



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2015

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SPEAKER'S RULING:

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(Resolution by Hon. M. Samson [Hansard p.5896, Nov. 19/15])6042

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, which I've already made your Clerk aware of. Yesterday in the House, I understand a motion was tabled and passed. Unfortunately, the government didn't provide me a copy of that motion, but to the best of my ability I was able to speak to the Clerk and get information on that and what that included.

Last night, as you would be aware, I delivered to your office everything I have that is in my possession, which was actually already public. I also provided you some background on that; I provided the memory card in question.

Mr. Speaker, I would also remind the government, of course, that any electronic devices that may have had anything on it are already in the custody of the government and have been since November 6th - that includes the BlackBerry, iPad, and laptop.

Moreover, this morning I swore a legal oath before the Clerk of the Legislature attesting to the fact that there are no files in my possession other than what the Clerk has been provided.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that that satisfies the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take the point of order under advisement. It is my opinion that the order is open to this House until 12:00 noon, at which time I'll assess the facts as of 12:00 noon.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: On that point of order - on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, of this week, an envelope was provided to the office of the administration of the House of Assembly, which was addressed to Laurel Munroe, director of communications to the Premier's Office. That envelope contained a written statement which was unsigned, as well as a thumb drive with one portion of a meeting that was recorded by the member for Dartmouth East following a conversation with the chief of staff of the Premier's Office.

Mr. Speaker, we have reason to believe that it was the member for Dartmouth East himself who provided that envelope to the offices of the administration of this House. I would ask if the member for Dartmouth East would take this opportunity to confirm whether or not it was, in fact, himself who did provide that envelope this Wednesday to the office of the administration of the House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, his own Premier has referred that matter to the police at the moment, and I have actually been advised - but I will say and I said publicly that I recorded it, and quite frankly, if I wanted to release it publicly, I would have released it to the media just as I did before. As I stated in the beginning, I have been advised that because the Premier has now referred the matter of that recording to the RCMP, because of the comments by the chief of staff on that tape, I should wait and comment on that to the RCMP should they wish. Should that matter be closed, I would be happy to speak more about it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, based on that response, I would ask that you take that response in consideration as you prepare for your deliberations as of 12:00 noon today, based on the unanimous motion passed by this House.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this is getting silly and ridiculous, and now the whole House has been dragged into something that is really a matter between two people, one is the member for Dartmouth East and the other is the chief of staff for the Premier. They are the only two who know what happened in these conversations. There are snippets of a recording, but they are the only two.

In the interest of bringing this to a fair conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you consider calling the Premier's chief of staff and the member for Dartmouth East to the House, outside where they can be questioned in public about what they know, without spending more public money and calling in the police, and all the other things that are going on, so we can get on with the business of government.

MR. SPEAKER: We will take all matters into consideration. As I stated earlier, the order is open until 12:00 noon - at which time I assume we'll all still be here - and the House will recess while I consider the facts of the matter as of 12:00 noon today.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, 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: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the Attorney General, I hereby beg leave to table the Law Reform Commission of Nova Scotia's 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 Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2467

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's youngest residents are the future of this province; and

Whereas every child deserves to feel safe, supported, and cared for with compassion; and

Whereas every child should have the chance to reach their full potential;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House and all Nova Scotians take time to celebrate and respect children's rights not only on National Child Day, but throughout the year.

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 Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 2468

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

Whereas National Child Day is celebrated in Canada on November 20th, in recognition of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child; and

Whereas the focus of National Child Day 2015 is on helping child refugees, an issue that is extremely important and timely here in Nova Scotia and around the world; and

Whereas all levels of government share an important role in protecting children and providing for their basic needs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize November 20, 2015, as National Child Day in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

RESOLUTION NO. 2469

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

Whereas November 14th to November 20th is Transgender Awareness Week, a time to increase awareness of the issues that our transgender friends, family members, neighbours, and colleagues continue to face; and

Whereas the event culminates with the Trans Day of Remembrance today, November 20th, which honours the memory of those who lost their lives in acts of anti-transgender violence; and

Whereas we recently took action to help further protect transgender Nova Scotians from harassment and discrimination by amending the Vital Statistics Act to remove the requirement for Nova Scotians to have sex reassignment surgery to change the sex designation on the birth certificate; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians must continue to take action to ensure that transgender Nova Scotians are further protected from harassment and discrimination;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize Trans Awareness Week in the Province of Nova Scotia and today as the Trans Day of Remembrance.

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

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

It is 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. 128 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Labour Standards Code. (Hon. Kelly Regan)

Bill No. 129 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 418 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Securities Act. (Hon. Randy Delorey)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2470

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: 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 Premier to produce to the Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly, by 12:00 noon of the next weekday following the day on which this resolution is passed, all emails, texts, letters, BlackBerry messages, and other correspondence of any kind held by him or any member of his staff relating to Kirby McVicar, the member for Dartmouth East, or Ms. Katia Younger, job offers to Ms. Younger, and audio recordings made on February 12, 2015, as well as any audio

recordings from conversations between Mr. McVicar and the member for Dartmouth East;

- (2) for greater certainty, the Speaker to issue a warrant and authorize the Sergeant-at-Arms to obtain the correspondence 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 correspondence available to any person upon request of 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?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

ST. F.X. FOOTBALL TEAM: UTECK BOWL (2015) - BEST WISHES

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, today I'm excited to stand in the Legislature in support of the St. F.X. X-Men football team. My hometown is buzzing with football frenzy, and tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. the St. F.X. X-Men take on the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds at home in the 2015 Uteck Bowl. The winner of the semi-final goes on to the Vanier Cup.

The last time the X-Men reached the CIS semi-final was in 1996. I was a student at St. F.X., and can remember the excitement on campus and throughout the community. To get to the Uteck Bowl, the St. F.X. X-Men had to secure their first AUS Championship in nearly two decades. On Saturday, November 14th, the X-Men defeated the Mount Allison Mounties 14-12 in a dramatic come-from-behind victory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the X-Men on a great season, their victory last weekend, and becoming the 2015 AUS champions. While there will be X-Rings proudly on display on both sides of the field tomorrow, I would like to wish the X-Men the best of luck. Go X go!

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

RUSSELL, BURTON: MAR. SPORT HALL OF FAME - INDUCTION

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to tell Maritime members about a well-deserved induction in the new Maritime Sports Hall of Fame. Mr. Burton Russell of Kentville is the author of 11 books about Nova Scotia's sport history and is one of the foremost sport historians in the Maritimes. The recognition of the tremendous role he played in helping to record the tradition of Maritime sports was honoured when he was named an inaugural inductee in June.

I want to congratulate Mr. Russell on this notable accomplishment and for his contribution throughout the years to the history of our province's sporting endeavours. Thank you.

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

CDN. FISHERIES RESEARCH NETWORK - FUNDING CONTINUE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Fisheries Research Network was launched in 2010 as a unique collaboration between scientists, academics, and the fishing industry. The examination of the structure and the movement of lobster stocks in more than a dozen locations across Atlantic Canada could affect the structure of fishing zones and the future management of the stocks worth more than \$620 million in landed values annually.

Understanding the science behind the catch can go a long way to increasing the cohesiveness of the fishing industry; however, after spending five years studying a variety of issues affecting the marine sector, the funding for this research network has run out. I would encourage the government to work with their federal counterparts to ensure that this important research continues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MACMILLAN, STU: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment today to talk about a Bedford resident who recently left us.

Stuart MacMillan was a man you could count on. He saw action in Europe in World War II. Stu was a member of the Bedford Legion Branch 95 for over 55 years, and he served in many capacities. He was awarded a life membership. He was also a past master of the Masons.

Stu coached many sports and then turned to officiating. He was the first Nova Scotian recognized on the wall of honour in Ottawa for track and field officiating. He

worked with special Olympians. He was a devout member of St. Andrew's Church and he was a dedicated Liberal. He spent much of 1993 going door to door with my husband, Geoff. Stu was Bedford's town crier. His motto was "Have Bell, Will Yell".

When his son Ron died in a car accident, he stepped in to help his grandson Colin, who was injured in the same accident. He was a devoted husband to Dorothy for nearly 60 years and a loving grandfather to Shane and Lachlan. Stu McMillan was a man with a big voice and an even bigger heart. He will be missed.

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

GUTHRO, BRUCE - N. SYDNEY SONGWRITERS CIRCLE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank international singer-songwriter Bruce Guthro for hosting a songwriters' circle in North Sydney with his son Dylan, Heather Rankin, and Dave Gunning. Coming home to play for people you grew up with is a true honour. Bruce and his friends remembered their roots and put on a top-notch evening of wonderful entertainment.

It's a true privilege to have this opportunity to say thanks to Bruce for a personal talented evening. We hope he keeps the songwriters' circles coming. Thank you.

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

INTL. TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE (11/20/15)

MS. LENORE ZANN: November 20th marks the International Transgender Day of Remembrance, and today is a day to memorialize those who have lost their lives as a result of transphobia and to bring attention to the continued violence endured by the transgender community. The Transgender Day of Remembrance was founded in 1998, and since then countries around the world mark the continued struggle of trans people around the globe, who face violence, isolation, and discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has made many positive steps forward to ensure that all trans people in our province can live in a peaceful and inclusive community; however, there is still so much more work to be done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

SHAW, LOGAN - HOCKEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: When natural abilities are matched with hard work, dreams are often realized. A tremendous young man from Glace Bay is living his dream as

a result of dogged determination, personal sacrifice, and believing that there is no limit to his game. Twenty-three-year-old hockey player Logan Shaw has battled to get better every single day since he was a toddler. He listened to his coaches, studied the game, and constantly worked on his shot and playmaking abilities.

After a dominant career in minor hockey, Logan played five years in the Q before being drafted to the NHL in 2011. This year he has had an impressive start in his third season as a pro with the Portland Pirates of the AHL.

Then, last month, the day he had envisioned during all of those practices and training sessions became his reality - on Friday, October 30th, Logan Shaw stepped on the ice as a member of the Florida Panthers, playing his first NHL game at home to the Boston Bruins. Wearing number 48, Logan replaced future Hall of Famer Jaromir Jagr in the Panthers' lineup - a remarkable night for Logan, who has certainly earned it.

Logan is a shining example for many kids in our embattled community. No matter who you are . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PICTOU ACAD. EDUCATIONAL FDN.:
BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY - PREPARATIONS**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to congratulate the members of the Pictou Academy Educational Foundation for the successful launch of the countdown to the Academy's 200th Anniversary.

The countdown to the celebrations began with the release of a book about the storied school and some of its former students. The book entitled, *Cradle of Knowledge: Pictou Academy, 1816-2016*, was written by local journalist and writer Monica Graham. Keynote speakers at the book launch were former Pictou Academy graduates Dan MacDonald, Class of 1953; and Scott Landry, Class of 1992.

Madam Speaker, I thank the foundation members for their dedication and hard work as preparations are under way for Pictou Academy's Bicentennial Anniversary. I look forward to the celebrations and events in 2016.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV. - INCOME ASSISTANCE: SYSTEM - CHANGE

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Madam Speaker, in a story published by *The Chronicle Herald*, a 55-year-old man who receives income assistance from the Department of Community Services stated that, "Surviving as a street person was easier than raising one child on assistance. The system is broken."

This Nova Scotian man receives \$825 a month in income assistance, his rent is \$800, plus electricity. A recent study conducted by Halifax City Council found that 12 per cent of households are spending more than half of their income on shelter alone.

In this same article the Minister of Community Services agreed with the man that the system was broken and that change is needed. However, we know that no increases to income assistance rates are coming anytime soon while this transformation takes place.

Madam Speaker, what are Nova Scotians living in poverty supposed to do while the system is being changed? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BARB'S BENCHES - LONG LAKE PARK

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, October 19th marked a very solemn gathering at Long Lake Provincial Park. This day marked the 25th Anniversary of the death of Barbara Baillie. Her life was ended abruptly at the hands of her husband of 24 years. Barb left behind five children, whose lives were forever changed by this horrific event.

The family and friends of Barb Baillie gathered at Long Lake Park for the dedication of Barb's Benches. This purple bench will be a reminder to all of the importance of recognizing the signs of domestic violence and speaking out against violence.

This was just the beginning of a campaign to have benches throughout HRM in Barb's memory and as a reminder of the consequences of domestic violence. Each bench will have a plaque with Barb's name and also contact information for reporting domestic violence.

It is my hope that Barb's Benches will raise awareness of domestic violence and will encourage people to speak out against this horrific act. Barb Baillie's children will always remember their mother, and if her bench gives even one person the strength to speak out against domestic violence they can take the comfort that their mother helped save someone from the horrific fate she suffered.

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

MARTELL, BOB: MIRA GUT COMMUN. - DEDICATION

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I rise here today to acknowledge Mr. Bob Martell, locally known as “Bridge Man Bob,” from Mira Gut for his dedication to the local area. Bob has looked after the opening of the bridge for water traffic for the past 39 years. Bob is the true gatekeeper to the Mira, controlling all of the boat traffic in and out of the Mira River. Bob was born and raised in Black Brook, has lived in Mira Gut, next to the Mira Gut Bridge, for about 52 years.

It is my great honour to thank Bob Martell and wish him many more years as being Bridge Man Bob, and congratulations to him for his dedication to the Mira Gut community. Thank you.

