



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

Second Session

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin the daily routine, the topic for late debate tonight, as submitted by the honourable member for Lunenburg, is:

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the special relationship between the City of Boston and the Province of Nova Scotia, commemorated annually by the delivery of a Christmas tree, and thank Andrea and Bill MacEachern of Lorne, Pictou County, for their generous donation of the 72-year-old vibrant 49-foot white spruce.

The late debate tonight, at the moment of interruption.

We'll now move on with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 112 - Children and Family Services Act.

Bill No. 118 - Heritage Property Act.

Bill No. 131 - Maintenance and Custody Act.

Bill No. 133 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 134 - Liquor Control Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, with amendments.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 136 - Motor Vehicle Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendment.

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

The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Private and Local Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

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

Bill No. 137 - An Act Respecting the Repeal of Presbyterian Church Legislation.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Day in and day out women and girls continue to experience violence. There are too many days where we hear about women who are abused and violated, physically, sexually, or verbally. The United Nations has indicated that one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.

Each year from November 25th through December 10th, which is Human Rights Day, we observe the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence. The aim is to raise awareness about violence against women and girls and the harm it creates not only on the victims but on the people who commit the acts, and on society.

In addition, on December 6th, we recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women across the country. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day marks the anniversary of the murders, in 1989, of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. They died simply because they were women.

While it is particularly timely to come together and consider this important issue during these commemorative days, this matters 365 days of the year. I can see the efforts that communities and society in general continue to make to educate people about the harms that violence against women creates and that makes me very happy and, most importantly, very hopeful.

I also see far too often, still, stories and news articles about gender-based violence in all of its forms. I read about spousal abuse. I see the effects of physical violence, and just as disturbing, verbal and mental abuse, which leaves no physical trace.

As the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, I stress our commitment to working with community partners to ensure they have the support and the tools needed to help vulnerable women and children, because unfortunately, gender-based violence remains far too prevalent. It continues to be a global pandemic, violating human rights and knowing no geographic, socio-economic, or cultural boundaries.

As we reflect on this challenging matter of violence against women and girls, I recognize and thank the many women-serving organizations across this province that work tirelessly to keep watch over women and children fleeing violence. They are strong public safety partners in their communities, and important educators, helping communities understand this complex issue and rally in support of lives free of violence.

This year, Canadians across the country are being invited to reflect, remember, and take the pledge to act in whatever way they are able to end violence against women and girls. I invite all Nova Scotians and my colleagues in this House to take this pledge with me. We all have a responsibility here. This is not a women's issue. It's everyone's issue. Women and men working together across communities is the key to ending violence.

My pledge will be to raise awareness of consent and do everything in my power to end violence against women. It is fitting that the 16 Days of Activism we are observing end on Human Rights Day, because everyone has the right to feel safe and to live free of fear and free of abuse, whether it be physical, verbal, or mental. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for providing a copy earlier today.

Gender-based violence is far too prevalent. As the minister said, we hear about violence against girls and women in the news nearly every day. Unfortunately, that means there are many, many stories that we don't hear - acts of violence that stay in the shadows, victims who think there is nothing they can do and nowhere they can turn for help. The effects are devastating for the victims and harmful to our society.

That's why observing the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence is so important. Raising awareness and shining the light of day on gender-based violence is one way to end the violence. It's a way to let women and girls who are suffering know that they are not alone, and that there are services available to them.

These days are rallying points for the thousands of dedicated service organizations, professionals, and volunteers who work so hard to support victims of violence, and to prevent it from happening in the first place. I am truly humbled to have this opportunity to publicly thank them for the work they do on the front lines 365 days a year.

In the days ahead we will mark the solemn anniversary of the murders at l'École Polytechnique, where we will remember the 15 young women who were gunned down, and we will mourn them always.

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is also a call to action. That's why I joined the minister in taking the pledge to do whatever I can

to end violence against girls and women. I take that responsibility very seriously, as I know all members in this Chamber do. We all want our daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts, and friends to live in a world where they don't fear for their safety because of their gender, and by taking the pledge we take an important step forward in ending abuse. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: I want to thank my two colleagues for their comments on this very important issue at this very important time. Violence against women is one of the most pressing public health issues facing us as a province, as a country, and as a world. Each year from November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10th, the International Day of Human Rights, countries around the world observe 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

As the minister pointed out, nationally, December 6th, this Friday, all Canadians recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. International and national days bring about better public awareness of violence against women, and they make us realize that this is vital and necessary, and a testament to our society on how far we have come to uncover violence that for far too long happened behind closed doors. However, we all know that women and girls across Nova Scotia and beyond face violence daily.

Members of this House really must work tirelessly to address and confront violence against women. Violence against women is not a women's issue, it is a human rights issue. Gender-based violence is not inevitable; we can prevent it by addressing factors that contribute to violence like poverty and by creating policies that respond to the needs of survivors.

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, it states that 83 per cent of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women. However, we know that women experiencing violence do not report all instances of abuse to police and perpetrators of violence are then not held responsible. According to the Canadian Department of Justice, each year Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence. This figure includes immediate costs such as emergency room visits and future costs such as loss of income.

There is so much work to be done here in Nova Scotia on this important human rights issue. Sometimes we may disagree in this Chamber on how to tackle problems that Nova Scotians face daily, however everyone in this room wants to end violence against women and girls and it is our responsibility to collaborate thoughtfully, respectfully, and quickly, to ensure that the next generation of Nova Scotians can live in a province where violence against women is an issue of the past. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would like to do an introduction if I could and before I do that I would like to, on behalf of our government and all young men across the province, add my support to the remarks that were made just prior to me by three members of this House on a critically important issue that I believe our province can deal with to ensure that every person feels safe in their own home.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery. We are joined today by Ellie Black of Halifax. Ellie is a world renowned artistic gymnast. She has an extremely busy schedule but she is here today to join us so I'd ask the House to give her a very warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 2611

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

Whereas through hard work and dedication, Ellie Black of Halifax has risen to the top of the artistic gymnastics around the world; and

Whereas Ellie has accomplished extraordinary feats in her 20 years, setting a world example for young people across our province; and

Whereas Ellie has won many medals in several competitions including the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto where she brought home five medals as part of team Canada, making her Canada's most decorated athlete at the games;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly commend Ellie for her success and dedication, thank her for representing Nova Scotia and Canada with such pride, and wish her the best of luck in Rio, the 2016 Olympic Summer Games.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver 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. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 2612

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

Whereas Constable Bart Leppan is a long-serving RCMP officer who now works in Sackville, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Constable Leppan is part of a team that developed the hybrid hub model which brings together a variety of community services including Big Brothers Big Sisters, to help youth who are in contact with the law and at risk of reoffending; and

Whereas Constable Leppan works with youth who show signs of vulnerable or risky behavior and helps to divert them away from the criminal justice system and for this work has been awarded a Big Brothers Big Sisters 2015 INSPIRE Service Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House join me in congratulating Constable Bart Leppan on his award and for the positive changes he and his fellow officers are making in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 143 - Entitled an Act Respecting Regulatory Accountability and Reporting in Nova Scotia. (Hon. Stephen McNeil)

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

The honourable Minister of Immigration on an introduction and a bill.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. With us in the east gallery we have two very esteemed women whom I'm very proud to call friends. We have Kathie Swenson, who is an active volunteer and past regional director of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, currently on the executive; and my constituent Betty Boudreau, who has been a great supporter and active volunteer in Halifax. I would like to ask both of them to please rise and get the applause of the House. (Applause)

Bill No. 144 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 38 of the Acts of 1996. The Antiochian Maronite Catholic Church - Our Lady of Lebanon - Corporation Act. (Hon. Lena Diab, as a private member)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT (RICHMOND CO.): VICTIMS' FAMILIES - SYMPATHY EXPRESS

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I will be asking for a moment of silence following this statement.

Yesterday was a tragic day for residents of Richmond County and the entire Strait area. A motor vehicle accident took the lives of a teacher and two young students. The young teacher, who was also a coach, worked at Felix Marchand Education Centre, while the two students attended Richmond Education Centre/Academy. Two of the victims are from the community of Louisdale, while one student was on a student exchange program from Mexico.

Words cannot express the sense of grief, sorrow and loss we are all feeling. On behalf of our Premier, our entire government and all members of the Legislative Assembly, I want to express our deepest sympathy to the families, fellow teachers, students and the entire community on this tragic loss. May we all stand united with them during their time of grief. Merci.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for a moment of silence.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We will now have a moment of silence for the victims of yesterday's terrible accident in Port Hawkesbury.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FEED N.S.: WORK - SUPPORT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, may I just say to the member for Cape Breton-Richmond from this side of the House that we are very moved by the statement he just made and extend our grief and condolences to members of his extended family and to those families that were affected. As he knows, there were a lot of connections, apparently, in this House to people in that motor vehicle, and we are all feeling the same sadness. Today has reminded us what is really important at a time like this. So I thank him for his statement.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say, on a different topic, that in March of this year 19,722 people in Nova Scotia were assisted by food banks. Thirty-one per cent of those food bank users were children. One quarter of the households assisted in this province received the majority of their income from a disability or old age pension. Food bank use increased this year over last year by almost 17 per cent, far higher than in 2008.

Feed Nova Scotia works hard to provide food to Nova Scotians in need. They distribute over 2 million kilograms of donated food to their member network of 146 food banks and meal programs across this province. They support their members as they build capacity to serve their communities and help raise awareness of the challenges of hunger and poverty.

