a career today. It really is a career, and that is a good thing.

There are a couple things that I did note when I was going through the bill, that I didn't see clarified. I spoke a couple minutes ago about communications. I'm only going to assume from reading this, it talks about essential competencies, and it talks about a few other things, and it continually references paramedics, but there's nothing specific in the bill that talks about the communications officers.

The reason that I raise that is, some of the communications officers, after they are there for a while, change their tag from an active paramedic status of 1, 2, advanced 3, or whatever it might be - was it 5? Dave, is that still right, a 5? Anyway, there's another designated credential number where they're a registered EMD. They're not mentioned in this, but they're still actually a paramedic. It's only that their tag has changed. That's the same for all us really, we're still but we're inactive and that's how you go for a while and then of course you're out. I don't know if there would be consideration for that or that needs to be clarified or that is just an assumption of those who spent probably what was many, many hours developing this document and writing of the each of the standards and all the pieces here under the Act, and what each represents and what each means.

It may be worth looking at and adding, amending somehow to see that they are there because that is an important piece. The folks at communications fall under this bill in my opinion as much as any paramedic on the street or working in the queue or anywhere else, they fall under this very piece of legislation. There should be something there and perhaps when it gets to Law Amendments, somebody will raise that. I don't sit there but I'm sure that others around the table could raise that issue or I'll speak to the minister on it. We can't forget that communications piece, it's a serious piece of this bill, and they are paramedics.

Much has changed, as I said; a lot has changed over the years. People, like I said, have changed but they are the key to this bill, and I want to just take a minute to think about how long this has gone on - like I said, forever. I spoke to a former Minister of Health about this and he said this was never brought forward to move because it wasn't ready. It has taken a long time to get ready. As I talked about a few minutes ago, it will be a year or two yet before it's in place. But it gives them a significant amount of - I don't want to use the word "power", but ability to manage a body who does deserve this very thing. It's been a long time, a long, long time.

I could probably tell you a lot stories some of you wouldn't want to hear about, changes that have occurred over the years, people we worked with, former operators. I think there were 52 operators when I became involved in this business, 52 operators at the time and some of them owned multiple - our former boss, Bill Arsenault, who has now passed on as of a few months ago, owned Windsor and Sackville. We were not affiliated with a funeral home like a lot of them were in the earlier days, actually right through until EHS took them over, transitioned in. We're still affiliated with funeral homes around the province - and/or cab companies, as some may recall. You could be driving a taxi cab and there would be an ambulance call and you would park that cab and you would jump in the ambulance and off you would go - and that would be how it got done.

The strange part about that is that that's not that far back when you really think about it. The ambulance business in Nova Scotia is really not that old. I think the first class was around 1970-71 where I saw an old picture of guys like Bill and Bud Avery and a few others, Jerry Parker whose number was like four, or something. I worked with Jerry for a lot of years and I was 442 and that of course was where you fell in and where you registered and so on like that. And there's a lot more than that today. I don't know how many, 1,400 I heard quoted here that have gone through and are part of the system in some way, registered in the system in Nova Scotia.

The old operators varied; there was no consistency. The E form and the A form mattered a lot because that's how you got paid, and we were always told make sure you get that signed because, if you don't get that signed, we don't get paid. We've come so far, I don't know what the budget line item today is, but the budget line item for EHS today is \$100 - some million. The former Finance Minister sitting beside you would know that as well. When I started it was \$14.5 million. We have come a long, long way - but all for the better.

You know, you talk about what governments invest and we hear that a lot in this Chamber - what do we invest our money in as government? There was a need to invest; if you looked around and you saw paramedics and what they were driving and what they were dressed in and what gear they didn't have, and how they weren't able to look after you in all honesty, but they ran fast to you and they ran faster to the hospital - and an investment was required. Thankfully governments all along have continuously invested in the system, and I hope will continue to invest in for some time. I'm sure it will reach its

peak at some point, if it already hasn't. We now have planes and we have helicopters and we have things that make us very capable, very efficient - very, very efficient. The cost of that business however is very high. Somewhere that has to level out and I think they realize that, too. And not unlike any other corporation or business, wages are a big part of that; it's huge, the HR side of that is huge. People should be paid a decent dollar for what they do.

When we were transitioned in 1997, I was making \$6.50 an hour and I think, at that point, we were about the second-highest paid in the province. We were doing very well at \$6.50 and I think our contract even allowed us to get a pair of boots - that almost never came through. It was interesting how those things didn't happen and it didn't really matter. We still had a job and we were working and we were happy doing so. So the transition has been quite something.