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

LAE MIN. - MOVER OF THE WK.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Madam Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to extend recognition to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education for being awarded the prestigious Mover of the Week award.

The minister has received this special honour because of her dedication in making university tuition fees rise. The minister reached this goal by taking the cap off tuition. Also, the minister edged out the other Liberal ministers by going the extra mile when she cut the Graduate Retention program.

I invite all here to join me in recognizing the minister for becoming the Mover of the Week by offering students a hand in moving out of Nova Scotia.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - FLU VACCINES

MR. BILL HORNE: Madam Speaker, it was my pleasure to visit the Fall River Guardian as part of Take Your MLA to Work Day. As I shadowed pharmacist and owner Shawn Grimm, I received a first-hand view of the day-to-day services of a pharmacy.

Three years ago pharmacies were permitted to start administering vaccines. During my visit, I was able to observe someone being immunized on site, who also received travel inoculations from a pharmacist. A pilot project, which began in May 2015, allows pharmacists to assess and prescribe for minor ailments. These initiatives were put in place as a way to alleviate some of the pressures placed on doctors and medical clinics.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Nova Scotians to remember to get their flu vaccines. This is the safest and most efficient way to protect yourselves and others from the flu. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BENNETT, BOB - VOL. EXPERIENCE

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, Bob Bennett is the executive director at Summer Street Industries, an organization creating opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. Bob has been an extremely community-minded person, with over 25 years of volunteer experience with numerous organizations.

He has volunteered with the YMCA, Rotary, New Glasgow Credit Union, Highland Residential Services, Persons With Disabilities Partnership Committee, Directions Council of Nova Scotia, and Kinsmen. He is the past president of many organizations, including Landview Housing Co-op and Pictou County Let Abilities Work.

As executive director for Summer Street, Bob has always believed in the statement, “We are so much more than just an employment service.” Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

GOV'T. (N.S.): REGISTRIES - SELL-OFF

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, the current government has broken yet another 2013 election promise. This time it's through their new electricity plan, which fails to break Nova Scotia Power's monopoly. Now the government is trying to add to Nova Scotia's version of the famous Parker Brothers Monopoly board game by selling off three profitable registries to a for-profit corporation.

Perhaps the government is trying to have its newest version of Monopoly ready just in time for Christmas. I suspect all out-of-province gift buyers will check out the government's “Fast-Dealing Property Trading Game,” no consultation required.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

ACADIAN SEAPLANTS - N.S. EXPORT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

MR. GORDON WILSON: Madam Speaker, a number of Nova Scotian companies are recognized annually by their regional chambers of commerce for their success in exporting.

At the Nova Scotia Export Achievement Awards, where all these companies are honoured, one of these regional nominees is named Nova Scotia Exporter of the Year. In 2015, this prestigious award went to Acadian Seaplants, the company nominated by the Digby Area Board of Trade. This company, founded in 1981 by Louis Deveau, is now the largest independent marine plant processing company in North America. It employs over 325 people.

As we know, one of the ways to grow our economy is to increase the level of exports from Nova Scotian companies. Given the importance of exporting to the future of Nova Scotia, it is important that we recognize these local businesses that have already successfully expanded their businesses by exporting. Acadian Seaplants exemplifies that successful Nova Scotian exporter, and currently exports to over 80 countries - a well-deserved choice for this award. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

SALSMAN, MURRAY - CANCER CARE AWARD

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Murray Salsman for receiving Cancer Care Nova Scotia's 2015 Excellence in Patient Care (Volunteer) award. This award acknowledges the work and commitment of those people who help enable quality cancer prevention and care for Nova Scotians.

Murray's contribution to patients and families has been outstanding, from his creation of Marg's Glad Garden in Grafton, Murray was able to raise funds for people in need by supplying gas money for appointments or mortgage payments, for a tank of oil, or for specialized medical equipment.

I thank Mr. Salsman for his dedication and commitment, and congratulate him on this well-deserved honour. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

UNITED WAY (COL. CO.) - COMMUN. PROGS.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, each year the United Way of Colchester County invests back into the local community by supporting critical programs that work to eliminate poverty, provide access to health or social services, and help kids be all that they can be. More than 5,000 individuals from Colchester County have benefited from the programs, grants, and initiatives supported by the United Way in 2014-15.

Applications are now open for 2015-16 to those who have a program that will move people out of poverty, help build a healthier community, and help our children succeed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

BIG SWIM: BRIGADOON VILLAGE - FUNDRAISING

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Madam Speaker, the Big Swim is an event held each year to support children living with chronic illness, a condition of special needs in Atlantic Canada. The swimmers brave the cold water of the Northumberland Strait, a 14-kilometre swim along the Confederation Bridge. This swim typically spans three to eight hours, depending on the weather and water conditions. Swimmers train for many months in preparation for the challenge. Each swimmer is supported by a kayaker and other backing boats who are volunteering their time and expertise. Support kayakers are key to the success of the Big Swim, provides a lifeline to the swimmers such as food, water, moral support, and safety support.

This year's funds went to sending 150 children to Brigadoon. Brigadoon Village is a summer camp experience for Atlantic Canadian children, youth and families living with chronic illness and conditions; 2015 was the fifth annual Big Swim and to date raised over \$560,000 for charity. Next year the organization is hoping that the Ministers of Finance and Treasury Board, and Environment will accept the challenge that he promised two years ago, will he do it? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

CLEARWATER SEAFOODS (PIERCE FISH. DIV.) - COMMUN. & BUS. EXCELLENCE AWARDS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, on October 20th, the Community and Business Excellence Awards were held to celebrate the work of local businesses and community organizations that are committed to excellence and innovation in Shelburne County. I would like to congratulate Clearwater Seafoods, Pierce Fisheries Division for receiving Exporter of the Year for demonstrating excellence in exporting outside of Canada as well as Darren Hudson's Wild Axe Productions receiving the Innovation in Business Award for achieving a competitive advantage in the marketplace, and the Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion received the Excellence in Community Development Award for their significant contributions to the community through their high leadership standards.

This is a well-earned recognition for all of these groups and organizations. Their valuable contribution to our community continues to ensure prosperity and economic growth in Shelburne County.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: INCOME ASSISTANCE - LENGTH

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Madam Speaker, in a CTV news story published in May of this year, the Minister of Community Services stated that there was an extraordinarily high number of people in Nova Scotia staying on income assistance longer than they should be. However, she could not give an exact number to back up these claims. A long-time social worker in the North End of Halifax, Paul O'Hare, who has worked with individuals on income assistance for 35 years, said he found it discouraging for a message like this to come from the minister and would like to see the numbers.

The minister goes on to say that you help folks, you lift them up to where they need to be, you support them in reaching their full outcome, and then they move on. Madam Speaker, while I agree with these claims made by the minister, I wonder how this is possible given that she has frozen assistance rates for two years. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

BAHR-GEDALIA, ULRIKE - RBC IMMIGRANT AWARD

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a constituent of Armdale, Ulrike Bahr-Gedalia who was honoured with a 2015 RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award and was also named one of Canada's top 40 change-makers by Canadian Living. Originally from Germany, Ulrike is the President and CEO of Digital Nova Scotia. She was also recognized as "Wavemaker" with the 2015 Top 15 Canadian Women in Communications and Technology Award: Innovator of the Year, and one of the Top 50 CEOs in the Atlantic Region by Atlantic Business Magazine.

Ms. Bahr-Gedalia is a local success story, and we are proud of her achievement as a successful immigrant to Nova Scotia and a female technology and business leader with local, national, and global reach, influence, and impact. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**MACINNIS, JIMMY & MARGIE
- STRAIT AREA C OF C ARTS AWARD**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER Madam Speaker, Jimmy and Margie MacInnis are this year's recipients of an award recognizing individuals who have enhanced the cultural, visual, performing, or literary arts. The Strait Area Chamber of Commerce chose Jimmy and Margie because they have worked and organized the West Mabou square dances for the last 25 years.

West Mabou is an institution for dance in Inverness County. You can find children seven years old and children at heart 87 years old at these dances. It is a special place, one where authentic culture lives and is transferred through generations. It is a gem, and we have Margie and Jimmy to thank.

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

LIB. GOV'T. - RURAL INTERNET SERV.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Madam Speaker, in our world of technology, access to the Internet is critical. In fact, one can argue that it is an essential service. Without Internet services in rural Nova Scotia, businesses cannot compete, students are disadvantaged, and communities are left behind.

The Liberal Government is taking a hands-off approach to this serious issue. They are expecting others to solve the problem. It's long past time for this government to give this issue the attention it deserves, or is this another issue where the Liberal Government is ignoring the needs of Nova Scotians and leaving them no option but to move out?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

ANL. FEMALE FIREFIGHTER NETWORKING DAY

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I was recently invited to take part in the annual Female Firefighter Networking Day at one of our local fire departments. I had the pleasure of having discussions with many women who volunteer countless hours away from their families to assist their communities as firefighters. This networking day offers an opportunity for women from different volunteer departments to come together to discuss and advance the issues and concerns specific to women in this role. I have the utmost respect for firefighters and was excited to see the talent and commitment of those in attendance.

I would like to congratulate and thank our female firefighters from all across the province for their hard work and dedication to their departments and communities. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MACEACHERN, BILL & ANDREA: BOSTON CHRISTMAS TREE - DONATION

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Andrea MacEachern's dream was to see her 72-year-old 46-foot spruce tree draped in Christmas lights. Andrea entered this cherished tree as a possible contender for Nova Scotia's gift to the City of Boston. After the field was narrowed down

to two trees, imagine their excitement when Andrea and Billy were told they were Boston bound, and their tree from Lorne was going to be decorated for Christmas.

The traditional Nova Scotia Christmas tree is to thank the citizens of Boston for their support following the Halifax explosion. Merry Christmas from Pictou East to the Boston Common, with love and thanks. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

GRAZIE, SAIDA - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Saida Grazie for really bringing life to the word “community.” She organized a wonderful back-to-school event for the children of the Bayers Westwood community on August 27th where she received donations for school supplies and other items to hand out to children whose families are living on a very tight budget. Saida is constantly working with groups in the community, and has a special passion and drive for innovating new ideas and programs. Saida’s energy is truly inspiring and makes me very proud to call her a constituent.

Her story began when she came to Canada with very little, and she never forgets the helping hands who allowed her to find her way. This is part of the driving force behind why she feels so strongly about supporting those in need. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate George Longard of Oxford, who is one of three country music artists inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame. This is the fourth time that George has been nominated for induction into the hall and his fans, friends, and family are thrilled that he has received the recognition that he deserves for his music.

Mr. Longard was only 16 years old when he was first asked to perform on the Don Messer television show. Over the years, he appeared on that show more than a dozen times.

It is an honour to congratulate George Longard on this outstanding achievement and wish him continued success in his future endeavours. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

GRAVES, BONITA ET AL: CHARITY - THANK

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize four sisters - Bonita Graves, Shelly Slaunwhite, Marina Peters, and Beverley Jollimore - for their recent act of kindness.

On Wednesday, November 4, 2015, the four sisters planned a lunch date. The week prior, one sister, Marina, who is bravely battling lung and brain cancer, had packed an older purse with goodies and generously gave it to a lady in need. This inspired her sister, Bev to load her trunk full of warm, freshly washed jackets. Together they ventured to downtown Halifax to find new owners for the jackets.

The men and women they met were delighted and very grateful; despite their own circumstances or medical conditions they were very happy to be receiving a new coat. One lady commented, "Today is a good day, all my needs have been met." In a time when most of us wonder which jacket shall I wear today, this was an eye-opening experience and the ladies cannot wait to plan their next pay-it-forward day.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking these generous ladies, and hope that their seeds of kindness grow in the future. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MACDONALD, DEBBIE - C.B. FARMERS' EX.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Debbie MacDonald, who has served for 49 years at the Cape Breton Farmers' Exhibition. Recently Debbie has been in charge of security for home crafts, baking, photography, and fine arts. Her day starts at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 11:00 p.m. Debbie feels the people she meets year after year make the experience memorable.

It's a true honour to have this opportunity to congratulate Debbie MacDonald on her 49 years of service to the exhibition. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

JOHNSTONE, STUART: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, this past summer the Province of Nova Scotia lost an outstanding citizen, a man who dedicated his life to the betterment of his community through years of service and volunteering. This man was Stuart Johnstone.

Mr. Johnstone had spent the majority of his life doing what he loved, which was helping out his community. He had spent 50 years on the Village Commission, a feat unmatched by many; he also served Waterville and District Fire Department for 65 years; and he was the proud recipient of a Diamond Jubilee Award for his thousands of hours of volunteering. Stuart Johnstone was a vital member to his community and embodies the compassion and pride for community which we should be so grateful to possess.

The Waterville and Valley community remembers Mr. Johnstone for all of his accomplishments and work which he had done for the Province of Nova Scotia. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HEARTLAND TOUR - PICTOU CO. STOP

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand to thank the participants and organizers of the Heartland Tour. This year marked the ninth time the tour stopped in Pictou County.

As part of the Pictou County stop, two bike courses were offered in Pictou West, a walk was held, and a bike tour to Springville took place. The Heartland Tour is a public awareness campaign that promotes the use of a bicycle as means of transportation to educate Nova Scotians about cardiac health and general health risks.