Today it is my pleasure to support the work done by Feed Nova Scotia director Nick Jennery, his hard-working staff, and the thousands of volunteers who work so hard to make sure Nova Scotians have food in their time of need. Thank you.

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

AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE - ENSURE

HON. DAVID WILSON: We, too, as a caucus want to send our condolences to the family and to the Government House Leader on the loss yesterday. We are deeply saddened to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, our children need affordable child care. Parents across Nova Scotia work hard to make sacrifices to make sure their kids get the best start in life. They are looking for a Premier who understands that.

We know that along with minimum wage increases, affordable child daycare is an important step towards ensuring a person's wage is a living wage. We know that our economy grows \$2 for every \$1 invested in affordable child care.

It's an investment, but it's not just a line in the budget. Women should not have to choose their career goals because affordable care spaces are out of reach. We need to ensure that families have access to affordable child care in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

AINSWORTH, CHRIS - ALTRUISM

MS. MARGARET MILLER: I'm very pleased today to stand to talk about one of the many stories of Nova Scotia. On May 24, 2015, Jackie Sanfilippo and Jimmy Missar from Columbus, Ohio, and their two dogs were on their way to Rainbow Haven Beach to camp for the night. Near Shearwater, the engine started to work oddly, so they pulled over into the Tim Hortons parking lot where they ended up spending the night.

The next day, Jimmy started working on his vehicle, and something happened. People stopped. They stopped to see if the couple were okay, or if they needed help. They gave them coupons for local stores and water for their dogs.

Most impressive was a young man, Chris Ainsworth from Elmsdale. Chris took the couple and their van to his home where they stayed for over two weeks until the van was fixed. The Ohio couple were overwhelmed by all the kindness they received in Nova Scotia, especially from their newfound friends, Chris and his family.

Chris says that he was raised to help people in need. I say the world needs more people like Chris.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

N.S. FED. OF AGRIC. - MISSION

MR. JOHN LOHR: The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture has represented the interests of our province's agricultural community since 1895. Today Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture members account for well over 90 per cent of all agricultural production in Nova Scotia. The federation brings together over 2,400 individual farm businesses and works towards a competitive and sustainable future for the farming community in Nova Scotia.

The mission of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is to help farming communities build businesses that are focused on being financially viable and ecologically and socially responsible. Nova Scotia's farming community is stronger because of the work done by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

PREM.: NOVA SCOTIANS - CONSULT

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, teachers have made it clear they are not willing to tolerate the Premier's heavy-handed tactics. Nova Scotia teachers are highly qualified, they work hard, and they are committed to providing a quality education to our children. They deserve the right to bring their valid concerns to the table and engage in collective bargaining that is fair with the government. It's time the Liberal Government stopped making threats and started listening.

It's unfortunate that teachers now join a lengthy list of other workers who have felt disrespected by the government - home care workers; nurses and health care workers; students, faculty, and staff at our post-secondary institutions; and those working in our screen industry.

Mr. Speaker, this needs to stop. The Premier needs to be willing to listen and consult with Nova Scotians instead of just trying to impose his will on them.

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

HAMILTON, WAYNE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sadness to recognize the passing of Wayne Hamilton of Brookside, a husband to Gerri and a father to Andrew and Sean. Born in P.E.I., Wayne served with the Royal Canadian Navy and later with the Royal Canadian Naval Reserves, rising through the ranks to the position of Commander of Harbour Defence and Port Security Unit One.

Wayne became a teacher at a number of local schools in Timberlea-Prospect. With a passion for travel and education, Wayne introduced students to thinking globally and international initiatives. He was instrumental in establishing the Canadian Council for Geographic Education and went on to develop the National Educational Canadian Community Atlas Program.

Wayne will always be remembered for his service and contribution to community. He was instrumental in developing the Brookside Community School and was a volunteer firefighter and a founding and long-time member of the Prospect Road and Area Recreation Association and the Brookside Homeowners Association.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia Assembly to join me in recognizing Wayne and his family for his lifetime of service and dedication to community. May he rest in peace.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

FAM./CHILD POVERTY - END

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, a recent report tells us that a staggering 37,650 children in Nova Scotia, or more than one in five, were living in poverty in 2013. That is the highest rate in Atlantic Canada and the third-highest rate in Canada. Child poverty rates are the highest in Cape Breton, where an astonishing one in three children are living below the poverty line; nearly one in four children in Kentville, New Glasgow, and Truro live in a low-income circumstance.

In 2013, for children under six in Nova Scotia, the child poverty rate was 27 per cent - close to one in three young children, compared to 22.5 per cent of all children. Sadly, young children in the Cape Breton census area had a poverty rate of 42.7 per cent.

As legislators, we must do everything we can to improve these disturbing statistics and work to end family poverty and child poverty.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): MEANINGFUL CONSULTATIONS - REASSESS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I have been fortunate enough to have been around this House for a number of years. What I witnessed at the Law Amendments Committee over the past few days I have never seen before. Bill after bill has been sent back as key stakeholders have expressed their concerns and displeasure over the government's lack of consultation and engagement. We have seen a bill come back to committee just days after stakeholders suggested substantive amendments were required.

Mr. Speaker, while this government claims to consult and engage, evidence is surfacing to suggest that this is just not the case. I encourage the government to reassess what they consider to be "meaningful consultations," as Nova Scotians are getting tired of being told what is best for them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DART. SOUTH MLA: FOSTER CHILDREN - COMMENTS

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to address some disparaging comments made by the member for Dartmouth South today in the Law

Amendments Committee in regard to foster children. As someone who was a foster child for 16 years of my life, I have heard all kinds of comments. In each new community, with each new family, I would hide the fact that I was a foster child because of the stigma, the comments, and the looks. I want to be very clear: we are not foster children. We are children.

Secondly, foster care saved my life. It saved many children's lives. It took us out of the homes of alcoholics, drug addicts, parents who abused us and neglected us. It took a four-year-old boy away from a father who tried to drown him because he complained that the bathtub was too hot.

Mr. Speaker, I was scared and ashamed of being a "foster child" because of comments like the ones in Law Amendments. Foster families saved my life; I was better off because of the kindness and love of strangers.

Mr. Speaker, I do not stand here today and pretend I speak for all children or foster families, so my humble advice to the member for Dartmouth South is stop acting like she does.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, permission to make an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: I notice seated in the gallery this afternoon is my parents' councillor and neighbour - he has been a councillor for District 12 for 24 years; he may also be known to some in here to be Iain Rankin's father. But I see Reg Rankin up there, so welcome Reg, and receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ROY, NICOLAS/N.S. YOUNG FARMERS - IMPORTANCE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, Nicolas Roy and the Nova Scotia Young Farmers help provide educational and development opportunities for young and beginning farmers across Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, farming can be an expensive and difficult undertaking, but a strong agricultural sector is crucial to our province's economic future. That's why the work that the Nova Scotia Young Farmers do is so important. They help identify and overcome problems encountered by young people getting involved in agriculture, and they prepare young and beginning farmers for a more active role in provincial and national agricultural organizations.

Because of our young farmers, I know that the agricultural sector will be in good hands for many years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EQUALITY/PEACE - PROMOTE

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Last night the Dalhousie Muslim Student Association and the Dalhousie Student Union facilitated a panel discussion called, I'm a Muslim. Am I a Terrorist? The purpose of this panel was to challenge Islamophobia on Dalhousie's campus, which is a very pervasive issue around the globe. Esteemed professor Jamal A. Bawadi gave a moving opening statement and continually reinforced that Islam is a religion of peace and not of violence.

As Nova Scotia and Canada prepare for the countless Syrian refugees seeking peace in our communities, it becomes the responsibility of all members of this House to promote equality and peace.

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

KERR, SHANNON: GRAD. - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Shannon Kerr, of Sydney, for being chosen recently to deliver the valedictorian speech to her fellow graduates at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Shannon received a degree in Public Relations and has accepted a term with the Cape Breton Regional Police. Shannon is the daughter of Brad and Karen Kerr. Shannon's commitment to her school shone through her leadership roles in residence and extracurricular committees. She was president of the Public Relations Society and a student representative council member.

I would once again like to congratulate Shannon Kerr on her graduation, and wish her every success in her future employment.

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

COM. SERV.: FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN - FOSTER CARE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in today's *Globe and Mail* renowned scholar and executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, wrote about the federal Liberals' plan to conduct an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission pointed out, the child welfare system across Canada is not well-suited to the needs of indigenous children. It does not account for the multi-generational impacts of residential schools and the impacts of severe and prolonged poverty. This leads to a dramatic overrepresentation of First Nations children in care - and in fact more First Nations children are in foster care today in Canada than at the height of residential schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully request that the Minister of Community Services take this into consideration as she considers this important bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

HEUBACH, AL - RETIREMENT

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: After more than 40 years in the business of bicycles Al Heubach is retiring so that he can spend more time on bikes, instead of most of his time fixing and selling bikes. When he does retire at the end of this year, the 62-year-old will also be closing the doors of the iconic Bike Barn, which he has operated just outside Lunenburg for the last 25 years.