For all of those people, especially the ones in the gallery yesterday who, like I said, have been here for a long time, many, many years, who never would have thought this would have ever happened, who jokingly talked about some day we would have the ability to have something like this in place. Nobody believed that it would happen. There were very few who would have believed it, unless you were really deeply involved in it and when it came time to be part of writing it, putting it together.

It's quite an honour to have the opportunity to speak to this piece, having come from that world - come from an older world, the beginning almost, not far from the beginning of this industry and that might make me sound old and I'm not. Really, I was young when I started in that business and I was still young when I got out and I'm still young today.

The experience that I acquired, through new and old, as the business evolved, is amazing. The life lessons that you learn working with and for people every day in that business are incredible. It makes you have a different outlook on life, perhaps, a different opinion on many things, sometimes strong, sometime passionate, maybe more so and maybe a little bit biased some days on certain topics because you've been involved in them - and biased is probably not a good word - more passionate is the word, I think.

I went to Pictou County in late 1999 or somewhere around there, the summer of 1999, and what was then Dort's Ambulance was transitioning into EHS and I was asked if I would go to Pictou County and help with that transition. I spent a year there or maybe a little more. What a great opportunity that was, not only to be part of that area, but to travel the entire northern region because that's what my job fell under, the chance to travel across Route 6 through Pictou and Tatamagouche and on to Pugwash and then into Springhill and down to Parrsboro.

I did that about once a month. It was my turn on the weekends to be on call and I would make that trip on my way home a lot of times and I would take the long way around and talk to those medics, guys and gals, more gals were starting to come in at that time.

Mostly it had been males at the time, but there are a lot of females working in this industry which is great to see as well. It's amazing how many, actually, and really good quality people coming in to what is now a career, as I said before.

I got to drive around that northern region and I had travelled the province fairly extensively in my younger days as a teenager playing hockey, baseball and things like that, so it was really great to make my way back through those areas. I don't think there is any place in the province I probably couldn't find, whether it was the craziest back road or the most unnamed place, I could probably find my way there and I don't know why that is, probably because I like geography. I had the opportunity to travel it extensively.

To meet those people that I didn't know, as paramedics, I would often hear on the radio in places like Parrsboro - Keith and the gang down there - I didn't know who that was. All I knew was a voice, never a face, but I got a chance over the years to meet a lot of them and coming to Pictou County was great because it gave me the opportunity to do that and I enjoyed my time there.

Y2K, for those who might remember that, was a big deal in those days and in Pictou County there was this amazing thing going on on New Year's Eve and everybody thought the world was going to come to an end and - guess what? It didn't, just like every other time, I guess, someday maybe, but a really, really great experience. Then I came back to communications and that was a very valuable time as well.

I got a chance to take on the role of staff development training and teaching new paramedics coming into the world of communications. Having been all through that, a lot of experience that I had, I really enjoyed my time there. I got a chance to meet a lot more people from around the province because those who could no longer work on the ambulance would have an interest in communications, so they could continue working, and we had a lot of interest in them because they were knowledgeable and they had a lot of skills to offer.

The importance of a communications centre in this province has been a huge asset to what's going on on the street. Some might argue that point in the early days when it wasn't a lot of fun, and there was some confusion, and not everybody knew the geography quite as well, and things were all broken up in different areas and districts and regions.

It's important to note how vital the role of the provincial ambulance communications centre is. They make it all happen. We're now in MIN numbers - I believe we've hit over 600 MIN numbers a day now. That's how many calls - a MIN number associated per call. It's a phenomenal amount of calls coming through that place.

When I left there in June 2006, we were barely over 400 at the time. On a busy day we had over 400. I would know those quite well, because part of my job was quality assurance - not only teaching and hiring and sometimes saying goodbye to folks who didn't

make it through that process or didn't want to stay - measuring the performance. That was all indicators set by EHS/EMC in the province. Those were meant.

Again, people had an idea today would come - a bill like this, someday. It would be a really great day when we would be recognized and be given such an ability to create a college of our own.

What will this mean in the future? It's hard to say probably just yet, but it's really going to enhance what we've done already, whether it's training - I know it speaks to disciplinary measures and monitoring and all of those things and the quality piece around all of that.

But now it's really about encouraging, I think - more importantly than ever - new people who are graduates coming out of school. Is there a reason to stay in Nova Scotia? There sure is. It's called a great career in paramedicine. If you've got an interest and you've got your sciences, or you want to learn them, and you want to go to school post-secondary - Holland College or a place in Nova Scotia or wherever you're going to go to train.