Preventing cardiovascular disease through an active lifestyle has positive implications for participants, as they generally enjoy good health longer. As a result of regular exercise and healthier living, the added benefit is it helps combat ever-increasing health care costs. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

VAN BOMMEL, CHRISTOPHER

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Madam Speaker, today I would like to tell you about a very bright young man. Christopher van Bommel of Antigonish is a graduate of St. F.X. University and just recently finished his master's at the University of Victoria.

He has received a \$140,000 scholarship for his next three years of studies to complete his Ph.D. at the University of Waterloo in the Department of, whew - Combinat - we'll skip that one. (Laughter)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: The record will show.

MR. DELOREY: The record will show.

One of these scholarships is the Alexander Graham Bell Canada Scholarship offered through the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada. It's a nationwide competition based on academics, research potential, and leadership. He also received the President's Graduate Scholarship and an entrance award.

Madam Speaker, Christopher is a remarkable young man, and I would like to offer my sincere congratulations on being awarded these amazing scholarships and wish him the best of luck in Waterloo and with his career.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

SIMPSON, RAYMOND

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Madam Speaker, for a young lad from Merigomish, his debut in the Legion Track and Field Nationals was a dream come true. Raymond Simpson, who is now a Grade 10 student, took his entrance in the National Steeplechase very seriously. He was calm and focused and took the lead right out of the blocks and never gave it up.

Raymond's home club is Pictou County Athletics and he certainly made them proud. The event is a middle-distance run with four hurdles and he was untouchable. His next goal is running in the cross-country for the North Nova Gryphons and I wish him all the best. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

97.5 COMMUN. RADIO (CIOE) - COMMUN. ROLE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate a terrific community radio station, 97.5 Community Radio, CIOE, which I had the opportunity to visit back in June; 97.5 Community Radio launched in May, is a not-for-profit community radio station, and is operated by the Cobequid Radio Society. Although it's based in Sackville, the station serves the communities of, and surrounding, Bedford, Sackville, Beaver Bank, Fall River, Wellington, Hammonds Plains, Mt. Uniacke, Timberlea, Clayton Park, and Rockingham.

CIOE embraces and focuses on each community - its news, events and activities, local artists and performers, and much more that's relevant to the interests of each local community. It features local music of many varieties, including Acadian music and fiddle music. It also runs programming on local events and sports, which includes a minor hockey hour. President of the Cobequid Radio Society, Jim Robson, along with Station Manager Al Hollingsworth, worked for over four years to bring the station from imagination to reality. It plays a very large role in every aspect of community life. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

CROCKET, JIM: HOCKEY ICON - RECOGNIZE

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, 60 years ago New Glasgow native Jim Crocket was a member of the 1955-56 Memorial Cup-winning Toronto Marlboros. Crocket, originally from Campbellton, New Brunswick, arrived in Toronto for the 1955-56 hockey season. The talented 18-year-old goaltender won the Dave Pinkney Trophy for allowing the least goals-against in the Ontario Junior League for that season. Bobby Baun, Carl Brewer, Cape Breton's Al MacNeil, Harry Neale, and Bob Pulford were also members of this championship team.

Jim and his wife Frank have lived in New Glasgow since 1967. It is a true pleasure to recognize this hockey icon today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (MALAY & JOHNSON FAMILIES) - THANK

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, on May 28th I was pleased to attend the opening of two Habitat for Humanity homes on Drysdale Avenue in Spryfield. Two of our local families are now the proud owners of a beautiful new and affordable home. It was exciting to see the Johnson and Malay families see their completed new homes for the first time. The families were thrilled to show their new homes to everyone at the grand opening.

Habitat for Humanity makes home ownership accessible to low-income working families through long-term, interest-free, no-down-payment mortgages. Low-income families have the opportunity to own a home, a dream that many had thought would never be possible. Soon there will be new neighbourhoods for the Malay and Johnson families as Habitat for Humanity is building more homes on Drysdale Avenue.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Habitat for Humanity for recognizing the need for affordable homes and helping families realize their dream of home ownership. I know the Malay and Johnson families will enjoy their new homes and look forward to raising their families in a safe, comfortable environment.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

PARAMEDICS: COMMUN. SERV. - SALUTE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, the Paramedic Long Service Awards were held in Halifax on May 26th, honouring 52 paramedics from across the province with 20 to 40 years' experience. Franklin Hubbard from Barrington,

Shelburne County, has served as a paramedic for 20 years, and Glenn Diggdon of Middle West Pubnico has served as a paramedic for 30 years.

Over the years paramedics have taken on a more significant role in our health care system, working alongside physicians, nurses, and working in nursing homes. So please join me in congratulating each and every one of these dedicated professionals and salute their service to their communities across the province, and of course thank you to Franklin and Glenn for their years of service. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**RITCEY-MOORE, JANE
- PROGRESS CLUB WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE AWARD**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, Adams & Knickle of Lunenburg first made waves in the scallop fishery in 1897. Since that time the family-run business has become synonymous with quality in the seafood industry. Jane Ritcey-Moore, president of Adams & Knickle, represents the third generation of family running the famed company.

This past Wednesday evening she was recognized by the Progress Club's Women of Excellence, as 1 of 19 women who have made contributions to their professions. Though well-deserved, you are more likely to find her talking about her community volunteering passions that her work as Woman of Excellence has shown. She is a former educator at Bonny Lea Farm, a member of the Lunenburg Academy Foundation, and a member of the rebuild of St. John's Anglican Church, the Waterfront Association, and the Special Olympics.

I wish to take the time to recognize Jane Ritcey-Moore as one of the Progress Club's Women of Excellence for 2015. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**CHETICAMP RIVER:
HABITAT RESTORATION TEAM - RECOGNIZE**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: I would like to acknowledge the team behind habitat restoration of the Cheticamp River for receiving national recognition. The Parks Canada CEO Award of Excellence recognizes Parks Canada team members and partners who have demonstrated a high level of excellence or achieved outstanding results.

Award recipients include Cheticamp River Salmon Association's Rene Aucoin and Jillian Baker, and Parks Canada employees Archie Doucette, Claudie Maillet, Jacques Chiasson, Willie Deveau, Jerry Leblanc, Kelly Deveaux, James Bridgland, Chris

Bellemore, and Coady Saunwhite. Let us thank these individuals for giving back to nature. Their efforts are important and valued by our provincial Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

NATL. CHILD DAY (11/20/15)

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, annually on November 20th, Canada and countries around the world celebrate National Child Day to mark two historic events: the 1959 signing of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the following basic rights to which children everywhere are entitled. All children under 18 have a right to an adequate standard of living, health care, and to play. All children have the right to express their views about things that affect them and participate in communities, programs, and services. All children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.

There are many reasons to celebrate children, but most of all, because children deserve to be recognized as the very most important members of our communities. They are our future, and for many of us, our children are our reason for making this world a better place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

CAPLAN, RONALD - KATHERINE MACLENNAN AWARD (2015)

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Ronald Caplan for being the recipient of the 2015 Katherine MacLennan Award in recognition of his exemplary contributions to preserving Cape Breton's heritage and culture for generations to come.

As a writer, interviewer, and editor of *Cape Breton's Magazine*, Ron worked tirelessly to collect and share the stories of the Island, and later agreed to make all issues available online at no cost, to the benefit of countless students and researchers. Additionally, Ron has made considerable contributions through his role as a trustee for the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, and his work as a member on the task force on the growth of the arts and culture section of the Cape Breton Growth Fund, the Nova Scotia Heritage Task Force, and the committee for a new library in Sydney. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**SHARON UNITED CHURCH (TATAMAGOUCHE)
- HERITAGE REGISTRATION**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sharon United Church, located at 15 Church Street, Tatamagouche, Colchester North, was built in 1854. The cost to build the church was \$580, so to cover a portion of the expenses, pews were rented for a yearly fee.

The church bell was donated by Miller Houghton & Co. of Liverpool, England. Alexander Campbell, a local shipbuilder who had constructed several wooden sailing vessels, also contributed. The church is Gothic revival style, with narrow, arched windows and a central tower with four spires.

In 1925, the majority of the congregation entered the United Church of Canada and the church was named Sharon United. The sanctuary is widely recognized for its acoustic quality, and was one of the venues used by the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts from 1957 to 1967. The North Colchester Cenotaph is located on the front lawn. The Sharon United Church has recently received a designation as a heritage site.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring more members' statements, the House will recess for a few seconds while we await Question Period at 10:00 a.m.

[9:59 a.m. The House recessed.]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I call the House back to order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF: RECORDING - RCMP INVESTIGATION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the integrity of the Premier's Office itself was called into question, Mr. Speaker. We now know the RCMP are investigating a very serious matter related to an audio recording of a conversation including the Premier's chief of staff.

I'd like to ask the Premier, why did he call in the RCMP?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the honourable member is getting his information. What has happened: there was a letter provided to this House that actually mentioned the RCMP which had audio associated with it. We felt compelled, to those people who were mentioned in it, to hand it over to them. What they do with it is totally their responsibility and up to them.

In this idea, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is overstepping his assumption quite frankly of what the RCMP may do. They are an independent body that will act on the rule of law in this province, and they will make sure that every rule is followed in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has confirmed that they're investigating the audio recording that the Premier's office turned over to them.

You know what's very interesting, Mr. Speaker? The Premier didn't call in the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, he didn't call in the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and he didn't call in the Auditor General. He could have called in any number of people, but instead, he turned the recording over to Canada's national police force, the RCMP.

So I'll ask the Premier, what was on that recording specifically that caused him to call the RCMP?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to tell the honourable member that what initiated the contact with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is that they were mentioned in a letter that has been provided to this House. As part of that letter, there was a 40-second tape. We didn't think it would be appropriate to only give them the letter where they were mentioned; we gave them all the information.

I know it may seem a bit confusing for the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. We have nothing to hide. We have turned over absolutely everything that we have. They will respond and do what they believe is right on behalf of the citizens of this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is confusing to all Nova Scotians is why the Premier and his chief of staff won't just be honest about what they know about that conversation that included the chief of staff and the member for Dartmouth East.

They have turned a recording over to the RCMP but won't say why. Well, here's a chance. What in that recording caused the Premier to turn it over to the police?

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind the Leader of the Official Opposition - he indicated that the Premier will not be honest. That's unparliamentary, and I'll get you to apologize for that in a second.

The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. I also want to thank you for the fact that no member's reputation should be impugned in this House by another with zero amount of fact.

We provided to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police everything that was presented to us, not only the things that mentioned an officer of law enforcement but also the attachment that came with it. That's what Nova Scotians expect an open and honest government to do, and that is co-operate.

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

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF:

MS. YOUNGER - PERSONAL SERV. CONTRACT EXPLANATION

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a 43-second recording was released in which the Premier's chief of staff can be heard telling the member for Dartmouth East, "I know you're taking a financial hit, I know that's painful, and if there's anything we can do for your wife on that side, if there's anything, please let us know. I mean, is there a personal service contract we can do, is there something we can do to help?"

By now I expect the Premier has had a chance to discuss this recording with Kirby McVicar, so my question to the Premier is, what explanation has his chief of staff given for offering a personal service contract to the wife of the member for Dartmouth East?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, as I said outside of this House yesterday that leading into that part of the tape, the member for Dartmouth East told my chief of staff that his wife would be losing her employment. My chief of staff made the suggestion that he made there on the tape that is there.

But let me be perfectly frank: no job was offered or provided at any time. There was no personal service contract provided. It was part of a longer conversation that was a back and forth, quite frankly, between two people who work together.

Mr. Speaker, when someone says my wife is losing her job, what would she prefer him to say, too bad, so sad?

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier claimed yesterday that he wasn't aware that Mr. McVicar offered the member for Dartmouth East's wife a job until the tape appeared. Last week the Premier claimed he wasn't aware that Mr. McVicar offered the member for Dartmouth East's wife a job until the tape appeared. Last week the Premier claimed he wasn't aware Kirby McVicar told the member for Dartmouth East that having

a criminal case tossed would help get him back into Cabinet. Two weeks prior to that the Premier claimed he wasn't aware that Kirby McVicar knew a day in advance that the member for Dartmouth East would invoke privilege to avoid testifying under oath.

My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier constantly being left in the dark about sensitive political matters by this chief of staff?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I want to remind all members of this House, we're moving forward to provide sustainable, long-term collective agreements with our public sector. I want to tell you we announced 70 new-entry jobs coming in the Public Service over the next five years.

While that member might be sidetracked by the sideshows that take place around this place, we're going to be focused on the best interests of Nova Scotians, delivering good government, ensuring this province moves forward in a sustainable, affordable way. They can continue to play in the circus, but we are going to deliver good government (Interruptions)

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has publically stated that his chief of staff speaks for him. In fact, the only authority a chief of staff has comes from the Premier. Kirby McVicar is on tape asking the member for Dartmouth East to come back and be a good soldier and offering to provide his wife with a job using public funds. To the public, these comments are a reflection of what the Premier wants.

My question to the Premier is, given what was clearly stated on that tape, how can the Premier continue to employ Mr. McVicar as his chief of staff?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to continue to remind all Nova Scotians, we want to thank them for giving us the opportunity to provide good government back in October 2013, to end the four years of misery that was brought onto this province by that government.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to respond, while that government was distracted by the sideshow, our government is focused on moving this province forward. In each and every indicator, each and every month, we're seeing positive results because our partners in this province believe in this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, and I will give you an opportunity to retract your earlier comment about the Premier being honest with Nova Scotians.