He will be missed not only for his personality and his willingness to help and promote all things bicycle, but also for his belief in repairing and not replacing things when possible. The veteran cyclist has said perhaps the best way to spend a summer would be touring the province on a bike. In years past, that wasn't possible because of work. Here's to hoping that 2016 is the summer he will be able to make that journey.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this time to recognize Al for his 40 years in the bicycle business and wish him all the happiness of his retirement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

PICTOU CO. HELP LINE/MACCALLUM, ARLIS - SALUTE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Pictou County Help Line is a confidential and non-judgmental telephone service providing care, support, and encouragement to the citizens of Pictou County and surrounding areas. The help line provides the following services: information, a listening ear, referrals, crisis and suicide intervention. For several decades the help line has been staffed by dedicated volunteers 365 days a year, which means this service is open on all holidays and weekends when other agencies may not be available.

This not-for-profit organization has been assisting the Pictou County area since 1983. Each year approximately 6,000 calls are fielded through the help line. Pictou County

salutes Arlis MacCallum, the executive director, and all the volunteers that have provided this much-needed service since the 1980s.

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

PREM. - POVERTY REDUCTION

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, back in 2006, the Premier, who then sat in Opposition, introduced a private member's bill called the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act. Unfortunately, now in government, we see a Premier who is not adequately addressing growing poverty rates in Nova Scotia. He has in fact frozen income assistance rates for two years.

Since 2014, food bank use for women and children is up across the province. In a recent report we see that in the Premier's own backyard, one in four children live in poverty. My hope is that the Premier takes some time to reflect on the issues that seemed important to him when he was in Opposition, maybe then his attention will finally turn to the things that could actually improve the lives of Nova Scotians.

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

PROSPER, LAURA - ESKASONI PEACE & FRIENDSHIP GARDEN

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Laura Prosper for her hard work in bringing a new community peace and friendship garden to the community of Eskasoni. Ms. Prosper knew an unused piece of land that was in danger of becoming a dumping ground and it could mean so much more for her community. She spoke with the land owner who generously donated the land back to the community so it could be turned into a space where Stations of the Cross would be placed for the elderly and disabled. This month 700 tulip bulbs were also planted by volunteers and next spring residents will see a living Mi'kmaq flag in the middle of the park. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ms. Prosper and thank her for making this project such a success. Thank you.

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

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ANGLICAN CHURCH MOTHERS' UNION - SUMMER BREAKFAST PROG.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mothers' Union of St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in North Sydney. With school closed for the summer this group decided to offer a free summer breakfast program. Three times a week children started their day with a free nutritional breakfast. Volunteers from St. John the Baptist saw a need in the community and filled it. This is true community service. It's an

honour to have this opportunity to say thank you for the valuable service provided by volunteers all summer. They make our community a better place to live.

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

FILM IND. TAX CREDIT: IND. - EFFECTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the past several months have been very difficult for those working in the screen industry and even the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage has conceded that changes in the Film Industry Tax Credit have had a negative impact. A lot of talented, creative people and their families are trying to decide whether they can afford to stay in Nova Scotia or they need to move away. They deserve to know specifically what this Liberal Government's commitment is to the screen industry for the next few years so they can make informed choices.

Given that the Premier broke his promise to extend the Film Industry Tax Credit for five years, they shouldn't be forced to guess what the future holds.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HOPE-SIMPSON, PEGGY - ADVOCACY/COMMUN. ENGAGEMENT

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month when Canadians were introduced to the impressive calibre of women ministers in the new federal Cabinet, I couldn't help but reflect on the trailblazers whose activism promoted the voice of women in Canadian politics and policy. One such activist is a neighbour and friend of mine in Wolfville.

Peggy Hope-Simpson has led a life of advocacy and community engagement. In 1960, Peggy became a founding member of Nova Scotia's Voice of Women for Peace and has worked at the forefront of advocacy efforts in the interests of children, the delivery of community health services, peace and security policies, and affordable housing.

Peggy embodies the quality of citizen that sustains and grows our rural communities, whose passion motivates others to strive for more than the status quo. It is my privilege today to recognize one of Kings South's remarkable activists, Peggy Hope-Simpson.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. LOHR: I call the attention of the House to the west gallery where we have Cyril McDonald, Councillor for Hants East. I would ask the House to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

HORTICULTURE N.S.: VEGETABLES/BERRIES - PROMOTION THANK

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Horticulture Nova Scotia is a membership-driven, non-profit organization representing the interests of the vegetable, strawberry, raspberry, high-bush blueberry, nursery stock growers in Nova Scotia. They know that farmers grow a healthy future, and Horticulture Nova Scotia promotes Nova Scotia-grown berries and vegetables.

Fresh, local food is good for Nova Scotians and good for our economy. Thanks to the efforts of everyone at Horticulture Nova Scotia, vegetable and berry growers get the support and education they need to thrive and grow. It is a real pleasure to thank Horticulture Nova Scotia's President Josh Oulton, Executive Director Marlene Huntley, and everyone at Horticulture Nova Scotia for supporting and promoting our province's excellent vegetables and berries. Thank you.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER PILOT PROJ. - MIN. UNVEIL

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this Liberal Government promised to be open and transparent; however, events in the past few months suggest otherwise. For example, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture continues to talk about a lobster pilot project involving a mystery group. Nova Scotians do not know who this group is nor do they know how much money this mystery group may be receiving from the government.

Mr. Speaker, open and transparent processes do not involve mystery groups. I encourage the minister to unveil this shroud of secrecy and come forward with details about the mystery group involved in the pilot project.

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

BADDOUR, LORI - FIRST LAKE EARLY LEARNING CTR.: CONF. - CONGRATS.

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, Lori Baddour, executive director of the First Lake Early Learning Centre in Lower Sackville, coordinated a conference called Supporting Playful Learning. Jeff Johnson of Explorations Early Learning will be giving the keynote speech and facilitating the day's events. Time will be devoted to important

topics like managing caregiver stress and burnout, mindful caregiving, trusting the play process, and documenting playful learning because they are good at it.

I would like to thank Ms. Baddour for her initiative in coordinating a conference like this in her community. It speaks to her character and the fact that playtime isn't only for fun and games, children are actually learning important life skills through their play.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**CLARKE, CHARLIE - WATERSIDE PROV. PARK:
WORK/CONCERN - THANK**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to thank Charlie Clarke for his interest and concern about the condition of Waterside Provincial Park. Mr. Clarke took it upon himself to nail planks to cover rotted holes in the boardwalk leading to the beach. He also took the time to share his concerns with the Department of Natural Resources about the condition of the boardwalk and the change rooms.

Waterside is one of five provincial parks located in Pictou West. It is important to both the local residents and tourists. Mr. Clarke grew up enjoying Waterside and hopes to see it maintained for future generations.

Once again, I would like to thank Mr. Charlie Clarke for all his work and concern in helping to maintain Waterside Provincial Park so it could be used safely and enjoyed by all.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

GOV'T. (N.S.): HUNGER - ADDRESS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, it seems like daily when I read the news from across Nova Scotia, I am confronted with story after story about families in this province not getting enough to eat. In a recent article published in the Amherst news it shows that the Oxford food bank struggles each and every month to maintain enough food on its shelves to feed the 300 clients it serves.

Food bank chairman Rufus Black says that more people are using the food bank this year than last year and that the majority of his clients receiving assistance from the Oxford food bank are families. According to the Canadian Journal of Public Health, Nova Scotia and Halifax have the highest levels of food insecurity in the country.

Mr. Speaker, this is plainly unacceptable and I hope this government will take real and meaningful action to address hunger in Nova Scotia.

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

GELHORN, KEITH - ADHD COACHING SERV.

MS. JOYCE TREEN: On October 14th I attended an ADHD Awareness Expo that was hosted and organized by a constituent of mine, Keith Gelhorn. Keith has recognized the need for awareness and support for everyone who has ADHD, not just children.

ADHD impacts over one million Canadians; bringing awareness is very important. Keith has been very successful in doing this. He runs an ADHD coaching service that is available for adults and students. Keith was also the driving force in having October proclaimed as ADHD Awareness Month.

I have had the opportunity to work with Keith while hosting a couple of literacy town halls. His commitment to advocate for individuals with ADHD is inspiring. Thank you to Keith for all you do, to help make people's lives better.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

PICTOU CO. RELAY FOR LIFE - CHANGES

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Pictou County Relay for Life will experience two major changes when its 11th annual event takes place this Spring. This popular event has raised approximately \$1.34 million for cancer programs and services in its 10 years of existence. The organizers will switch venues and Glasgow Square will host the 2016 event.

Leadership Chairperson Vicki Moore is very excited about the new location. This change of venue will attract more teams and increase visibility. While the hours and location of the event are different, its focus remains the same: to raise funds for the battle against cancer, to celebrate cancer survivors, and to remember those who lost their battle against the disease.

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

N.S./HFX. - FOOD INSECURITY LEVELS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we know a healthy diet leads to better outcomes in health, wellness, education, and at work. Unfortunately recent reports tell us Nova Scotia and Halifax have some of the highest levels of food insecurity in the country. This is a sad fact, especially considering that the Minister of Community Services has not raised assistance rates to a livable level during her tenure. In fact, she is signalling assistance could be frozen so long as she is the minister.

Mr. Speaker, this is unfair. All Nova Scotians deserve enough food to live a healthy life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

BERNARD, HON. JOANNE
- BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS INSPIRE PUB. SERV. AWARD

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend one of our own here in this House. Each year the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Halifax presents the Inspire Awards to recognize those who are truly committed to mentoring in their professional and volunteer lives.