Do we have opportunities here in this province? I hope we do for a long, long, long time to come, because we're just getting there. We're just getting there, really. It's hard to believe I'm saying this, 25 years and more after I was hired to be a paramedic, that we're just getting there. Yes, a long time, a long, long time.

Eddie wants me to hurry up. He said, you've got to sit down. I said, oh, okay. I guess I can do that - in a minute.

And I guess I will, in a few minutes, wrap this up. I just wanted to take a few minutes to really recognize the importance of the people who deserve to have this in place. That is the people who have stuck it out and made it a career, people who have been around a long time, people who have gone through the hard times and the hard calls, people who have fought for this for a long time. There have been many ups and downs in this business - like every business, I suppose, but the hardships are different.

There have been others in this House, as I have alluded to earlier, who have put forward bills around the long-term health care of paramedics - post-traumatic stress, and what that means. We hope, or at least I do, that this being formed will take a leading role in assisting with that very thing.

Early in my career, in those days, there was no such thing as help for anybody struggling from calls that weren't always the greatest calls to do. That could be any number of things, and I don't need to even describe what that is. You can just imagine, and if you can imagine it, we've done it. That's the downside. The great side is all the great people you get to meet every day and the people that you do help. (Interruption) I'm being heckled here for some reason, Mr. Speaker. Not "heckled" - that's not the right word.

As I was saying, the people that you meet every day - there's somebody new every day. Now, there are regulars you get to meet and you get to know well, folks like veterans who are being transferred for care on a daily basis or a weekly basis, whatever that care might be.

I remember meeting many of those, and they used to say, oh, it's five o'clock in the morning, and he's calling, and he's got to go to the hospital. You know what? He was a veteran, and I don't care if he calls at three o'clock in the morning or five o'clock in the morning or 10 o'clock at night or two o'clock in the afternoon - that guy's getting the care that he deserves. We just get up and you go and you do that call. People used to growl a little about that, because you'd be working two and three days in a row.

But that gentleman - I'll never forget him - when he called, that didn't matter. He served his country, and we serve him. That's how that went. That was the relationship you built with the clientele out there. It was good. They appreciated that.

There were funnier calls as well. There were things that you'll never forget that are good experiences, people you meet - doctors and nurses, other medics from around, other workers in clinics and whatever they might be.

We've got another member here from Cape Breton who was a former health care provider and others too, not just him, many others who have come through this place who have been health care providers, who we would interact with, whether we were bringing him or her in for an appointment or whatever it might be. I don't think people appreciate - it's probably no different than police or fire, you don't need it, you don't think about it, but when you need it, you think a lot about it, and you appreciate it after you've made the call and you have had the service provided.

I know from all of the years that I worked there and in the years since I've left, there have been a number of people come in my office that have had interactions with EHS, and they weren't coming in to complain - maybe about the bill, but the service was always top quality. That was always so nice to hear. It continues to be nice to hear, about medics I don't even know anymore, new people who have come and been around long after I left; it carries on. People get in this business for a reason; they love working with people and for people.

There are a lot of things, like I said, probably a lot more I could talk about and there were other incidents that happened over the years that would give some satisfaction to what this bill really means to those people that have been around for a while. Swissair, I worked that night. You know you talk about calls that had serious implications - 9/11 - I worked. Those were not the greatest times, but the people came together. Those paramedics came together to work together regardless of differences. It's interesting how those things all just unfold as they're supposed to; it's a natural thing, interactions with police and fire people, like I said, always outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I could probably go on a lot more and I'm not going to. It's getting late in the day and late in my half hour, or whatever I've had, but I do want to say a huge thank you to the government and to the minister for finally getting this bill to the floor of this House, and this is not the end by any stretch, I don't think. This bill will get through and it really is just the beginning of the next version, the next piece.

I want to take the closing minute to say - to all those paramedics out there, the ones who were here yesterday; the doctors and Ron Stewart, for their vision and for their work; to each and every paramedic out there, new, old, retired, passed, those who started it and those who will spend many, many, many years of their life working in this field - a huge thank you for all you do every day out there, and to all our emergency responders, whether they be police or fire, but this bill is about the paramedics today. It's huge and I want to thank each and every one of them for all that they do, as I said, and will continue to do in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I guess with those very few words, I will take my seat, thanks so much.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 123. 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No.125.

Bill No. 125 - Zion United Baptist Church of Yarmouth Dissolution Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: I move that Bill No.125 be read for a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 125. 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 Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: 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.

[5:01 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[5:04 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 has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 78 - Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.