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF/DART. EAST: RECORDING - REACTION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I believe I said or meant to say that (Interruptions) I hope the Premier will be honest, but I certainly retract any implication that he has not been honest up to this point. I was trying to call on him to be honest in this situation, so I retract what I said and would like to move on, because I do want to make something very clear. The only sideshow is coming from the member for Dartmouth East and the Premier's Office - not from the NDP, and not from the PCs. Those are the two parties to the sideshow.

Do you know what's very interesting? Yesterday the Premier said he was not happy about what he heard on that audio recording. Just now, in answers to questions from the NDP, he defended it and characterized it as a perfectly normal conversation between two people who work together. I would like to ask the Premier, which is it? Is he happy with what he heard in that recording, or not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If he actually would read the entire statement I made, what I said to the media yesterday was that I was not happy with what I heard in that 40-second clip, but what I said would really clear this up if the honourable member for Dartmouth East would release the entire tape and my chief of staff would be happy to respond to the entire conversation - not 40 seconds at a time. That member might want to be led around this House by the member for Dartmouth East, but this government won't be.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I say again, the only two groups involved in this circus are the member for Dartmouth East and the Premier's Office, those are the only two. (Interruptions)

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

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier wants the member for Dartmouth East to say all he knows, and that's great. So, will the Premier hold his chief of staff to the same standard and bring him over here to answer questions on the same thing?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I've said many times, I encourage the member for Dartmouth East to do what all members of this House have asked him to do, which is release the entire tape, and my chief of staff would be happy to respond in its totality.

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

PREM. - CHIEF OF STAFF: PERSONAL CONTRACTS - NUMBERS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday wasn't the first time the hiring practices out of the Premier's Office by the chief of staff have made the news. Back in February 2014, a freedom of information request showed that Kirby McVicar helped secure a personal services contract for the Premier's former director of communications Glennie Langille - a job that previously had been subject to an open competition. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday we found out that Mr. McVicar offered to arrange a personal services contract for the wife of the member for Dartmouth East. So, my question to the Premier is this, how many people has Kirby McVicar hired on personal services contracts, on behalf of the Premier's Office and his government?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again in this House, I want to encourage the member for Dartmouth East to release the entire tape. My chief of staff would be more than happy to respond to the conversation in its totality.

Mr. Speaker, like most chiefs of staff, they are part of the hiring process that takes place in any government, including the former government - the chief of staff would have been part of the hiring process.

MS. MACDONALD: Appearing from the Premier's Office, he continues to be in the dark about these matters. Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have every right to be concerned about the standards that are being displayed by the Premier's Office which is fundamental in the affairs of this province. This is a Premier that has cut the Film Tax Credit, placed thousands of screen jobs at risk, cut funding to non-profits, eliminated jobs in the public sector and community services offices.

So, my question to the Premier, how does he justify offering a job to the wife of a Liberal MLA to help him deal with the loss of his Cabinet salary, when his government is cutting jobs across this province in the name of austerity?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the honourable member - I did not offer a job to any member's spouse in this House. I do want to remind the honourable member that we are moving forward in a sustainable way for this province. I'm very pleased that the CFIB, for two months in a row, has indicated small businesses' profits at the highest confidence in the entire country. Think about that - the highest confidence in the entire country.

I know it's not all that long ago, but the honourable member should find out how confident small businesses were when she had the opportunity to sit on this side of the House. I also want to remind all members of this House, last Friday we had an opportunity

to announce that we would be hiring 70 new positions for the next 5 years inside the Public Service, filling vacancies with zero experience, providing young people an opportunity to stay in this Province.

I want to remind all members of this House, 20,000 young people show us how important this province is by showing up every year to post-secondary education. You know what they recognize, Mr. Speaker? They have a government that is looking for them to be part of the long-term sustainable future of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: CHIEF OF STAFF - HONESTY

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the member for Dartmouth East was removed from Cabinet because the Premier felt he wasn't completely honest with us. The Premier had a Director of Communications who was set aside because the Premier felt he wasn't completely honest with him. Does the Premier still have confidence that his chief of staff has been completely honest with him in this matter?

THE PREMIER: Yes. (Interruptions)

MR. BAILLIE: Yes, we've heard that before, Mr. Speaker, and we know how it turned out. There are a lot of questions about how many copies of audio conversations may be floating around. Can the Premier confirm for this House today that he has checked that the government itself is not in possession of any of these conversations?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the honourable member that no member of this Cabinet or our Party or our government goes around secretly taping anyone. Maybe for a Progressive Conservative that's hard to figure out, but quite frankly there is no conspiracy theory here. The reality of it is, whatever we have, we've provided to the appropriate people.

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

PREM.: CHIEF OF STAFF - CONFIDENCE CONFIRM

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the people of Nova Scotia would be far more accepting of these answers if they actually answered the question. If they actually had the people involved in these conversations here where they could tell for themselves, the people that know, because once again, the only two groups involved are the member for Dartmouth East and the Premier's office itself.

Yesterday, the Premier said he continues to have confidence in his chief of staff even though he is part of a recording that is now under investigation by the RCMP. It's 24 hours later; I'll ask the Premier again, does he still have confidence in his chief of staff?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the honourable member knows that that is under investigation. I want to remind all members of this House, we provided it because their name was in it - and I have all the confidence in Mr. McVicar.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier's becoming known for being kept in the dark for things that go on in his government, but this is beyond the pale. The RCMP have been very clear that they are investigating the material that he turned over to them, material that includes his chief of staff and this is under investigation by the police. But that chief of staff, of course, is still in his job with the confidence of the Premier, and that's fine, that's how he answered the question. But does the Premier really believe that the chief of staff could stay in his job - basically in one of the most senior jobs in government - while the RCMP investigation is ongoing?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is stretching this a bit. We provided the RCMP with the information that was provided to us. They are doing what any appropriate people would be, to look at it. I'm not sure what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is looking for here, quite frankly. We've been forthright and upfront with Nova Scotians. We've continued to provide good government. I know it's frustrating for the Progressive Conservative Party but at some point they have to stand up and say boy, this government is finally leading this province in a positive, directed way.

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

PREM.: CHIEF OF STAFF - SECRECY

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Well, the Premier has made it clear, he has confidence in his chief of staff but can the public have confidence? That is the question.

There is an unsettling pattern that has emerged from the Premier's office. A pattern where the Premier is kept in the dark on a regular basis. First he didn't know about his former Director of Communications' domestic assault arrest last year; then he claimed he knew nothing about charges involving a former staffer and the member for Dartmouth East; he didn't know about the use of privilege in the court case; and now he claims that he knew nothing about the conversation between his chief of staff and the member for Dartmouth East.

Why is the Premier allowing his most senior staff to keep him in the dark about these important matters?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question; it gives me an opportunity to continue to tell Nova Scotians the positive direction we're moving forward. Again, small businesses across this province have confidence in this government. More confidence than any small business sector across the entire country. I want to tell you we've continued to open up to make sure that young Nova Scotians get an opportunity to stay and work in this province. I understand why the honourable members are frustrated because quite frankly, in two years, we are accomplishing twice as much as they were able to do in four.

MS. MACDONALD: Oh, Mr. Speaker, what a tangled web we weave when first we practise. The common thread among all of these instances is the Premier's chief of staff, yet the Premier continues to say that Mr. McVicar is doing a dandy job. He said that about the member for Dartmouth East as well, the day before he changed his mind. Mr. Speaker, if you consider offering a personal services contract to Liberal insiders, constantly withholding information from your boss, a great job, then I guess those are standards . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, why are his standards so low for his senior advisors, let alone his chief of staff?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to remind her, Nova Scotians responded not only to this Premier, but to this entire group of well-meaning, well-educated, hardworking Nova Scotians because they saw a team of people who could lead this province. Not only did they see someone who could be the Premier, they saw any one of these colleagues who could be a Cabinet Minister, unlike that member, who the former Premier had to manage every day of work she did as Minister of Finance and Minister of Health. I trust the members of this Cabinet and caucus, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**MUN. AFFS. - HANTS WEST:
MUNICIPAL CO-OPERATION - ENCOURAGEMENT**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question will be through you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What we have seen in the past months and years is some co-operation amongst municipal units. We have seen it along the South Shore, and the Pictou are now talking positively. Unfortunately, where I come from in the constituency of Hants West, we have a couple of municipal units that are not quite on the positive side, but are working toward some kind of partnership.

The minister is very clear and aware of the current situation out there. It has been going on now for some time and not just on one or two issues, but on multiple issues. Has

the minister himself or his staff been directed to help encourage this process along, now that it has been started in West Hants?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. First and foremost, our government has been very involved in working with our municipal partners to achieve structural change in the province that will make our communities viable for the long run. The situation in West Hants and Windsor has been particularly concerning and unfortunate, I believe, for the citizens there and from the perspective of government.

Our department has been involved in trying to find a resolution for those two groups. We provided a mediator that wasn't able to bring those groups together. It's very clear that the divisions in that community are longstanding and deep, but we did work with West Hants in the direction that they wanted to move, to have a new fire service. I am very happy to say that the continuation of coverage in that area has happened.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer. Fire service is but one issue, there are multiple issues, and I know that the minister is aware of that as well. This is a bit precedent setting. What we do know is amalgamation will soon be filed for by a citizen's coalition-led group and maybe along with one of the two municipal units. Once that is done there is a question around funding. Can the minister speak to how that process might work, if that application does move forward?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has said in this House and in public, change is coming to this province. We are either going to be defined by that change or we can define that change ourselves. We are working with all of our municipal partners to achieve that structural change that we believe is necessary to secure viable communities, moving Nova Scotia into the future and we will work with all partners that share that goal.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. More than halfway through the five-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, many Nova Scotians have spoken out about their experience in the health care system and it's clear the strategy is not working to address all issues. People are crying out for the government to listen and to address their concerns, but the government is deciding to stick to the status quo.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, why won't the minister admit changes are needed and provide an updated plan for the mental health services in Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to speak to the honourable member and his question around mental health and the update of the strategy. The idea of a strategy is to give it time to work, implement it province-wide. We still have a year and a-half or more to go on the strategy. We also know that Dr. Courey with the Nova Scotia Health Authority is also involved in oversight province-wide, and that will help the strategy to be delivered across Nova Scotia.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt the toll the broken mental health care system has on individuals. We've heard many stories here and in our constituency office; it is devastating for those people and those families.

It's also true that the financial cost of a broken system will soon become unmanageable if we don't do something now - one study projects that mental illness will have a direct cost to the province of \$1.4 billion by 2041 if we don't do something now. Now that he's aware of the human and financial cost of doing nothing, will the minister accept that the status quo is not working, and update the mental health strategy?

MR. GLAVINE: What we do know in terms of the mental health strategy and the work being done across the province is in fact to do more in the early years. That was pointed out when Dr. Jana Davidson did her report on the work of the IWK Schools Plus and other supportive programs to children in our school, and we'll also be advancing further work in our schools. We know that that is the best investment for the long term, and we'll continue to look at supporting our youth, especially those up to age 25.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - POLICE: MENTAL HEALTH CRISES - TRAINING

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of Justice. There are instances where police officers are called to respond to incidents where an individual may be having a mental health crisis. In those instances it is important that officers have the training to handle these situations. When I was asking this question, I was thinking about Robert Dziekanski - rest his soul - and what happened to him in an airport in Vancouver. I'm sure many people remember that, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister of Justice inform the House what sort of training the province's police service receive to help individuals who are facing a mental health crisis?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I appreciate the question; it is a very good one to ask. I'd like to assure everyone that the police do receive special training in mental health issues. A number of years ago here in our province we had an incident as well where somebody was badly injured, and out of that came the Hyde report. The commission was held to look into how we treat people with mental illness and people who are in crisis. From that, a lot of lessons were learned.

MR. MACMASTER: I know that best practices are involved in addressing mental health, and they're constantly evolving. This requires regular training. Can the minister give us some understanding of what training is being offered, and how will that training be continuously updated for the benefit of police officers and certainly for those who may be experiencing a mental health crisis?

MS. WHALEN: Thank you for the question. The whole issue of mental health in our society is big for every member of our government; we are concerned about that.

On the policing side, I know it's very much on their minds because every day they're on the front line, along with other first responders and seeing the issues that people are facing and the difficulty of mental illness in our province and certainly in our country. They're very well aware of it. I know that the chiefs of police - all of them really across the province - work together as a group and have training that they share, in the RCMP as well.

In terms of the specific details, if the member would like more, I can provide that for you. I'll get a more fulsome answer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

BUS.: FILM/TV PRODUCTION DROP - EXPLAIN

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: My question is to the Minister of Business. I'd like to table a chart by IATSE Local 849 that compares the amount of work its members had last Fall under the old Nova Scotia film and television tax credit and this fall with the new film incentive and the number of films and TV series being made. The drop is dramatic.

When questioned about the job loss, the minister stated that the downturn was due to the sudden closure of Egg Films - and I'll table that as well, but the IATSE chart focuses on film and TV series, not commercials. How does the minister explain the sudden drop in films and TV series being made in Nova Scotia this fall?

HON. MARK FUREY: I don't know what comments I've made that the member is referring to. I don't recall having any comments about Egg, but if I stand to be corrected I would value that information. One thing we've heard clearly from the industry over the past number of months is we both want the same thing, and our government has listened to the concerns of Screen Nova Scotia, we've taken the discussions we've had, we agree that there's a need to change the discussion on the future opportunities of the industry in Nova Scotia, and we've taken steps to restore the confidence of those domestically and internationally on opportunities of the film industry in Nova Scotia.