I am delighted to share with the House that on November 4th the member for Dartmouth North, our Minister of Community Services, received the organization's Inspire Public Service Award for her many years of leadership, both in the non-profit sector and in her public life.

I would note that the minister has been previously recognized with a number of awards: the Holly House Hero Award, the Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-Profit Management, and the William H. Donner Award for Excellence in Non-Profit Delivery, as well as the Better Business Bureau's Ethics Award for the Non-Profit Sector.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so very proud of the member for Dartmouth North for the obstacles she has overcome, for the many people she has helped, and for the many she has inspired. I know all my colleagues in this House would want to join me in congratulating our colleague for her well-deserved award. (Applause)

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

ROLLIE'S WHARF - REMEMBER

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a landmark in North Sydney, Rollie's Wharf on Purves Street, which was sold to new owners and was demolished yesterday.

The building dates back to 1915 and served as a training facility for the Navy during the wars, later as the Northern Yacht Club, a Kinsmen centre, and for the last 27 years, Rollie's Wharf. Every event imaginable took place at Rollie's, and if you spent time in North Sydney, you would spend some time at Rollie's.

It's sad to see the old girl coming down. She will be missed by Rollie and Lynn Clarke and all those who have memories of Rollie's.

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

LIB. GOV'T. - CONSULTATION

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in the last three weeks, we've seen many examples of this Liberal Government's complete disregard for deep and meaningful consultation with Nova Scotians.

This isn't the first time, either, Mr. Speaker. This government was forced to put part of their tobacco legislation on hold last year, then made further amendments later on because they had failed to consult with key stakeholders before drafting the bill. Bill Nos. 137 and 100 were further examples of this government making decisions without engaging with the people who would be impacted by those decisions.

Now we have amendments to the Heritage Property Act, the Liquor Control Act, and the Children and Family Services Act, among others, which we are discovering were all written before proper engagement . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member that it's not proper during members' statements to refer to legislation currently before the House.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River has the floor.

MS. ZANN: Now we have three bills before the House that are, among other . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions) Once again, I remind the honourable member it's not proper during members' statements to refer to legislation currently before the House.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River has the floor.

MS. ZANN: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to get it right here.

Anyway, here we find ourselves today in front of you, Mr. Speaker, with certain issues coming up that it seems were improperly discussed with members of the communities who are going to be reflected in what happens to their lives.

I would hope that the members on the other side would take this into consideration when they make their decisions in the future. Thank you.

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

**GAUDETTE, ODETTE/MAILLET, PETER
- PARAMEDIC LONG-SERV. AWARDS**

MR. GORDON WILSON: In Nova Scotia, the emergency medical services and their paramedics are such an important part of our health system. It is the paramedics who arrive in the first minutes that someone's hurt or becomes critically sick. They provide care in these emergencies, and over the last years, they have seen their role in the health care system expand.

To recognize their important role, Leo Glavine, our Minister of Health and Wellness, awarded 52 paramedics with the Paramedic . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member it's not proper to refer to other members by their surnames.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby has the floor.

MR. GORDON WILSON: The Minister of Health and Wellness awarded 52 paramedics with the Paramedic Long Service Award during Paramedic Services Week last May.

I would like to recognize two of the 52 recipients - two from Digby County. They're Odette Gaudet of Church Point, who has served 20 years, and Peter Maillet of Meteghan, who has 25 years. Both are highly capable paramedics with long years of service, and I congratulate them on receiving this award. They exemplify the caring professionals who are so important to their patients during an emergency. I would like to thank both of them and all the paramedics for their professionalism, service, and compassion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for "test the Speaker with members' statements" has just about expired. We'll now move on to Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - TEACHERS UNION DEAL: PLAN B - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Yesterday teachers overwhelmingly rejected the deal made between the Premier and his government and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive, putting the Premier's plan for financial restraint into high doubt. My question to the Premier is, what is his Plan B to get this all back on track?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank the many people who sat down at the table to come out with what was an agreement that we believed was fair, not only to the teachers but to all Nova Scotians. It was one that was within the fiscal framework.

I want to be very clear - any agreements that we sign will fit within the fiscal framework, and the deal that we had on the table yesterday was the best deal that is going to be presented.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we certainly understand the need to have a fiscal framework, but there are many people who aren't sure that was the best deal. Thousands of parents and students told the government they want to see real reform in the classroom. We're hearing from many teachers who actually were disappointed that the deal that the Premier's government made with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive traded away real reform in the classroom to try and get into that fiscal framework.

Now that that deal has been rejected, does the Premier intend to bring back an opportunity for real reforms in the classroom as he moves forward?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's a wonderful opportunity for me to tell this House the major investment this government has made in public education since being privileged to be a government. We capped class sizes. We have hired more teachers. We've ensured that we made an investment in learning. We've actually brought in teachers from across the province for the first time to sit down to talk about curriculum and outcomes. We reduced outcomes from P-3 by over 200, making a better working environment for classroom teachers.

Ironically yesterday we had teachers from across our province representing Grade 4s and Grade 6s doing the very exact same thing, to look at the curriculum to reduce, to ensure we are focusing on the things that matter to students and parents. I find it ironic that that member now on one hand is suggesting we were too tough and now he is complaining that we weren't tough enough. What does he want?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you exactly what we want - we want to see real improvements in the classroom. Parents in Halifax are wondering why their kids go to school in a class of 37. That is happening today.

Parents are wondering and students are wondering why the government traded away professional development days to get this deal, which teachers rejected. Teachers are wondering why their classes and their schools are falling apart around them, Mr. Speaker. The government traded that all away in its deal with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive.

Many teachers have spoken up and said they want these issues - the classroom experience, the student experience, dealt with in an agreement. All of that was thrown out in a deal that teachers rejected.

Mr. Speaker, now that is done and here we are and the government needs a Plan B. If the Premier really wants to see improvements in the classrooms, will he tell this House that those very issues of class size and PD days and the classroom experience will be dealt with before a new agreement is reached?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to know if he actually looked at the agreement. There were financial terms associated with that agreement that we believe were fair to all Nova Scotians. We have a responsibility to ensure that not only are we investing in public education, that we are - it is the most investment we've made in any program in public education.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have to ensure that health care services are where they are, that Nova Scotians expect to receive them in their community. I need to make sure that vulnerable Nova Scotians are receiving the supports. The honourable member has a bill before this House about the number of Nova Scotians who are going to food banks; we need to be able to balance and invest to ensure that all Nova Scotians get to experience equality of life.

This agreement was fair to taxpayers, it was fair to teachers. Let me be clear: we continue to say to teachers that we are prepared to talk and negotiate about the very things that he is referring to, whether it is PD days, whether it is about principles in the union or not, Mr. Speaker. This was achieved at the bargaining table, there was give and take. We are disappointed that it didn't happen but let me be clear, this government will continue to see education as a priority but we will also live within our fiscal framework.

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

PREM. - TEACHERS UNION DEAL: OPTIONS - DETAILS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, last night teachers across this province convincingly voted against this Liberal Government's most recent contract offer. It appears that another group of hard-working Nova Scotians have grown tired of this Premier's heavy-handed tactics. Teachers in this province work hard, they are highly qualified, and they want what's best for their students in the classroom, and they deserve an opportunity to sit down with the government and have their concerns addressed in a fair and reasonable manner.

Last night, after the vote, the Premier stated: "We have options now to contemplate." My question to the Premier is, what are the options he is now contemplating?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to replace the \$65 million that she was part of cutting out of classrooms.

As I said in a statement to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, yesterday we had teachers representing Grades 4 to 6 across our province in working with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to reduce the outcomes that are expected by teachers across this province, to make sure that we're focusing on the things that matter. We're listening to teachers to ensure that the working environment is what they want it to be.

At the end of the day, we only have so much money. Each member of that House just stood up talking about wanting more and more investment to community organizations across this province. If we continue to do what they want us to do, this province would be bankrupt.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, all we're asking for is that people who provide important public services be shown some respect by their government. Time and time again, this Premier has shown an unwillingness to engage in meaningful negotiations with our public sector workers. We see a government that does not listen and does not consult with Nova Scotians. Home care workers, nurses, health care workers, university students, faculty staff, and people in the screen industry have all experienced the heavy hand of this government. So my question to the Premier is, why will he not engage in meaningful collective bargaining with Nova Scotian teachers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. That's exactly what we did; we put a proposal on the table. Let me tell you, it's three zeros and two ones, we froze the Long Service Awards at current years and current salary.

What we did when we negotiated with the unions, we changed that bargaining pattern which happened at the table. It went 0, 0, 1, 1.5, and 0.5 at the end of the year four. The Long Service Awards would have been frozen at the number of years, but would have paid out on retirement salary. That wasn't something that we brought to the bargaining table; it was something that was negotiated at the bargaining table.

I will say one thing - at least the Nova Scotia Teachers Union allowed their members to vote. Let's hope the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union allows their members to have a vote.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, this Premier just doesn't get it. The teachers who voted against this contract yesterday, they say it's not about the money. It's about the threats by the government; it was about the disrespect from the government; and it was about the lack of action by this government to deal with the pressing problems that teachers face on a daily basis in the classroom.

My question for the Premier is this, the Premier has indicated that he has a framework for legislation to impose wage freezes on teachers and other public sector employees. Could he please share that framework with members of this Legislature?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's the same member who introduced legislation to take away the right to strike from paramedics.