Bill No. 117 - Public Inquiries 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, November 20th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. At that time we will call Government Business, Public Bills for Second Reading - Bill Nos. 126 and 127 - and such other government business that may arise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to resume tomorrow, Friday, November 20th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, November 20th, at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 5:05 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2457**

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Minister of Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas each year one in three Nova Scotia seniors will be hurt or injured as the result of a fall; and

Whereas many of these falls could have been prevented by managing personal risks and creating safer environments; and

Whereas the province acknowledges the dedication and hard work of many community and provincial organizations who strive to help prevent and reduce falls for Nova Scotia seniors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize November 15 to 21 as Falls Prevention Week in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 2458

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Bruce Pearson, regional manager of business development for the northern Nova Scotia group of TC Media newspapers, retired from the Truro News in June 2015 after a 41-year career with the newspaper, starting out as a paper boy at age 11; and

Whereas Pearson, from Valley, Colchester North became involved with many organizations throughout the years, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Kinsmen, Rotary Club, the Children's Aid Society, and the Liberal Association, as well as more than 30 years with the fastball league; and

Whereas Pearson feels privileged to say his career ended where it began with a company more than four decades before, witnessing significant changes from print only to digital media;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bruce Pearson and wish him a healthy and happy retirement.

RESOLUTION NO. 2459

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas World Changers started at Redcliff Middle School, Colchester County, with 38 students involved in a Me to We initiative through Free the Children; and

Whereas the international organization encourages youth to help change one local and one global social injustice issue relating to things such as education, water and renewable resources, and income related skills development; and

Whereas these students raised \$600 for the Truro Homeless Outreach Society's Hub House, a permanent shelter; \$2,400 for a We Are Silent initiative; \$1,000 for clear water initiatives; and worked with the Royal Bank to help clean up garbage behind the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the World Changers at Redcliff Middle School for having an impact and making changes on issues in their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 2460

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas the Sharon United Church in Tatamagouche was built in 1854 at a cost of \$580, and pews were rented to help cover a portion of the expenses; and

Whereas the church is in the gothic revival style, with narrow, arched windows and a central tower with four spires; and

Whereas the sanctuary is widely recognized for its acoustic quality and was one of the venues used for the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts from 1957 to 1967, along with the North Colchester Cenotaph located on the front lawn;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Sharon United Church for recently being registered as a heritage site.

RESOLUTION NO. 2461

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Monique Natividad, a VON Adult Day Program coordinator, works with clients three days each week and is making a difference in their lives; and

Whereas some of her clients live in their homes with family, some live independently, and others come from other care facilities, and they are from all walks of life and are of all ages; and

Whereas Monique enjoys music, which she shares with the clients as well as the Immaculate Conception Church choir; and along with her husband, Jesus, and three sons, takes in international students during the school year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Monique Natividad for her exuberance and her gift for brightening the lives of those around her.

RESOLUTION NO. 2462

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Megan Wynn from Crowes Mills, Colchester North, a member of the Onslow-Belmont 4-H Club, will be one of six youth from Canada to participate in the European Young Breeders School in Battice, Belgium, where there will be hundreds of students from all over the world attending; and

Whereas Megan received “Grand Champion Dairy Individual” at an EastGen Showcase at a 4-H event in Truro last year; and

Whereas her confidence in her good animal skills serves her well when working with animals in competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Megan Wynn for being chosen to participate in such a world-class event and wish her well in her future endeavours to be a veterinarian.

RESOLUTION NO. 2463

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Education)

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

Whereas Cassidy Langley from Crowes Mills, Colchester North, swam more than 14 kilometers across the Northumberland Strait as part of the GIVE TO LOVE's Big Swim; and

Whereas Langley's goal was to raise \$2,000 for Brigadoon Village, a non-profit recreational facility at Aylesford Lake that provides camp programming to children, youth and families living with a chronic illness, chronic condition or special need; and

Whereas this 20-year-old university student competed her swim in four hours and three minutes and had raised more than \$2,400 by the time she finished her swim;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cassidy Langley for her successful fundraising accomplishment.

RESOLUTION NO. 2464

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Education)

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

Whereas in 2015 the Royal Canadian Mint launched a nationwide coin design competition called My Canada, My Inspiration, with only 25 being selected as finalists from nearly 10,000 designs; and

Whereas one of those finalists was Andrew Meredith from Great Village, Colchester North, inspired by memories of being a kid and playing in the snow with his three sisters on the farm; and

Whereas his drawing of a child making a snow angel, titled Winter Fun, could be on a Canadian coin in 2017 to celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Andrew Meredith for being selected as a finalist and hope to see his design on a 2017 Canadian coin.