We announced last Friday a significant investment in the film industry, they were receptive to that, they publicly endorsed that and they publicly endorsed the Film and Television Production Incentive Fund.

MS. MANCINI: On November 10th, international film consultant Jan Miller said that Nova Scotia went from having one of the best film tax credits in the country to one of the worst incentives to film, and I will table that document. We heard that one of the major barriers to making the new film incentive fund work better is the cap placed on the fund of \$10 million.

My question then, is when will the minister lift the cap to ensure that the current film incentive fund doesn't lead to more uncertainty?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. As I indicated earlier, we've engaged the film industry, I've met with producers, with technicians, with crew, multiple components of the industry on multiple sets over the past number of months, and I want to table a piece of correspondence from the media from July 2015, where the producer of *The Healer*, himself a prominent international producer, stated "My feeling is the new incentive scheme is very workable and can go a long way towards helping keep films and television shows coming back to Nova Scotia."

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

BUS.: RURAL INTERNET SERV. - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Business as well. As he is well aware, being an MLA from southwestern Nova Scotia, the challenges we're having with Eastlink Internet services, broadband Internet service and access to, what I would qualify as almost a right these days, for students to be able to access information that is broadband Internet service.

I've asked many questions to a number of ministers here in the House of Assembly on what the government is doing about it, if there is any way that they can entice companies to provide a service that is acceptable to today's standards. So, I'm just wondering, maybe the minister can provide an update on what he's doing when it comes to Internet service to rural areas.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague. We recognize and acknowledge the importance of high-speed Internet, broadband through rural Nova Scotia, for the reasons my colleague has mentioned - for education, health care, for small business, a number of reasonable options that anyone would pursue.

To the point, we've done a number of community consultations; we've reached out to the industry extensively. We've just recently concluded a statement of work where we're

looking for an industry expert, Mr. Speaker, to provide guidance to government on the opportunities that are there, as well as the challenges that we face. So, we continue along that line and we're getting tremendous feedback from the industry in that initiative.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I thank you very much for that answer but I also want to ask the minister, Eastlink Internet service in southwestern Nova Scotia, more specifically in Argyle-Barrington, has built out their wired system, they are hoping that once people are connected that wired system that the wireless system actually gets a little better, but there are really no guarantees in that. Also, I think we have a company that has a wireless system that honestly doesn't really want it, doesn't really know what to do with it.

I am hoping that the minister steps in as best he can, that this government steps in to make sure that industry truly helps those small rural communities that deserve to have good Internet service.

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I think it's an appropriate recognition of a small company in rural Nova Scotia, as I engaged the industry, the service provider indicated to me that they were providing quality high-speed Internet in Digby Neck, Long Island. Quite honestly, I thought that if they could provide high-speed quality Internet in Long Island, one of the geographically distant communities in our province, we should be able to provide that in any community. We've asked the industry for their input and they provided that feedback. We continue to work with small providers, particularly an initiative by Mainland Telecom, now as we speak, in Lunenburg County where they recognize the density of the community and they are working with that community group to meet their needs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMN.: BACKLOG - MIN. EXPLAIN

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Human Rights Act. We hear of people waiting extraordinary amounts of time to make their case before the Human Rights Commission and the media has also reported on a big backlog there that takes years in some cases. I have a constituent who said seven years he has been working on one of these things. That's obviously a long time to make your day in court, as it would be. My question is, what does the minister say to these people who are waiting such extraordinary amounts of time to make their appearance before the Human Rights Commission?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question because the honourable member has raised an issue that is important to all Nova Scotians. Many people turn to the Human Rights Commission when they have a serious problem and a question they need addressed and it is not right to have it take so

long, so it's certainly a concern to me as minister and our government that it takes a long time.

Really, there have been backlogs, I would say in that. I can say that I visited the Human Rights Commission office; they are certainly being restructured and organized. They have a very good working commission board, so we made sure that the appointments were in place for that, and I know that it is a concern and an issue for us to advance those case times.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you, minister. We do sometimes see cases where Crown corporations get a ruling and then certainly appear to drag things out with appeals and other practices. I hear mumblings among people that they feel the Crown corporations are more likely to do that because they are taxpayer funded. They are using taxpayer money as opposed to their own money. So my question today is, who actually holds the Crown corporations responsible for being accountable and prudent with taxpayer money and making sure that they're doing what is morally and financially right?

MS. WHALEN: Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. That was a little bit veiled in terms of the question that was asked. I'm not sure exactly what cases the member is referring to so I would be happy to speak to you further at the end of our House today and find out more about that, but I can say that every organization, whether they are a Crown corporation, a private organization, government, or otherwise, we all are held to the same standard to co-operate with the Human Rights Commission or the Ombudsman Office or any of the independent offices that we have in this province, to ensure that people have an opportunity to be heard and that justice is served.

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

BUS.: SOUTHWESTERN N.S. - INTERNET SERV.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Business. In February 2014 the Economic and Rural Development Minister, who is now the Minister of Energy, said that Internet provider Eastlink had until the end of the year to offer rural broadband service to isolated pockets of the province, and I will table that. Well, it's almost the end of 2015 and residents of southwestern Nova Scotia are still without reliable Internet service. My question to the Minister of Business is, why are hundreds of residents in southwestern Nova Scotia still without reliable Internet service?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. There is a very simple answer to the question that my colleague has advanced. When the broadband contract initiated in 2007, a commitment was made to meet 100 per cent hook-up by 2009; that was extended to 2010. The objective was never achieved and it was the NDP Government that paid out the invoices on the contract that expired on December 31,

2014, indicating to the service provider that all of the commitments had been met for that contract. That government, that member, a minister at the time, failed to provide Nova Scotians a service that they committed to.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister check his facts, because that contract was still in existence under the Liberal Government. Also, the Liberal Government could have taken a stance against Eastlink to make sure they fulfilled their commitment, and they have done nothing with Eastlink. People in Nova Scotia are tired of waiting.

I will ask the minister, what is the date by which residents without reliable Internet can expect to be provided with this service under the Liberal Government, who says they can solve everything?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the large number of Nova Scotians, particularly in southwest Nova Scotia, who do not have high-speed Internet service. We are working with them and industry service providers to try to find solutions.

That member, as a Cabinet Minister, had the opportunity in government for four years to address this problem, and all they did - quite frankly, they paid out the contract to the service provider, suggesting that the service was completed. There is no punitive action that the government could have taken under the contract to change that. That government failed Nova Scotians. They paid the bill out and the service wasn't provided.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

IMMIGRATION PROG.: APPLICATIONS - INFO.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Immigration. We've heard, especially in the last week, a lot of talk about refugees coming to Canada, and certainly to this part of the world, to Nova Scotia. I know that the minister made an announcement in previous days regarding 211, and if you're interested in helping and so on, to contact that number.

Have there been further processes put in place whereby individuals who are quite interested in being part of this program can apply to or contact?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that very important question today. It's one that affects all Nova Scotians and all Canadians, especially with today being National Child Day. We all need to be caring and compassionate, especially when it comes to children. We believe that probably 50 per cent of the refugees who will come will be children.

We did make an announcement on 211 a couple of days ago, and I'm very pleased to say that they issued a press release yesterday. As of yesterday at noon, they had over 600 callers who have offered volunteer services as well as cash donations. They've also released an email address where people can send an email if they don't wish to make a phone call. Again, we remind everybody to please keep doing that, anybody who wants to help. Thank you.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for some clarity in the answer, but I guess I was looking just a wee bit deeper than that. There are people who are quite interested in housing, of course, some of these refugees that are coming. I was just really wanting to know, is there a different process, other than 211, by way of an application or a contact in your office directly? How will that work, or perhaps you're still working on that program? I don't know. Thank you.

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to elaborate a bit further to my colleague and everyone in the Legislature. Certainly, people - groups of five, or organizations - can privately sponsor refugees. The best way to do that is through a sponsorship agreement holder. Currently there are five in the province: the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Baptist Church, the United Church, and of course, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia.

There have been many, many meetings that have been held across the province with various communities. We know there are at least 60 private groups that are currently mobilizing and are agreeing to sponsor refugees, and we look forward to receiving many more.

Any further questions, please contact us. You can also look at our website, "<https://novascotiainmigration.com/support-for-refugees/>," and we have all the information on the website as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

EECD - SCHOOLS: MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE - POLICY

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Most large high schools in the province have a full-time maintenance employee. CEC in Truro and Dr. John Hugh Gillis in Antigonish are examples of this. This employee is invaluable. Arriving early to remove snow and ice outside, repairing numerous items for the school, replacing light bulbs, checking faulty technology, washrooms, and checking on furnaces and ventilation systems are some examples of what they do. Some schools do not have this type of employee. Perhaps the school board's attempt to improve their bottom line has eliminated this position in some schools.

My question to the minister, should all schools in our province, especially our large schools, have the convenience of having a full-time employee responsible for maintenance that often requires immediate attention?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member for the question. I think it's important to state here publicly that one of the most valued staff members we can have in any school is a custodian who makes sure that the school is safe and clean. The safety and security of our students is of utmost importance, and the maintenance custodian staff member who is there has a huge responsibility. I commend them for the work they do every day in our schools.

I would remind the member that, as I believe he would know, the responsibility for staffing our schools, the allocation that goes to those schools, whether they are large or small, is the responsibility of the school board.

MR. DUNN: Approximately three years ago, North Nova Education Centre and Northumberland Regional High School had this position eliminated. I believe their savings by doing this would be overshadowed by what it would eventually cost the school board.

If you talk to administrators, they will tell you the school wouldn't function without them. Eventually in-house maintenance begins to deteriorate. Schools have to wait for personnel to arrive to fix a problem. In fact, they may pass four burned-out light bulbs to fix the one on their work order. They usually follow their work order and leave.

My question to the minister is, should it be a standard policy, if a school is a certain size, that they have a full-time maintenance person on duty?

MS. CASEY: To the member, the decision about the allocation of staff to schools to provide the services that we have all identified here as being absolutely critical is a decision that's made by the board. With respect to a policy, it would be a board policy about how they wish to allocate those services to the schools under their jurisdiction.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV. - ASSISTANCE RATES: COST OF LIVING - PARITY

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: For two years the Minister of Community Services has frozen income assistance rates for Nova Scotia's most vulnerable. We know that the department is undergoing a massive transformation which will affect the Employment Support and Income Assistance program.

When the minister was asked by CBC whether any increases can be expected while the minister finishes her review of the program, which is scheduled to be completed by 2018, she stated, in terms of money at this point in time, nothing. I'd like to table that.

Mr. Speaker would the minister outline when income assistance recipients can expect their assistance to catch up with the cost of living?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I'm proud of the work that the department is doing in transformation. We've known for a couple of decades that there have been piecemeal incremental changes that have happened that have not kept up to the pace of the unique and comprehensive needs of the people who use our services.

We finished phase one in July. I'm excited about phase two, which is coming up over the next 18 months, where we can see some meaningful significant change that will better meet the needs of people who use our services in Nova Scotia.

MS. MANCINI: A freeze in income assistance is a cut. The cost of living over the past two years has increased by 3 per cent and will continue to rise during the transformation. This means that Nova Scotia's most vulnerable will be forced to get by with less and less.

Can the minister explain how women and their children are supposed to make do while the income assistance transformation takes place?

MS. BERNARD: I find it really quite astounding that the member from the previous government - of which she was not a part - actually is concerned about people on income assistance . . .

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I stand on a point of order because I believe during Question Period, in response to a question, I heard the Premier swear, and he was not corrected by you. I would ask you to listen to the tapes of the recorded Question Period to determine whether or not that, in fact, occurred and use your judgment accordingly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that under advisement and bring that back to the House.

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. 126.

Bill No. 126 - Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in the House today to speak about Bill No. 126. In the Fall of 2014, the PRPP Act was passed but not proclaimed as we were waiting on finalization of our regulations, as well as the multilateral agreement between the federal government and participating provinces.

PRPPs are a new type of voluntary savings plan that benefits workers who do not currently have a pension plan and those who are self-employed. PRPPs are designed to be easy for employers to set up and more flexible and affordable than traditional pension plans.

Currently, only 40 per cent of Nova Scotians have a retirement plan. On top of that, less than 20 per cent of Nova Scotians are currently contributing to Registered Retirement Savings. PRPPs will provide low-cost, regulated pension options for employers, employees, and the self-employed across our province.

The proposed amendments would allow money from PRPPs to flow into retired savings arrangements under the Pension Benefits Act. This will ensure workers have consistent options and protections when they retire, regardless of whether they have been saving through a defined contribution pension plan or a PRPP.

Madam Speaker, passage of this bill will permit the PRPP regulations to be finalized, so I move that Bill No. 126 be now read for a second time. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Speaker, there are a number of ways for people to save out there. I know many people do not save; many people may not have the ability to save. I was looking the other day at a mortgage rate of 2.2 per cent, so you can see why people in this day and age, when borrowing is so cheap, that they would be really encouraged by those low rates to instead of saving money to be borrowing money to buy homes or other assets.

When I was a young fellow growing up I used to put my birthday money in the bank and . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You've still got it.