Let me tell you, we're going to continue to do what we've done from the very beginning and that's focus on kids in the classroom and that's why we continue to invest in public education. It's why we've capped class sizes, hired more teachers. It's why we continue to believe in public education, and we believe in the good work that teachers are doing across this province.

When we reached out to Nova Scotia Teachers Union, it wasn't us who brought the people to the table to represent teachers; it was the union who went out to get a chief negotiator. Perhaps she spent too much time listening to the other union leadership and not enough time listening to her own membership. At the end of the day, we negotiated a reasonable, fair deal with the people they brought to the table.

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

PREM. - TEACHERS UNION DEAL: CLASSROOM - REFORM

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only person that listened to the Nova Scotia Teachers Union leadership was the Premier of Nova Scotia, who traded away any real chance of reform in our classrooms to try and set a wage pattern. Now he has neither a wage pattern, nor reform in the classroom.

That's disappointing to the thousands of parents who told this government they wanted to see change in the classroom, to the students that go to our schools, and now we know it's disappointing to many teachers who also were in favour of making changes in the classroom that were not included in the deal the Premier reached with their own union.

So, let's ask the Premier, why didn't he insist on real classroom reform as part of the deal he made with the Teachers Union leadership?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to again remind him, as part of the agreement that yesterday was put before teachers, it was a program to constitute a committee that had equal representation from the union and from the department, to look at a number of pieces of the action plan that the union wanted more discussion, more conversation with teachers to come to a resolution, but, let me tell you Mr. Speaker, we didn't wait. We continued to change the environment of the classroom by capping class sizes and hiring more teachers. We reduced outcomes and by engaging teachers across this province we reduced outcomes from P-3. Yesterday

we were doing the exact same thing with teachers representing Grades 4-6 across this province.

We're not standing still. We're working with classroom teachers to affect the learning environment that Nova Scotia children are in and we are doing it in a positive, effective way.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, worse than standing still, the Premier traded away the real reforms that parents and students, and many teachers now say they wanted like on PD days, like class sizes in the later grades, like the classroom working conditions, like student achievement, like report cards that matter to parents. Those were all things in the action plan that got traded away at the table with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union executive.

Now even teachers say they went too far when they traded those things. Sure they're going to have a committee now, but the government has burnt its relationship with our teachers and traded away any interest in making those things happen. So, how can the parents and students of Nova Scotia trust this government now to make any real change in the classroom when they were prepared to trade it all away?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that in public schools across this province, report cards were changed two years ago, with the support and help of teachers. I want to remind the honourable member that public education schools across this province - outcomes from P-3 were changed, based on working with teachers. I want to tell the honourable member that yesterday in this province sitting with teachers from Grades 4-6, we were looking at outcomes to reduce them so we focused on the things that matter to students and families across this province.

I also want to remind the honourable member that when we had the good fortune and privilege of becoming the government of this province, there were over 40 additions and alterations in front of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. We invested in that infrastructure, Mr. Speaker; there are two remaining. That's not only an investment in the classroom - it's an investment to the physical environment that our children are in and that teachers are in. We will continue to provide and invest in kids across this province and we'll do so in the fiscal framework that we have laid out.

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

EECD: TEACHERS/MIN. - BARGAINING RESUME

MS. LENORE ZANN: My question today is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. After reaching a tentative agreement with the NSTU last month, the minister said, "We have 10,000 teachers who deserve to have a contract." I will table that Mr. Speaker.

Given that there are 10,000 teachers without a contract, my question for the minister is this, is she committed to returning to the bargaining table to ensure that teachers in Nova Scotia get a negotiated contract?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I certainly don't need somebody to table anything to remind me of what I've said. Teachers in this province do deserve a contract. We sat down with the Teachers Union to try to negotiate a contract. The Teachers Union and the government came to a tentative agreement. They put that out to the teachers, and it was the teachers who rejected that.

I do want to say to the member opposite and to everyone in this House, teachers do deserve a contract, and we will work with them to make sure they have one.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear in that answer whether she has actually committed to returning to the bargaining table to ensure teachers get a negotiated contract.

Teachers from across the province are expressing concern that the education reforms being sought by the province are not addressing the issues that affect everyday life in the classroom. We're hearing about too many children in classes and not enough support. I have been saying for months now that teachers are telling me that they've not been consulted meaningfully about these reforms, and now we're hearing that the teachers are actually feeling bullied by the government. So my question for the minister is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It is unparliamentary to infer that the government is bullying anybody.

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

MS. ZANN: . . . that the teachers are feeling pushed around by this government.

My question to the minister is, how does she plan to deal with the disconnect between the current reform process and the everyday experience of teachers in the classroom?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would go back to the comment that the member made, that teachers had concerns about "too many children in the classroom." That is what capping a class size means. We are addressing too many kids in the classroom. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

PSC - POSITIONS: COMPETITIONS - TIME FRAME

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of the Public Service Commission. We hope that all of Nova Scotia's Public

Service is able to attract and retain the highest quality of workers. In order to do that, it is important that the government is able to hire individuals within a reasonable period of time. Otherwise we risk losing those individuals to other opportunities, either locally or, unfortunately, sometimes out of province.

Can the minister update the House on the average time it takes to fill vacant positions in the Public Service?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, when we're filling positions in the Public Service, we don't put a time frame on it. We look for the right qualified candidate to fill that position to deliver services to Nova Scotians on behalf of government. Thank you.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the government plans to open more jobs for young Nova Scotians who have little or no job experience, and I applaud them for that. However, I have some concerns that many of those young people may be recent graduates who have no steady or sustainable income, making it much more difficult for them to wait too long for a callback on a job application.

Can the minister inform the House of the average time period that is expected to fill those jobs earmarked for those young people?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, we don't plan on opening jobs for youths - we already have. We have already hired youth into the Public Service. Ever since our government has come to power, over 1,000 youths have entered the Public Service. We have also taken out the requirement for anyone joining the Public Service to have two years of experience. That was this government.

Up until this government changed that requirement, anybody joining the Public Service had to have two years of experience. That eliminated every single new graduate out of colleges or universities in this province. We have youth in the Public Service right now we can point to who would not have been eligible to work here before that was taken out by this government.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - MENTAL HEALTH SERV. BUDGET

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Mental health services in this province are in crisis. We've heard too many stories from families who are struggling to get the care that they need.

Last Wednesday, here in this House, the member for Halifax Chebucto said that the department would be spending more than \$270 million on mental health services this fiscal

year. I'll table that, in case he forgot. According to both the provincial business plan and the Nova Scotia Health Authority, that's not true. In fact, the entire amount allocated to mental health is \$122.3 million short of that number.

Why is there such a large discrepancy on how much money has been allocated for mental health service delivery? Can the minister reconcile that statement?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, obviously the department of Health and Wellness has a budget to deliver and an array of programs across the province. We also know that there used to be nine district budgets for the operational side of mental health and we know that the Nova Scotia Health Authority is also involved with part of that \$270 million that will go out for mental health in this fiscal year.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in the provincial budget, \$111.2 million was allocated for mental health services through the Nova Scotia Health Authority. The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis determined that the indirect and actual costs of mental health services amounts to more than six times the annual budget for those services. Even more startling, the report projected that the cost of mental health would increase by \$1.5 billion by 2041. I'll table that as well.

The member for Halifax Chebucto also emphasized during his speech that not everything is about the money. While we agree with that, it is clear that the enormous gap in services is related to budget cuts and priorities in mental health care delivery.

My question to the minister is, will the minister agree to look into the funding breakdown and clarify with the health authority and the IWK exactly what the budget stays at \$25 million less than the department? So again, can the minister quantify the amount that this difference is qualifying for them?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, that certainly can be obtained for the member. What I am pleased about is that in August we gave an update on the Together We Can Strategy and I'll table that for the House. There was also additional information about how additional mental personnel have been added over and above what the strategy was projecting in its inception, so I'll table that for the House.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - WALK-IN CLINICS: PHYSICIANS - ACCESS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the CBC reported that the government's new super board is limiting doctors from working in walk-in clinics. A document distributed to doctors at a recent meeting in the Halifax area indicated that the requests for new physicians to work in walk-in clinics will most likely be denied.

I'd like to ask the minister, why does the minister feel that new physicians should be denied permission from his new health authority to work in walk-in clinics?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: What I can say is that in the first presentation there was incorrect information that was provided to residents. Dr. Harrigan is meeting with all residents to make sure that from the Nova Scotia Health Authority there is absolutely clear information on the path forward.

Yes, the health authority will go through a period of transitioning, moving towards more collaborative practices versus walk-in clinics.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we and Nova Scotians support those collaborative clinics, but changing guidelines and restricting access to walk-in clinics and credentialing physicians for that, I believe is the wrong approach. The government hasn't announced any new collaborative clinics. Why would the government have those guidelines looked at at this point, before even opening a new CEC or new walk-in clinics around the province?.

Would it not be more beneficial to ensure that we recruit those newly-graduated medical students prior to changing rules or guidelines? Can the minister give an indication if they are going down that route, where we'll be limiting physicians' credentials in certain areas, especially walk-in clinics?