MR. MACMASTER: I've still got it, yes - that went to pay my tuition. But I know back then when I look at my old bank books I was getting a 7, 8, 9 per cent rate of return just in my little bank account which, if we look at today, we would love to be getting that return with virtually no risk.

We're living in a world where people do need to be encouraged to save. There is not a lot of reward for people in terms of a safe rate of return with interest rates so low.

I think about this vehicle that is before us with this piece of legislation, these pooled pension plans, I can't really say I object to them but seeing there are other forms of savings out there such as RRSPs, tax-free savings accounts, which are really going to be - especially as time goes on, a tax-free savings account, that's where to have your money. People have RRSPs but if you get into the tax-free savings accounts - I know when I worked at the bank, you could see how people today, who never had the benefit of those accounts, how well they would have done if they had them 20 or 40 years ago. I was thinking for young people today if they start using those accounts, how well they'll be at some point in the future. There really won't be any need for a non-registered savings account at that point because people will be using tax-free savings accounts for anything over and above their RRSPs.

There are tools out there that try to encourage people to save and I don't know if a pooled pension plan is going to provide any more encouragement. I don't know if it's going to change things but as I say, I can't really object to it because I don't see it as necessarily a bad thing. It may not be ideal. There are many options, even the Canada Pension Plan. I know there was discussion about giving people a chance to make voluntary contributions in addition to their regular contributions.

I know there was concern by employers about having to match that. Well, if those contributions were made voluntary, and just by the employee if they wanted to make extra contributions to Canada Pension Plan, that would take away any problem that an employer might have with that. We wouldn't want to cause employers to increase their cost which could have an impact on the number of people they can employ.

I know that is something that has been discussed in the past and the Canada Pension Plan already exists. Its fees are incredibly low and it has a large asset pool already. It is independent, has a global presence, and it certainly has a good track record of investment, results, and performance. So I know that has been debated in here - whether maybe that would be a better vehicle than the pooled pension plan.

I know insurance companies will like this new offering of the pooled pension plan and I know, for defined contribution plans, they dominate that space. Canadians, as we know, pay some of the highest management fees in the world on their investments. I think

it's largely because it's controlled by those insurance companies. The average fee for a Canadian equity or stock fund used to be about 2.4 per cent, which is much higher than say, the Canada Pension Plan investment fee which - I can't quote it to you, but I know it would be significantly less than that.

So chances are with these pooled pension plans, perhaps there will be lower fees than 2.4 per cent, but at the end of the day I do believe it's something the insurance companies will favour because they will capture this space. They are all about - you can't blame them, they are out to make money, too, but they are going to capture this space and make it work for them.

I think I will conclude with that. As I say, I can't really strongly object to pooled pension plans but I'm not so sure that it's going to make a real difference for people. It might for some who will take advantage of this. I don't want to be too negative about it, but I guess a word of caution that it not be given as a false sense of security for people.

One of the things that we don't really have, Madam Speaker, for people who are not able to save a lot of their money - it's hard for them to get advice. A lot of times people's savings, in terms of their future when they retire - a lot of the advice they get, even outside their investments, makes a huge difference in what they have when they retire. From what I can see - and perhaps I'll share it another time, or maybe I'll just save the idea for the future - I think there are ways that government could change the way the investment field works so that those people actually do get advice. Studies have proven that some of those decisions made, even outside their actual investments, make a bigger difference to people in terms of how much money they can save over their lifetime, so that they are well prepared for retirement. Thank you.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place and speak to this bill, an Act to Amend Chapter 37 of the Acts of 2014, the Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act.

This legislation is part of a relatively long process that started some considerable time ago, when the late James Flaherty was the Finance Minister in the Harper Government. At the time there was a lot of discussion, I guess I would say, about enhancing and expanding the Canada Pension Plan, which as we all know is the public pension system that most people who are in the labour force contribute to and then draw from at retirement.

Unfortunately, that public system has not kept pace with the conditions of the labour force, where people have different labour force attachments than they used to, and also for people who are self-employed - they're not necessarily a party to the Canada Pension Plan, in some instances. The federal Harper Government were looking for a

vehicle to keep from having to enrich or expand the public pension plan, and the vehicle they came up with is what we have here in front of us. The vehicle they arrived at was this Pooled Registered Pension Plan idea.

Now, shortly after Minister Flaherty floated this idea, or announced that this was the direction that the federal government would be going in, a former Finance Minister in Nova Scotia was at a meeting of Finance Ministers. I am making reference to Graham Steele. He took the position that this was a tool for - it would benefit a small number of people, and there was no reason to prevent that small number of people having greater certainty in their retirement. For that reason, it was a vehicle that could be supported, that was viable and was worth looking at, but in no way do these provisions speak to the measures that need to be taken to provide adequate pensions for people in their retirement.

The people who will benefit from this tend to be people who probably have higher incomes. The vast majority of working people who don't have a workplace pension plan would never benefit from this particular model of providing pensions. These Pooled Registered Pensions, first of all, are voluntary, and you know, it's really hard to look at your limited cash flow sometimes and squirrel money away into a pension fund on a voluntary basis. We have seen, for example, with our RRSPs, it is really only a certain stratification in our province and in our country that are actually able to take advantage of RRSPs and many people are unable to do that.

Our caucus has no objection to these measures for pooled registered pension plans. There are a small group of people who will benefit from that, but let's not kid ourselves in terms of the impact that something like this will have. The impact of these measures are minimal and they will be of benefit to a very small proportion of our population who, hopefully, will take advantage of it and be better off.

The vast majority of people who require pension security have not been protected and will not be protected by these measures. The way to do that, to provide greater security for people in their retirement, is through the very excellent public system that we have, the Canada Pension Plan, a plan that I have urged the former Minister of Finance and Treasury Board in this Liberal Government to support.

I have to say it is one of the issues I didn't really follow in the federal election so I'm not sure what the position of the new federal government is with respect to enhancing and expanding the Canada Pension Plan. I suspect that they are more open to doing that than, certainly, the Harper Government had been. Pensions are something I'm very interested in as a public policy issue; it is something I will certainly be looking into and ensuring that if the federal government is going to do this our province is onside with an expansion and enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan.

I will be interested to see if we have presenters at the Law Amendments Committee about the provisions of this bill. With that, I will take my seat, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

MR. BEN JESSOME: Madam Speaker, as has been said in this House today and the fact that this bill is being introduced in addition to the previous Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - the honourable member for Clayton Park West, in addition to her work from last Fall - I'm pleased to hear today that we are going to continue on our path to making these pooled registered pension plans another option for Nova Scotians.

Being the youngest person here in the Legislature, I'm growing a respect and an appreciation for how important it is to save for retirement. Certainly, my conversations with constituents in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville would support the importance (Interruptions) Someday they'll have jobs. So anyway, I'm here today to affirm to the House and to Nova Scotians that the Department of Finance and Treasury Board and the current Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, the honourable member for Antigonish, is committed to continuing the pursuit of this goal, adding another vehicle for Nova Scotians to save for their retirement.

I've had conversations with people back home that would support this initiative. As the member for Halifax Needham indicated, this is something that has been discussed and considered at the federal level since 2010 and certainly the province has a role to play in ensuring that Canadians have as many opportunities to save for their retirement as possible.

Across the nation some of our western counterparts have started initiatives of their own and passed legislation. In doing this, this province will join British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan with this initiative in mind.

As was stated earlier today, there's only about 40 per cent of Nova Scotians who have a pension, and there's an even lower percentage actively saving for their retirement through an RRSP. So it's in our best interest as government to try and enable another opportunity for Nova Scotians to make moves to enhance their saving opportunities.

This bill is a set of amendments to the previous Act which will enable a low-cost regulated pension option for employers, employees, and those who are self-employed. I need to stress that this will be a voluntary option. The contributions of employers will be voluntary, and the immersion to this type of an agreement will be optional for employees as well.

I'd like to highlight that just as recently as last night I had the opportunity to attend a function with a number of the business representatives in the Hammonds Plains-Lucasville community, and when I spoke to them and told them I would be speaking to this bill today, they spoke positively about having another tool in their belt to attract new employees and, certainly, attract younger employees who need to be starting to save for their retirement at an early age.

As the department developed regulations and continues to do so, it was recognized that there are a couple of things that need to be tweaked in order to make this goal a reality. Specifically, it was not possible under the previous Act for funds to be transferred from a pooled registered pension plan into a locked-in vehicle - for example a locked-in retirement account, because there's no such authority that currently exists.

These amendments are fairly technical, but minor in nature and certainly very possible with the support of this House. Firstly, as I previously indicated, this bill allows for PRPP accounts to be transferred into locked-in vehicles, enabling access for account holders. Secondly, it provides the process for transferring funds as a result of division of assets, for example as a result of a relationship breakdown, from the PRPP to the plan of the member's spouse upon division of asset funds in the member's account; they may be transferred to a PRPP account of that person's spouse, to the spouse's pension plan, to a prescribed retirement savings arrangement for the spouse, or used to purchase a life annuity which will guarantee a payment after a time. Thirdly, the bill consequently includes amendments to allow for the money to be transferred from the account and also to be accepted on the other end. And the final amendment gives the province the authority to do this.

I'd just like to end quickly by reiterating that this is a voluntary thing for employers. For employees, it's creating another opportunity for Nova Scotians to start saving for their retirement. I think it's a positive initiative.

I'm pleased to see that there is some reception on the other side of the House, and certainly the Department of Finance and Treasury Board and the current minister will continue to try to make this a reality as quickly as possible. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, as members of the House know I am very interested as well in the issue of pensions and I wanted to say a few words today in support of this bill and in support of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board as he brings this through to the House. As the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville has so rightly said, this is important for people of all ages, to have access to some means to save for their retirement.

Many years ago the Government of Canada set up RRSPs but unfortunately a very small percentage of people overall access them and very few put the full amount in that they are entitled to. Less than 20 per cent, I believe, of Nova Scotians have put any money in, if you look at the most recent year. So that's only one in five who are contributing and we all know sometimes you can only contribute \$1,000 or perhaps \$2,000 a year so you're not getting to the maximum and you're not really building up a big pool of money for your retirement.

This PRPP legislation is really adding one more means for people to put money aside and prepare for retirement, which is important no matter what age you are and in fact, the earlier you start, as the member for Hammonds Plains knows, the more your money will accumulate and the more you will have a decent amount of money at retirement. It's important for all of us because having enough money to retire is very much linked to poverty for people who are in their senior years and knowing that you can live in a reasonable manner as you go into your senior years so it's very important for all of us because in society we want people to be able to live properly and have enough money to live safely and healthily.

I just wanted to say a few words, particularly about - the Acting Leader of the NDP actually said that she didn't think this was very much use, that it might not help many people. As the House would know, I had the opportunity to be the Finance and Treasury Board Minister for a time and I wanted to mention particularly Dalhousie University, which is a very large employer in Nova Scotia. Dalhousie has actually been a very big proponent for this PRPP legislation. They have a category of workers that are not covered by their other pension plans and they really want to be good employers and they want to offer pension options to those employees.

They feel that this would be very good to have. They want to have it; they want to be able to contribute as well, along with their employees through the PRPP. As we know, it's not mandatory, it's optional, but here we have an employer that is anxious to put it in place and wants to support their employees. So it is important that we move this legislation along and have the right framework so that we can participate, fitting into the national framework for PRPPs and making sure that this is an option available to Nova Scotians.

We are saying that this is one of the options. We know it's not everything. People still contribute to CPP and there may be a discussion about that in the future as we look at the new federal government and what they are doing, as we look at what Ontario is doing and so on. But today we have the opportunity to add one more option to the pensions of Nova Scotians.

It is really an alarming fact that only 40 per cent of Nova Scotians have an established pension, either defined benefit or defined contribution, so we really need to help provide more options. Another group of employers that I have talked to are real estate agents and those agencies have a lot of brokers who work under them but essentially they are self-employed, they're independent. They would have the option; self-employed people would now have the option to contribute to this sort of a pooled and portable pension plan.

It has a lot of flexibility. It allows one to move employers and still keep that fund growing. It allows for lower costs to administer because your money is pooled into a larger pool. A lot of small employers would know that they find it enormously expensive to set up their own plan if they only have 50 or fewer than 100 employees; it's very expensive to administer your own plan. This would allow them to opt into this sort of a plan with much

lower administrative costs therefore, more growth in the fund, more money back to the people who are contributing for their retirement.

It's good from an employer's point of view and it's good from the employee's point of view. It will be one more option for people who don't have a plan in place and we know for those who opt in it's a lot easier to opt in and have money taken off at source, at your payroll and have it saved for you. That's a much easier, more disciplined way to do it than it is to perhaps find money in your operating budget to set some money aside for the RRSP payment if you're making it on your own.

This way, the company can help, the employer can help and everybody wins in my opinion. I think we'll be surprised to see that quite a few companies and quite a few individuals will take advantage of this new option that's being presented. I know there are groups like Dalhousie University specifically waiting and asking that this be brought into place in Nova Scotia.

I'm very pleased to see this amendment before us today so that we can get this bill, Bill No. 126, to the Law Amendments Committee and see the next steps in it becoming a reality. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members of the Legislature who have taken the time to speak to this second reading - in particular, my colleague the honourable Minister of Justice. I would certainly like to acknowledge that in her capacity last year, the PRPP Act was first introduced in the Legislature. I'd like to acknowledge that today as we move forward with these amendments.