MR. GLAVINE: What we can get from a whole number of sources on data of the number of doctors that are available to work in walk-in clinics, work in collaborative practices, work in clinics and places like the Cobequid Health Centre is that we have the second highest per capita doctor ratio right here in HRM.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: SYRIAN REFUGEES - TREATMENT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question again through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. We know that Syrian refugees set to arrive in Canada will be either privately sponsored or sponsored by the federal government. However, we do know that providing services such as health care is a responsibility of the provincial government. The federal Minister of Health has indicated that it is possible that some refugees with infectious diseases will be admitted to Canada, and I'll table that story as well.

Has the Minister of Health and Wellness had discussions with the federal Health Minister and Nova Scotia Public Health officials in order to ensure that refugees get the treatment that they require once they arrive here in Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: A month and a half to two months before the refugees would be coming to Nova Scotia we actually opened a clinic at the ISANS centre. That will help facilitate some of that early medical examination that will need to go on. We've also had conversations with the federal Health Minister. Finally, the medical support for refugees coming to any province in Canada is now being picked up by the federal government which the previous Conservative Government had dropped for refugees coming to the country.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I thank the minister for that answer. While many of those Syrian refugees will be welcomed to Nova Scotia, they'll have experienced war, the loss of loved ones, and prolonged dislocation. Such trauma may contribute to mental illness and additional demand for mental health services in areas of Nova Scotia. These individuals, like all Nova Scotians, deserve to have timely access to a responsive mental health system.

Many people living in Nova Scotia have already tried to tell this government that the system is in crisis already without the added burden. Would the minister inform this House of his plan to address the potential mental health needs of these refugees?

MR. GLAVINE: There's no question that the member opposite is working from the wrong premise. He needs to look at how we've expanded mental health services in the province. At the IWK now not only do we have a world-class facility in the Garron Centre, but we also have a world-class team that is working there.

I know that as refugees go across the province - that's the real advantage to the movement of refugees in Nova Scotia, they won't be here in one hub. They'll be spreading across Nova Scotia. We'll have the array of services that they need to adjust quickly.

I look at a couple of the families that have come just in the last months. They're in school. They're getting great support. The member opposite does need to check his facts.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

NAT. RES.: FIREWOOD SHORTAGE - STATUS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources, and the question is a simple one. Is there a firewood shortage in Nova Scotia or not?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course, the department does work to evaluate the situation when it comes to firewood. It is a priority for us to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to that important energy source. We do not have a direct impact necessarily on the marketplace and what's available, but we do consistently work with our partners in the private sector to ensure the best flow of fibre possible in the province.

MR. HOUSTON: There's certainly a great number of people around the province who are having a hard time sourcing firewood, so I believe there is a firewood shortage. I'll ask the minister again: Does the minister believe there's a firewood shortage in Nova Scotia, yes or no?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite always positions himself as the resident expert on any topic, so we'll take him at his word. I do not think at this particular point, it would be fair or precise to speculate on that nature. We still have a lot of a season left to evaluate. We will continue to do that, of course always working with our partners in the private sector to ensure that there is a flow, to the best of our ability, so that people are able to heat their homes this winter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: LAW AMENDMENTS PROCESS - MIN. UNDERSTANDING

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when the Minister of Community Services was asked by the media why she wasn't prepared to conduct any further consultations in relation to matters before Law Amendments, she referred to the Law Amendments Committee saying: I don't understand that legislative process, I don't need to as a minister.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why she believes that as a minister she does not need to understand the Law Amendments process?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I'm sure this is a question that that member will never have to grapple with, but when you're a minister, your work stops when your bill reaches the Law Amendments Committee process. What happens in that room, you're not privy to, you're not in the room, and you're not in the committee. So I rely on my colleagues to do the work of the Law Amendments Committee, which they do a fantastic job. So at that point in time I don't need to know what happens in the Law Amendments Committee until a bill comes back to this House or it goes back to the department.

MS. MANCINI: I'd like to draw the minister's attention to yesterday's Hansard. Yesterday during Question Period, when responding to a question by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier said, and I will table it, ". . . let me tell you how Law Amendments Committee works. People come in and make presentations, and the committee members listen." Mr. Speaker, it seems that it is not the Leader of the Official Opposition who needs to be instructed on how the Law Amendments Committee works, it is the ministers of this government.

Mr. Speaker, why does the minister believe that it is not her job to listen and respond to the concerns of Nova Scotians at Law Amendments Committee?

MS. BERNARD: Quite frankly, if that's all the member for Dartmouth South has on the consultation process that happened with CFSA, she need not rise in this House. We had a year of consultation; we had tons of consultation with the Aboriginal community and with communities that deal with children in care. It was about the protection of children. Law Amendments Committee has a process that I am not participatory in as a minister. The bill came back to the department, we worked on amendments, it went back, they were passed, it comes back to Committee of the Whole, and like I said before, I don't think she's ever going to have to worry about that process as a minister.

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

**COM. SERV.: CHILD & FAM. POVERTY REPT. CARD (2015)
- STATISTICS**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Community Services. The 2015 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia, released last week, contains alarming statistics. The percentage of children living in poverty in 2013 is still 24.3 per cent higher than it was in 1989. In 1989, Nova Scotia had the fifth highest child poverty rate; by 2013, the third highest provincial child poverty rate and the highest rate in Atlantic Canada. We have lost ground relative to other provinces.

Will the minister admit that these statistics mean that many Nova Scotia children don't always get enough to eat?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the member for the question. In 2013, even with incremental changes in the benefit package in Nova Scotia, we still find families struggling every day. We understand that, I know how difficult it is to make ends meet on a very limited budget, whether you're on income assistance or whether you're the working poor. We work with community organizations every day to provide the basic necessities for children throughout every community in this province. Benefit reform will address many of those issues. I'm looking forward to the federal contribution through the Child Tax Benefit. We know that it takes many different partners to eradicate child poverty, and we're dedicated to working with those partners.

MR. ORRELL: Shockingly, young children in the Cape Breton census area had a poverty rate of 42.7 per cent. The child poverty rates are highest in the Cape Breton census area, where astonishingly, one in three children - 32.4 per cent - are living below the after-tax low-income measure. So my question to the minister is, will the minister commit to using her power at the Cabinet Table to spur on the economy so that people of Cape Breton, and all of Nova Scotia, have better access to jobs and food as part of a comprehensive, concerted effort to help families that are living in poverty?

MS. BERNARD: I'd like to thank the honourable member for thinking I have power at the Cabinet Table, God love him - I have power at the Cabinet Table. I just

recently returned from Cape Breton and we've made many, many investments in different organizations that really work on the ground: the Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre; the Clifford Street Youth Centre, which is in the member's riding - he knows the work that I've done with them. We've also worked with the Whitney Pier Boys and Girls Club, and the EPIC educational program as well, because we know the at-risk component for children in Cape Breton.

We've made significant investments in organizations that work on the ground with them, to help families that are in crisis through food security, financial literacy, crisis intervention, and parenting and coping strategies around children and problems within families. So Cape Breton really has been quite a focus over the last couple of months within our department.

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

BUS. - C.B. UNEMPLOYMENT DATA

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my next question is for the Minister of Business. Statistics Canada recently released unadjusted regional unemployment data that shows that Cape Breton has the third-highest unemployment rate in all regions in the country. Meanwhile the job vacancy rate by region has Cape Breton as the third-lowest in the country. This means that of all the regions in the country, Cape Breton has the third-highest rate of unemployment and third-lowest job vacancy rate.

What does the minister have to say to the people who are losing hope to build a better future at home?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague would know, the process of running economic development in the past has not worked. The Department of Business has embarked on a new journey to engage the private sector. The private sector has told government, get out of the way and let us lead.

We're fulfilling the components of that discussion and are certainly aware of the challenges that exist in Cape Breton. We continue to work with our colleagues and partners in Cape Breton to ensure that Cape Breton and Cape Bretoners have equal opportunity to participate in the economic development of Nova Scotia.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. In the last five years, Cape Breton has lost 4,600 full-time jobs. The labour force has dropped by 9,200 and the population has dropped by 6,500. The population drop is the single-worst region in the country. The first Ivany goal is the average net gain of 1,000 working persons per year.

Will the minister get serious about growing Cape Breton instead of cutting, and see that Cape Breton can no longer be ignored?

MR. FUREY: I want to assure my colleague that Cape Breton is not being ignored. We work with all of our partners across the province. But I do want to share with my colleague, for his information, that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business just recently released in an October 2015 report that “For the first time in months . . . small business confidence took an upward turn in October . . . with optimism indexes rising in Nova Scotia (to a nation-leading 68.0).” I want to share with my colleague that things are changing in Nova Scotia. I’ll table that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV. - BRUNSWICK NON-PROFIT: RESIDENTS - STATUS

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Community Services was asked about her decision to eliminate the subsidy provided to Brunswick Street Non-Profit and the pending eviction of 80-year-old Shirley Joyce. The minister attempted to deflect her responsibility in this matter by stating that Shirley could bring her case forward to the Residential Tenancies Board. Given the minister’s professional history, I believe she understands the limitations of the Residential Tenancies Board. The board has no authority to reinstate the funding cut by the minister.

What is the minister prepared to do to ensure that Shirley will not be evicted and can stay in her home of 30 years?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for that question, because it allows me to clarify the misinformation that came out from the NDP caucus yesterday, in which I was shocked and appalled that they didn’t get it right.

Subsidies are not cut by any government in the provincial sphere, whether it is an NDP Government, a Progressive Conservative Government, or a Liberal Government. Subsidies are linked to CMHC mortgages. When your mortgage is paid, your subsidy ends. It’s a federal program; it happened to me at Alice Housing. I didn’t make the release and blame the NDP for it because that would be misleading and erroneous.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, the minister is avoiding the reason Shirley received an eviction notice in the first place and avoiding her responsibility in this matter. The minister was providing a subsidy to Brunswick Street Non-Profit and made the decision this summer to eliminate it. As a result, Shirley’s rent increased and she was unable to afford the home she has lived in for 30 years.

An 80-year-old woman is 13 days away from being evicted, and the minister has the authority to stop it. I will ask, what is the minister prepared to do to ensure that Shirley will not be evicted?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I met with the tenants of the Brunswick Street Housing Co-operative and I met with the residents of the Harbourview Tenants Association yesterday. Let me make it crystal clear, this government did not cut any subsidy, it expires when a mortgage is paid off - let me make that clear. But I am willing to work with tenants so that they're not displaced through rent supplements so that women like who you're speaking of don't have to face eviction, do not have to worry about where they're going to live in safe, affordable housing in a very short period of time. I've offered that help and it's misleading to say this government cut that subsidy. She knows it; I know it - stop saying it.

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

ENERGY: SHELL OFFSHORE EXPLORATION - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Energy.

As we know, offshore oil and gas exploration creates a little bit of controversy wherever it tends to happen. We're hearing a lot from local fishermen and local fish plant owners about the Shell exploration that's going on right now in the Shelburne Basin. Sometimes it's hard to figure out what's real science and what is just hearsay, so my question to the minister is, can he give us a little update on what's going on in the offshore exploration that Shell is doing?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the member would be familiar with the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, which is a joint venture between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada on which we have members and staff with the expertise necessary to be able to look at what type of drilling activity is taking place on our offshore. Nova Scotia has a very proud history over many years of being able to do drilling and exploratory work in our offshore in a very safe manner, not only safe for the environment but safe for the men and women who work in our offshore. We rely upon the board to be able to make those decisions for us, put in the necessary conditions and the necessary restrictions to ensure that any activity taking place in our offshore is done so in a prudent and safe manner.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, as the minister also knows, some of the controversy has revolved around the issue of the capping stack, in case there is a blowout, the availability of that capping stack - it actually sits in Norway, rather than anywhere in North America - and the issue of dispersants, so if there is a blowout what kind of dispersants you're using and what effect that has on the environment and fish around that

area where that dispersant might flow because of the currents in that area. Maybe it's a further clarification of the issue of blowout, capping stacks, and dispersants to try to appease the questions of the fishing industry.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, when the Opposition asked to have both Shell and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board appear before the Resources Committee, we did so as efficiently as possible and tried to accommodate the schedules of the Opposition Parties in order to find a time where that meeting could take place. In fact, that meeting was extended to allow even more time to have as many questions asked as possible. Again, we rely upon the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to have the necessary expertise to look at questions such as blowout preventers, the use of dispersants, and others.

The fact is that since the Macondo disaster there has been a tremendous amount of knowledge that has been gained from that, safety protocols that have been put in place. The fact that we haven't seen another disaster of that type, the fact that they do have the necessary safety protocols, again, I believe it is important that we rely upon the experts. While it is important to raise concerns, which is very legitimate, it is also important to make sure that members get the facts so that they can give those back to their constituents to address their concerns.

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

CCH - BILL NO. 118: CONSULTATION - DETAILS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and pleasure of being a member of the Legislature's Law Amendments Committee, but over the last number of days, in fact the last number of months, I can say it has been anything but a pleasure to watch how this government has failed to consult in a most basic manner on the bills that they're bringing before this House. Nor has it been a pleasure to witness this government ignore the opinions of Nova Scotians day in and day out. Will the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage please outline exactly what consultation he did with municipalities prior to introducing Bill No. 118?

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, we have listened to stakeholders at the Law Amendments Committee and we have made changes based on what we've heard. Thank you.

MS. ZANN: Well, the senior solicitor for the Halifax Regional Municipality actually came into Law Amendments Committee on Monday to tell us that they had not been consulted on Bill No. 118 and that the changes City Council explicitly requested were nowhere to be found in the bill.

Could the minister please assure us that this bill is supposed to protect and preserve heritage and explain why he allowed such a glaring omission to be present in a bill that he put forward for the consideration of this House?

MR. INCE: Mr. Speaker, my department received 14 direct submissions from all municipalities. HRM provided us with a 50-page document for that. Thank you.

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

COM. SERV. - BRUNSWICK NON-PROFIT: TENANTS - FUNDING

MR. LARRY HARRISON: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. I really appreciated the answers you gave a moment ago with respect to that lady who may be evicted from her place.

I'm always concerned about the individuals who might fall through the cracks. Is there something available for her - a fund, whatever the case may be - to help her get resettled again?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. One of the first and foremost things we try to do at Housing Nova Scotia is work with the non-profits and the co-operative organizations that have non-profit and safe, affordable housing throughout the province. Oftentimes we are funding partners within that.

When non-profits like the two that we are referring to, and even the non-profit that I ran for a number of years, runs into sustainability problems, we can look to Housing Nova Scotia to come in and try to look through the slate and the queue of a wide range of federal programs that may be able to help them out.

If that doesn't work then we are able to offer rent supplements for individuals so they can be settled in a private market setting, so there is the least amount of upheaval and confusion in their lives, because we know it's very stressful on tenants when they are caught in that situation.

MR. HARRISON: Again, I want to ask the minister, is there something that will take place in the next couple of weeks for this lady, through the department?

MS. BERNARD: I met with both leaders of the tenancy association yesterday from both of those organizations. We are committed to working with them. Unfortunately the board of directors for both places are not working with their tenants' associations so that puts the tenants right in the middle of where, quite frankly, they shouldn't be.

We are committed, I am committed, and the CEO of Housing Nova Scotia is committed to working with them, meeting with them, and making sure that each tenant's needs are met.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - PHONE SCAMS CRIME PREVENTION GROUPS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, just a quick one to the Minister of Justice. We hear often of phone scams. It seems that every week I pick up a local paper at home to hear about another scam that is often targeted at seniors.

My question - we know that organizations like the Kings Crime Prevention Association, for instance, provide a great defence by educating people to avoid communication with potential scammers. What support is the minister providing community crime prevention groups to support them in their efforts in this regard?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question. We do have, as you know, a Public Safety and Security Division within the Department of Justice, and we do a lot on the education side for protecting the public.

On the specific question of a group like the Kings Crime Prevention Association, I would have to get back to you on the exact support and in what means it is made. We keep public safety and helping in the education of the public so that we know how to protect ourselves, we keep that very high on . . .

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, just before the Opposition House Leader calls business for this afternoon, I would like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. BAILLIE: In the gallery today are a number of people who are here to see the debate this afternoon. They are Henry Vissers, who is known to many members of this House, from the Federation of Agriculture; Marlene Huntley from Horticulture Nova Scotia; along with Nick Jennery of Feed Nova Scotia. All three are doing important work in our province. I'd like all members of the House to join me in welcoming them to the proceedings this afternoon.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 121.

Bill No. 121 - Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that our caucus on this Opposition Day has chosen this bill for debate. It's a bill that's important for our province. It's a bill that has been supported by other caucuses in the past.

I know I first introduced this bill in April 2011. I have to give credit to the chair of the Port Hawkesbury Food Bank, Larry Evans; he's a lawyer in Port Hawkesbury. It was he who brought this idea to my attention. He brought it to my attention because he was reading about this bill being put in place in the Province of Ontario. We know this legislation is active in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I know our own Health and Wellness Minister here in this Legislature put this very same bill forward on March 28, 2013. First reading of the bill took place on March 28, 2013. So we are hopeful. One of the things we actually did with this bill is we've introduced a mirror image of the bill our Health and Wellness Minister in this Legislature had introduced back in 2013, with the hope that we could get past some of the oft-times disagreements on legislation here.

We thought, why not introduce the same bill that the Liberal Opposition at the time introduced - just two years ago - with the hope that it would be acceptable to the government? If it was acceptable to the Health and Wellness Minister and other colleagues of his Liberal caucus in 2013, surely it would be acceptable today in December 2015.

We think this bill is a good start. I know one of the things we have to make sure of in trying to enact a piece of legislation like this is that it actually works as an incentive for farmers. What we're talking about here is encouraging farmers to donate food that may

otherwise go to waste - food that's local, that's fresh, that's healthy - food that could be donated to food banks here in the province. That's the goal.

We must make sure that there is an incentive. Mr. Speaker, I was just going to ask you - actually, never mind; I'll continue. I know I've looked at numbers myself to see what this would cost the province and what would have to be given to farmers. If we looked at a typical cost percentage for farmers of an amount of food produced, what kind of incentive would we have to give to them to help to cover their costs to bring that food to market? When I say to market, I mean to the food bank.

Efforts have been made, and I would be pleased to share that with government members with respect to this legislation. Typically, with a tax credit, it may even be something that would be matched by the federal government, and that's something that's worth discussing; it's worth investigating. But if not, it is something that we in this province can do ourselves.