One of the things I noted through the debate thus far on second reading was the fact that we have a diverse age range of the members who stood to speak. I think that in itself clearly indicates the interest and the importance of investment vehicles for retirement savings - that it is something important wherever we are, at whatever stage of our lives, whether it be extremely early in our careers, like my colleague, the honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville, who I believe is the youngest member of the Legislature sitting right now. He clearly spoke quite passionately - and was quite well informed - on not only the bill but, in particular, the fact that these amendments are coming forward to expand the capacity and allow for the most effective implementation of the PRPPs.

I won't reiterate the many things stated by the members prior to me, but in addition, just a couple of comments from the other side of the House. I appreciate that the Opposition representatives who spoke are not opposed to these moves and amendments. I thank them for that, and I thank them for their comments. The member for Inverness, who spoke about

some of his concerns about what could be done better and some of his concerns about, I guess, retirement savings vehicles and the investment industry broadly - to that I'd say, again, these amendments and the PRPPs in general are really just a new vehicle, another approach.

Some of the key characteristics are about the flexibility of these tools, this investment tool, and transferability. Again, as the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville highlighted and stressed, a real focal point is what can be done at the back end once the savings have been completed, treating these the same as any other retirement benefit plan. So it's about ensuring that this financial tool for retirement savings is just another option.

To the point the member for Inverness brought up about the industry that provides investment services and investment advice, I just encourage the member to follow the proceedings of Bill No. 129, which I just tabled for first reading earlier today, around the securities regulations. There is some work being done there around those rules to provide more valuable information to investors in a broader way.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will take my seat. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would the honourable minister please move second reading of the bill?

MR. DELOREY: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 126.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill 126. 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: Madam Speaker, will you please call Bill No. 127.

Bill No. 127- Labour Standards Code.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 127 be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, I'm sure everyone in this House would agree that no one should have to worry about their job when they are caring for a very sick family member, or grieving the loss of a loved one. The proposed changes to the Labour Standards Code will give employees time to care for a gravely ill family member, or mourn the loss of a close family member.

The federal compassionate care benefit allows eligible Canadians to draw employment insurance while they take time off work to care for a very ill family member who has a significant risk of death. We understand that Nova Scotians who might need this kind of leave are dealing with heartbreaking situations. These amendments will extend compassionate care leave from eight to twenty-eight weeks, and protect employees' jobs while they're on leave. These changes will align Nova Scotia's protected leave with Canada Labour Code changes and federal increases in EI Compassionate Care Benefits that will come into effect in January. In fact, Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia is the first province to bring its labour code in line with the federal compassionate care changes.

These amendments will also lengthen unpaid bereavement leave to five consecutive working days for employees dealing with a death of a close family member. Previously, folks were eligible for one or three days leave. At this time, when families are spread out quite a bit, we thought that it would be important to lengthen that length of leave, and this will bring Nova Scotia's bereavement leave more in line with several other provinces. Madam Speaker, these labour code standards changes offer protection that families hope they'll never have to use, but will mean the world to them if they're needed.

I can speak from experience, Madam Speaker, about 25 years ago I lost my first husband, and the leave time that I had gave me some time to heal. I also used some vacation time, but that meant very much to me at that time of sudden loss to be able to draw on that particular benefit.

So, with that, I would like to hear what my Opposition colleagues have to say. I'm afraid I have to step out for a moment, but I have people taking notes. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill No. 127. All of us in this House, all Nova Scotians, know the hardship faced during illness and/or death of a family member. Anyone who has had a family member who has been ill and has tried to work and/or care for their loved one at the same time, knows the stress that places on, one, a working environment and, two, a relationship with the family member, or members at home who have to deal with the person who is dealing with the illness as well. So, it's critically important that Nova Scotians are able to take that time that they need to care for their loved ones during this illness, or the time of grief, and maintain their job security.

We are encouraged to see the changes brought in by the federal Conservative Government in their budget in the past Spring that extended EI insurance for those taking on paid compassionate leave of absence from six weeks to six months. Madam Speaker, this allows an employer as well to be able to temporarily fill those positions, and as we heard yesterday, they're bringing in a bill that's going to allow up to 70 people time to take jobs, and we're hearing that these are term positions. So this could be one of those term positions of the 70 jobs they speak of. It's important not only to have a job when you come back after such leaves, but also to have some financial support in lieu of your wages lost during these difficult times.

We are pleased the provincial government followed the leadership of the federal government and aligned these policies accordingly. We have not heard of any opposition to this bill yet from any of our stakeholders, or any other stakeholders, but we look forward to hearing from Nova Scotians concerned with this bill in the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I too am pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place and speak in support of this legislation. This is a really important piece of legislation in terms of harmonizing. Now the new provisions under the federal Employment Insurance Act will allow people to have a longer period of time, with pay, through the Employment Insurance Act, when they need to take time off for bereavement due to the loss of a family member.

My colleagues both have spoken before me of instances where they have been in this situation and I have to say, last winter was a very trying time for my family, for my sister who works in the private sector in a large insurance company. She lost her husband during the winter months and it was a really, really tough time for her and for our family, for myself.

Her employer was very generous in accommodating her need to have time off, both prior to my brother-in-law's death and then following his death, but they didn't have to be accommodating to the extent to which they were. I think we would like to believe that most employers would, in fact, be accommodating, and I think many actually are very accommodating, but not in all cases.

This provision establishes what we, as a society, feel is a compassionate and caring way to care for one another in difficult times. The loss of a loved one, somebody close to you, a child, a parent, a spouse, a sister, these are difficult times. People in these times should not be concerned about whether or not they are going to have a job to come back to, if they need to take time off to care for those around them and to have the needed time to grieve themselves in these terrible situations.

This is important legislation and not to be too partisan about it, but it's lovely to have seen that the Harper Government were able to do the right thing on a piece of legislation that would have such a broad impact to so many people in our country. I think it's really good that the provinces now are all harmonizing their labour standards legislation to bring the labour standards of the province in line with the federal Employment Insurance changes that will extend benefits for a longer period of time for people in these circumstances.

I would hope that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education would be bringing us more substantive changes to the Labour Standards Code in the province. Our Labour Standards Code is somewhat outdated. Our Labour Standards Code could use some change that better reflects the current conditions of the labour market and offers greater certainty to people who are at work, a better balance, an opportunity for better work-life balance.

I would welcome some progressive change in our labour standards legislation and change that is not initiated because of a change in federal policy, but change that is initiated because our provincial government has the political will to improve things for working people in the province.

I think this is really what government is for, to be the intermediary to help ensure that there's a level playing field, that there's a fair playing field, that there are standards that are set for working people across the board, and to really set the terms and conditions for healthy workplaces and healthy employment so that people aren't left on their own individually to try to negotiate with an employer, where there can be a very great imbalance in power between the worker and the employer. Government is there to help people deal with issues that they can't reasonably be expected to deal with on their own.

Overhauling the Labour Standards Code, modernizing it, and making it a stronger Labour Standards Code - particularly since most of the jobs that we have seen created under this government are part-time jobs. They are jobs that are uncertain, and they are jobs that leave people vulnerable. Our Labour Standards Code does not have much by way of protections or things that will enhance the employment status of people in those kinds of jobs.

With that, I'll take my seat, Madam Speaker. I'm interested to hear people who come before the Law Amendments Committee on this bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I stand here today on Bill No. 127, an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Labour Standards Code. Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, it's about time.

Under the first amendment, an employee is now entitled to five consecutive days of unpaid leave from work upon the death of a spouse, parent, guardian, child, ward, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law. Under the previous Act, employees were given one to three days, depending on their relationship with the deceased.

Unfortunately, most of us have experienced heartbreaking loss. We should not have to justify to anyone why the loss of a loved one deserves one day's leave or three days' leave. The truth is all losses are devastating. I should not have to prove that my love for my former guardian or foster family member is any different than your love for your biological parents or family. Madam Speaker, you should not have to prove to me that your love for your in-laws is any different from my love for my brother or sisters. These changes treat all our loved ones equally - all our friends, family, and colleagues equally.

There's another amendment to Bill No. 127 that is equally important. The second amendment to Bill No. 127 is around compassionate care leave. Before this new amendment, employees were given eight weeks to take care of a gravely ill loved one. As we all know, illness and disease do not understand time. Madam Speaker, the federal government expanded EI benefits from eight weeks to 28 weeks. This amendment will match the 28 weeks. What this means is an employer must hold a job for 28 weeks. This will allow an employee more time to stay at home and take care of a loved one during their struggles and final days. Loved ones often spend years of their lives looking after us. It is only right that we do the same for them.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education did not come up with these changes alone. They consulted with stakeholders like CFIB, Restaurants Canada, the Retail Council of Canada, Restaurants Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour. Not only did they speak to these stakeholders, but they reached out and listened to all Nova Scotians.

The federal government estimates that these changes will impact over 6,900 people across Canada every year who will be able to spend more time with their loved ones in their last and final days. Madam Speaker, 180 of those 6,900 people will be Nova Scotians. We must support them, and these amendments do just that. As of January 3, 2016, these amendments will take effect. Quite frankly, these amendments show once again that this Liberal Government cares.

I was trying to figure out a way to end this and what I could say that would show how much of an impact that this will have on Nova Scotians' lives so I would like to quote the member for Bedford, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. It will be my first and only time quoting here: We understand that Nova Scotians who might need this kind of leave are dealing with heartbreaking situations. No one should have to worry about their job when they are caring for a sick family member or grieving the loss of a loved one.

These changes offer protections that families hope that they'll never have to use but it will mean the world to them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Madam Speaker, I just want to speak very briefly in support of this bill. To pull on some of my own personal experiences: I come from a very large and extremely close family, so often when I hear people use the term "it takes a village to raise a child," I think that they are referring to me and my siblings and my cousins directly. I feel like the term was coined for us, especially when you are like myself and the youngest of - I think the last time I counted - 50 first cousins, and that's just from one side because my mother was an only child.

We were a very large and extended family and the only negative part of being from such a close family, apart from needing to find gentle and kind ways to remind them that they have to stay out of your business sometimes, and also constantly having to answer the question, why aren't you married yet, apart from any of those things, the hardest part really is when you lose somebody, when you lose somebody from your family.

For me, personally, in a period of less than a year, I lost my four uncles and that was a very overwhelming, emotional time because really it was like losing a parent. So when I see these amendments, when I see this piece of legislation and I see the amount of care that is put in and the amount of time that is given individuals to grieve and to be able to get back onto their game and get back into their livelihood without any risk, I feel very supportive of that.

My period of grief with the loss of my uncles then led into a two-year period where I was a primary caregiver for my mother who was ailing and didn't have the luxury of being able to take time off and, in fact, worked a full-time job that was a two-hour commute either way back and forth from my parents' home where she was convalescing. As somebody who has felt this and felt very frustrated and very helpless, these amendments, these changes to this bill really give me so much hope.

Like my colleagues, I'm excited to hear what people at Law Amendments Committee will say. I'm hopeful that there will be people who bring their own personal experiences like I have and see what a remarkable move forward that this bill actually is. With that, I thank you and I will sit.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 127. I do want to thank my honourable colleagues for the comments that they made in

support of the bill and I did note several concerns on other issues to do with the Labour Code. I want to make the members aware that the bill that I tabled in the first reading this morning will deal with some separate amendments that offer more protection for workers who are seeking to consult with Labour Standards about their employment rights. I just wanted to bring that to their attention and with that, I move second reading of Bill No. 127.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 127. 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: Madam Speaker, I move that we recess until 12:00 noon.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We will recess until 12:00 noon.

[11:45 a.m. The House recessed.]

[12:07 pm. The House reconvened.]

SPEAKER'S RULING:

Dart. East MLA: McVicar Conversation - Recording Produce
(Resolution by Hon. M. Samson [Hansard p.5896, Nov. 19/15])

The House unanimously agreed to an order for the member for Dartmouth East to produce the original unedited recording of the conversation between the member and Mr. Kirby McVicar on February 12, 2015, and for the Speaker to issue a warrant and authorize the Sergeant-at-Arms to obtain the recording if it was not produced by the time required by this resolution.

The recording of the entire conversation between the member and Mr. McVicar was not delivered as required by the unanimous order of this House yesterday. The Speaker issued a warrant and the Sergeant-at-Arms served it upon Mr. Younger.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Yesterday the House unanimously agreed to an Order with regard to the member for Dartmouth East which I will read for the record once again:

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.

That was passed yesterday, unanimously, by this House. I have been advised by the Chief Clerk that the member for Dartmouth East has delivered a letter, a CD and a memory card to him and also a sworn oath respecting this matter.

I will now read that letter and the oath. This is from the member for Dartmouth East dated November 19th, 2015, addressed to Neil Ferguson, Chief Clerk of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly:

“Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I am pleased to write you further to the resolution of the House of Assembly today where I was asked by the assembly to produce a recording. I write in response to the resolution (which I have not been provided by government or any other party) to confirm I am not aware of the existence of the recordings of any conversations between me and the Premier, or the Premier's Chief of Staff, other than the two files which have already been released. One which I personally released publicly and openly on November 12th, and one which I understand the Premier's Office released earlier today.

I have enclosed these two files for your records in compliance with the motion of the House. While the official Hansard is not available at the time of writing of this letter, I understand the motion references a 20-minute conversation and a full recording. I'm not aware of the current existence of any such recording. If I had such a recording in

my custody I would, without question, deliver it to you at your request, without the need for a motion of the House.

It is my recollection that the discussion with Mr. Kirby McVicar, which occurred at my constituency office in February of this year, was very short and not anywhere close to a length of 20 minutes, which has been suggested. If the Premier or House Leader has determined there was a 20-minute conversation, I can only surmise that they have a recording of their own, which I would encourage them to release, as I am extremely confident that such a recording would further go to demonstrate the Premier's Office was fully involved in making the demands on the actions of me and my family. I do recall, that I said very little during the entire conversation, and it was very much a one way conversation from my perspective. I would also again state that ultimately my decision to go along with the requests of the Premier's Office and I take responsibility for that decision. That being said, neither I, nor anyone representing me at any time asked for a job, employment contract, or compensation in return for not speaking out. As the recording released by the Premier's Office attests, the offer made by Mr. McVicar was turned down by me as I found it inappropriate.

I have acknowledged the conversation was recorded, however I never personally listened to the recording other than that which has been released. The recording was made after discussion with advisors, including a member of the RCMP, in order to protect myself from any possible allegations against me in the future. The recording and segments had been kept for those purposes only, however I reiterate that the two files released are the complete recordings that I am aware of still existing and the only ones I have in my possession. To this end, you should be aware that I have in the spirit of the motion, today, also checked my computer at my Constituency Office to see if additional files remain there. They do not. I have checked the surveillance system in my constituency office which may also have recorded the conversation in question, but it only retains data for a few weeks before over writing the files. Therefore, a February conversation has been overwritten many times.

While I do not know what files may still have been on my previous electronic devices, my BlackBerry was completely wiped remotely without warning at the direction of the Premier's Office on Thursday, November 5th, 2015. The device was returned to them on Friday, November 6th, 2015. On the same day I returned both my government laptop and iPad so I do not have access to these devices. The backup

server for the Constituency Office was returned to government surplus in October, 2015 (this is recorded in the asset disposal log). All of these items are therefore no longer in my control, but rather in the custody and control of the government. None of these devices I had prior to November 5th, 2015 remain in my possession as I was required to return them.

It should be noted, as I stated publicly, that the first time I listened to either of these was last week. I released one recording to CBC last Thursday for the sole purpose of addressing the issue of the Premier's erroneous statements that his staff did not provide guidance or direction about the handling of my leave of absence and the court case.

After finding the second file, I discussed the matter with my advisors, and I chose not to release the second file because I had decided that after Thursday of last week I needed to focus on my work in my constituency, and representing the issues which the people of Nova Scotia were bringing to me since becoming an Independent member. You will note, in support of this I have done no media interviews or issued any public statements about the matter in over a week. I have also spent no time since then, until today as a result of this motion, looking for any additional files. I am confident, however, that none exist other than what has been released. I cannot explain why the Premier's office would choose to release the file they came into possession of, but this completes fully the files which I have.

I understand the Premier has asked the RCMP to investigate whether there are any legal issues raised by the statements of his Chief of Staff on the tape. I will of course be happy to cooperate with any such investigation should I be asked.

I trust this satisfactorily responds to the motion before the House. As discussed with you I am willing to swear an oath to attest to the fact that I am not aware of the existence of any other recorded files.

Sincerely,

Andrew Younger MLA
Dartmouth East."

I will now read the oath provided by the member to the Chief Clerk earlier today:

“I, Andrew Younger, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Dartmouth East, attest that, as far as I am aware, there exist no recordings of any kind of the conversation with Kirby McVicar, Chief of Staff to the Premier in February 2015 other than those two which have been provided to the Chief Clerk of the Nova Scotia Legislature, and that for further certainty I have no such recording in my custody or care.”

This was signed by Andrew Younger, MLA, and sworn before the Chief Clerk of the Nova Scotia Legislature, Neil Ferguson.

It is clear from the contents of the member’s letter that he has not delivered the recording of the entire conversation between himself and Mr. McVicar, as required by the unanimous order of this House yesterday.

The order made yesterday provides that I am to issue a warrant and have the Sergeant at Arms executed to obtain the warrant. I have issued that warrant and the Sergeant at Arms has served it upon Mr. Younger.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 117.

Bill No. 117 - Public Inquiries Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I am pleased to be back here for the third reading of Bill No. 117, which is an amendment to the Public Inquires Act. Mr. Speaker, there was no representation at Law Amendments Committee for this. I would just like to remind the members of the House what this amendment is.

This is an amendment that will provide protection to witnesses and other participants who give evidence of testimony at an inquiry, and Mr. Speaker, this is for any inquiries that come up in the future. It’s always unfortunate when there are situations that

require that sort of step for our province, but we do need to be ready and have good legislation that is at the forefront of Canada. This amendment does bring us in line with other provinces across the country, so we know that it was something that was lacking in our current legislation, and so we feel that it's very important.

The provision, again, is meant to help ensure that people who are participating in an inquiry can speak without fear of their testimony being used in criminal or civil proceedings. The forthcoming restorative inquiry - as we know there have been mentions of that coming up and some news of it in June when it was officially launched. So we know that there is an upcoming restorative inquiry into abuse at the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children, and that is an example of an inquiry that will be assisted by this legislation. I wanted participants, when that time comes, to be able to tell their stories fully and that will help in the healing process of survivors and their families.

This amendment will ensure that people telling their stories will not fear having their statements subsequently used in another proceeding. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move third reading of Bill No. 117. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I was in Winnipeg for Beyond Borders, an organization that advocates for children who are exploited, often sexually, around the world. They work with 77 other countries, and they are basically Canada's representation in that regard.

One of the gentlemen who was at this symposium was Chief Justice Murray Sinclair. You may recall that he was the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that examined what happened in residential schools in Canada. I can tell you from the presentation that he gave, which included some video footage of that commission - prepare yourself for some heart-wrenching stories. I know we're looking at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children sometime in the near future, but in that case, in the case of residential schools, children were taken away from their families and they were taken away from their communities. Then, in some cases, they were abused - physically, sexually, emotionally.

Imagine having to deal with that, but having to deal with it without the bedrock of having your family and having community to support you. The testimonies were heart-wrenching. There was one gentleman - they included some footage of his testimony. It came at the very end of the commission. I believe he was also participating, and actually came out that day to tell his story. In his case, his clothing was even taken away from him when he was first sent to residential school. Probably one of the last acts from his family to him was to give him some new clothing, and that was taken away from him. You can imagine as a little child, something like that happening to you, and then enduring the abuse and trying to understand what the abuse even was at such a young age.

We think about the Community Services legislation before us here, Bill No. 112, and I know there were concerns raised by the Aboriginal community here in Nova Scotia to ensure that legislation doesn't cause unintended consequences for children who might have to move into foster care. I want to highlight that.

Back to the public inquiries and the need to bring out the truth - which I believe is the purpose of this legislation, to ensure that people can speak freely - is very important. One of the reasons is that people who have suffered abuse often keep it secret. They are made to feel shame by what happened, even though what was done to them was wrong and wasn't asked for. But that is the reality. Many people who are survivors feel shame and keep what happened to them secret.

I do hope that with this legislation people feel free to come forward and tell their stories, and if survivors feel they can do it, may they feel some support and comfort to know that we care here in this Legislature and that there are people across the province who care about what happened to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Thank you. I am pleased to rise to speak to this bill and support it.

Inquiries are a vital component of our democratic process. I see that this amendment will only assist in contributing to that process and adding to that process. To be able to testify without fear of further prosecution is integral to that. Fact-finding and truth seeking can be challenging at the best of times, and this particular amendment will certainly assist us in moving toward that goal. Those are my comments. 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: I do thank the members of the Opposition, the Critics for Justice, who have spoken on this matter. I appreciate their support. I do think that they understand that this is about creating a safe environment so that people can feel the confidence to come forward and tell their stories.

I think that the member for Inverness has said it very well. I'm sure that it will be a very difficult time, as we have seen in other similar processes in other countries and of course in our nation as well, as was referenced with the residential schools inquiry. This is something that is difficult, but we want to create the right conditions so that it can be done in a way that we are seeking truth, that we are trying to help people heal, and trying to move on after that so that we can never repeat the same mistakes that were made in the past.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move third reading of Bill No. 117.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 117. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that we recess for five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess for five minutes.

[12:26 p.m. The House recessed.]

[12:33 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I certainly thank all of our colleagues for a very productive and interesting day.

Mr. Speaker, just to advise the House, as we have been doing, Law Amendments Committee will be meeting on Monday, November 23rd, at 4:00 p.m. During that time, the bills that will be considered at Law Amendments Committee will be Bill No. 122, Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act; Bill No. 123, Paramedics Act; and Bill No. 124, Social Workers Act, and from today, Bill No. 126, Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act; and Bill No. 127, Labour Standards Code.

The House will sit on Tuesday, November 24th, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. At that time, following the daily routine, we will go into Public Bills for Second Reading, and they will be the bills introduced today, which are Bill Nos. 128 and 129.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Tuesday, November 24th, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and would like to wish everyone a safe and happy weekend.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on Tuesday, November 24th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The House is adjourned until Tuesday, November 24th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 12:34 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**(Tabled Nov. 19, 2015)****RESOLUTION NO. 2465**

By: Mr. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Rita Mae Schwartz of Shad Bay and Peter Jollimore of Hatchett Lake took it upon themselves to organize and facilitate the first annual Prospect Communities Volunteer of the Year Awards Gala, hosted by the Resource Opportunities Centre at the Prospect Road Community Centre on Saturday, May 30, 2015; and

Whereas the Prospect Communities Volunteer of the Year Award is named in honour of Barb Allen, a longtime community volunteer and it recognizes an outstanding person or group who demonstrates commitment to, and active engagement in volunteering in the Prospect Communities; and

Whereas 22 individuals and community groups received recognition for their community service in front of a packed house, with Shirley and Jim Little receiving the first ever Barb Allen Volunteer of the Year Award;

Therefore be it resolved that member of the House of Assembly join me in acknowledging the enormous efforts that Rita Mae and Peter put into making this a memorable event that will continue to celebrate community volunteering well into the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2466

By: Mr. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas the Prospect Road Lions Club was first established in 1996 to serve the communities of Goodwood, Hatchett Lake, Brookside, Whites Lake, Terence Bay, Lower Prospect, Prospect, Prospect Bay, Shad Bay, Bayside, Blind Bay, McGrath's Cove, and East and West Dover; and

Whereas this year marks the end of an era as membership dwindled and the club was forced to cease operation, after 20 years of making significant positive contribution to the communities served; and

Whereas the Prospect Road Lions Club initiated numerous activities in community including the Canada Day Family Celebration, the Seniors Christmas Dinner in partnership with the Whites Lake Legion, running BBQs at community events, collecting used eyeglasses for recycling, providing a yearly scholarship for an outstanding high school student, participating in community clean-up efforts, helping at the Blessing of the Fleet, Project Pride, and Remembrance Day;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in acknowledging the huge positive contribution to community made by the Prospect Road Lions Club.

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)

(Tabled Nov. 20, 2015)

RESOLUTION NO. 2471

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Maria Gorman has been chosen to participate in the Teachers Make a Difference program; and

Whereas she is one of only 10 teachers in the province to be chosen; and

Whereas Maria Gorman is a teacher at the Tri-Counties Regional School Board;

Therefore be it resolved that that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Maria Gorman on her selection to this important program and wish her continued success in her profession.

RESOLUTION NO. 2472

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Larry Burke is winner of the 2015 Employee of the Year Award; and

Whereas this award is presented annually by the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce; and

Whereas Larry Burke is a valued employee of D.K. Muise Motors;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Larry Burke on his selection as Employee of the Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 2473

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas 15-year-old Jenna Bishara has been selected CBC young athlete of the day for November 6; and

Whereas Jenna has been curling for seven years and currently plays on six teams; and

Whereas Jenna was chosen as a junior star for the Men's World Curling Championship in Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jenna on her athletic achievements and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 2474

By: Ms. Joyce Treen (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas Faye MacPherson and Aubrey Smith were married on November 22, 1955, in Dingwall, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas they have three children: Leona, Aubrey, and Mary; and

Whereas their children, seven grandchildren, and great-grandson would like to recognize their love and devotion to each other and to their family on this very special day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Faye and Aubrey Smith on the occasion of their 60th Wedding Anniversary and wish them all the best in the years ahead.

RESOLUTION NO. 2475

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas Valerie Metlege graduated from Grade 9 at Fairview Junior High at the end of June with a collection of awards; and

Whereas she was the recipient of the Peter Rackham Award for Outstanding Academic Effort and Achievement; and

Whereas Valerie was also on the Principal's List throughout the three years and received subject awards at the convocation ceremony in French, Science, and Math;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Metlege on receiving her outstanding academic achievements and wish her continued success in high school and beyond.

RESOLUTION NO. 2476

By: Ms. Pam Eyking (Victoria-The Lakes)

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

Whereas the Wagmatcook Arts and Culture Festival took place in Wagmatcook from October 13 to 17; and

Whereas the Wagmatcook Arts Festival, now in its fifth year, is a festival to celebrate Mi'kmaq culture and to share traditional teachings through singing, dancing, storytelling, and through Aboriginal arts; and

Whereas the festival draws residents and visitors to Cape Breton every year to enjoy the events and encourages everyone to experience Mi'kmaq culture;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Wagmatcook Arts and Culture Festival organizers on another successful year and wish them the best as the planning begins for their 2016 festival.