We can advance this legislation today, right here, move it past second reading, and move it into the Law Amendments Committee so that Nova Scotians have a chance to give their opinions on this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, how is this legislation working in Ontario? Well, I picked up the phone and I spoke with the executive director of the food bank in Sudbury, his name is Dan Xilon, and when I spoke with Dan he told me that it's working very well and they have more food, they have more local food, and they have more food that's fresh coming in for the people they serve at the food bank in Sudbury, and in asking about how it works there are certain requirements for donations. For instance, fruit and vegetables have to be pre-processed, honey, nuts, dairy, meat, or other products that are accepted - and they don't accept cut up meat, they would only accept the animal in its entirety, and there are reasons for that.

There are also requirements as to who can actually make a donation. It has to be a registered farming business with greater than \$10,000 per year revenue, and I know we'll hear soon from my colleague, the member for Kings North, who is a farmer, and who will be able to explain how farms, and farmers, would participate in this legislation.

So, in short, it's working really well in Ontario and 2014 was the first year that farmers could actually claim a credit. Now, there was delayed uptake because there wasn't a great deal of awareness amongst farmers at first. So if we see today the value in advancing this legislation through to Law Amendments Committee, and hopefully with its passage in this sitting of the Legislature, this December, we could begin by putting the word out to farmers to ensure they are aware that there is a credit available, so that we do get more local, more fresh, and more food for our food banks.

So, Mr. Speaker, another thing that was considered was processing and transport of food and that was something that they have not yet entered into in Ontario. They respected that it would require more regulation, and they're not there yet, but what they are doing is they have passed legislation, like what is being put forward here today, which is a mirror image to what the government caucus had proposed just two years ago.

So I think we should get on with this; I think that there are very good reasons for doing this. We heard questions in Question Period today, concern from members on all sides of the House about poverty, and about how well our children in this province are being fed. This legislation is action we can take together today to make a difference. How many times do we hear we can't get along at Province House? Often we hear that, Mr. Speaker. We have taken the position to be constructive, to put forward a bill that has been put forward by the government previously. We are aiming to gain agreement here, and we hope to get it.

A recent report tells us that almost 40,000 children in the province, which is about one in five, were living in poverty in 2013. Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that families that are living in poverty don't have it easy. They're making decisions about where they spend the money they do have every day and sometimes food is an item that gets shortchanged, and we know of the prevalence of breakfast programs in schools, and why they start, because families at home were having difficulty providing food for their children in the morning.

So there's all kinds of evidence, all kinds of reasons why we should be doing something like this, why we should be supporting this legislation to help our food banks to provide a better service for those who are in need.

I'm also thinking about the prevalence of farm markets. I know there's a great deal of interest in this province today, Mr. Speaker, from many Nova Scotians who want to eat food that is local and that is fresh. They want to know where their food is coming from, and they trust their local farmer. Why not extend those benefits to people who are using food banks? I can think of no reason why we wouldn't be passing this bill today, passing it on to the next stage in the Legislature. We know that it is working in Ontario. It can work here, and it's something I think we can all get behind.

A colleague of mine has said to me that we have the people here who can make it work, and we do. It's getting near Christmas. It would be a great time of year to show goodwill amongst ourselves here in the Legislature, so why not? That's what I would say, Mr. Speaker: why not?

We do believe that the Health and Wellness Minister was sincere when he introduced this bill a couple of years ago. We hope that he was, and that he will be supportive of this today. It's in an area that he represents in the Valley. We know it's perhaps the most significant farming belt in our province. I have farming in my area, Mr.

Speaker, but not to the same extent, certainly not with the amount of diversity that we see in the Valley.

I had a chance to be in the Valley about a month and a half or two months ago, and I bought some apple cider. I like to let it age; it gets a little more bite to it. I enjoyed being in the Valley, and I thought, wow, how lucky people living in the Valley are to have access to all this fresh food so close to home. We have farm markets in Inverness County, but when you drive the strip there in the Valley, in the area of New Minas and Kentville, you see the prominence of food and how it plays a part in the local economy, but also how it plays a part in the kitchens of families in the area.

Why not extend the abundance to food banks? This bill, I believe, will do that. It is something we should be doing today. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues, and I sincerely hope we pass this bill here in second reading - Bill No. 121, the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act. This is the bill we are talking about.

I sincerely hope, in a goodwill gesture amongst ourselves in this Legislature - to the farmers in the province, to our food banks, and most important, to the people in this province who use food banks, who deserve fresh food, local food, and more food - that we get together this afternoon and pass this bill through second reading. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, plagiarism is the biggest form of flattery. We know in 2013, Minister Glavine introduced a very similar bill to the House to discuss this tax idea for farmers and food banks.

I want to touch base on food banks, because Nova Scotia food banks play a huge role in society. It's an important role that we, as government and as Nova Scotians, need to support these food banks - the hard work they do, the volunteering, the fundraising, and especially this time of year when they are doing turkey drives for Christmas.

When we hear these stories and what needs to happen, we have to be grateful that some of us in this House can afford food to put on our tables, but there are many Nova Scotians who can't. We have to think about those people, especially over the holidays. As we go forward and as we get closer to Christmas and the holidays, please take a moment around your family home to look in your cupboards and see what you can share to help Nova Scotians get ahead over the holidays.

We can talk about the importance of food. It must be hard for families who don't have the adequate food to get their kids to school and this is tough and there are some incredible programs in the community that help these families; Nourish Nova Scotia, for example. Nourish Nova Scotia has a wonderful program that makes sure that there is food

in the classrooms for kids who go to school, to ensure that they don't have an empty belly so that they can learn.

When I think about this bill, Laurel Broten did a great job of doing a tax review and during that tax review, we got lots of great ideas and it was an independent review, but this part wasn't brought up. That's not saying that the tax review is an ongoing process and every day it's looked at and it's going to be always looked at. Down the road, this might be an area that we can have another look at this. (Interruption) Maybe if you actually listened until I'm finished, then you'll know where I'm going with this.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I would like to remind the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto not to refer to the members opposite directly.

MR. STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I hope that they will actually listen instead of chirp, but we'll go forward from here. Anyway, once again, I will proceed.

It's interesting, 11 per cent of food to Nova Scotia food banks are already donated by commercial farms and wholesale grocers. This is a great initiative already and yes, there could be more, and yes, for sure, there could be greater discussion on this. We are strengthening our core service to deliver to Nova Scotians; we need to continue to do that.

Farmers are a large part of Nova Scotia's agriculture; they play a huge part in building the future food supply for Nova Scotia. I'm proud that in downtown Halifax we have the Farmers Market where a lot of farmers bring their produce to the market to share their goods and sell it to Nova Scotians. That's how they survive themselves is to sell these products directly to Nova Scotians and yes, it is costly, and yes, we understand that and we have to find ways to work towards allowing farmers to go through this process.

The other big problem we have, that we have to look at in this process is - the big thing about this bill, in some ways it's interesting coming from the Progressive Conservative Party. You want us to cut spending, cut revenue, balance the budget immediately, and then we want to have a tax expenditure, so on top of that, if we're going to continue with the tax expenditure, then we have to look at the ramifications; so where is that money going to come from? We have to look at that and that's a fair question. The cost of this associated - we're not even 100 per cent sure where the cost is or what the total cost is. (Interruptions) I guess I'll keep talking about farmers and the importance of farmers as it seems that that calms the other side down a bit.

When you go to the Valley and look at the abundance of vegetables and fruits, it's incredible to see what is offered in the Valley of Nova Scotia. The Minister of Health and Wellness has discussed this numerous times in the House about the farmers and what they contribute to our society. And yes, he did bring this bill up, twice. I guess where we need to look at this. When stuff comes to the House that is not costed, not thought out thoroughly, then we have to take a moment of pause.

As the Opposition has said numerous times in this House, we have to consult, we have to go out to the community and get advice. I think at this point that would be the smartest thing to do, because that other side wants us to continuously consult and reach out to stakeholders. So we're going to do that, and I think that's an opportunity to do that with this bill.

You know, if we don't take that time to do that, then how are we going to make sure that this is right, that it's going to make sure that the food banks can handle the influx of food? We want to make sure that the food quality that's delivered to the food banks is at the highest standards when it gets there, and we want to make sure that the food banks can handle the food influx and make sure that that doesn't get spoiled. So, I think that it's a very good point to go forward and to discuss this with the stakeholders, and have these discussions with the farmers to ensure that this process is done correctly.

I guess, clearly, there are so many unanswered questions and just so many unknowns with this bill, because it's a very loose bill and I think that we want to make sure that this bill is done correctly, it's looked at with a clear understanding of how it's going to best support Nova Scotia's food banks. I guess that's where, when we see that in Nova Scotia, if we don't take the time to do this bill right it will have ramifications that might actually have to do with the federal tax credit, and you know the fact about the federal food bank tax credit is already sort of in place with the feds. We have to make sure that that doesn't have any ramifications with that piece of legislation.

So, you know, yes there are some great provinces that already have this and we're going to go and have those discussions with them to ensure that we in Nova Scotia do this right. I guess that's where I want to just again talk real quickly about the importance of the food banks and doing this right. That's where I think at this point, that we as a government are not saying no to this bill. We're saying that we need to look at it, we need to consult with it and we need to look at all angles, and to make sure that this is done correctly, and that's all we are asking to do. We are going to take the time and we're going to commit to just doing that. We're going to commit to making sure that this is the right process for Nova Scotia, and I think Minister Glavine has a lot of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, I'd like to remind the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto not to refer to any other member of the House by their surname.

MR. STROINK: I think the Minister of Health and Wellness has a very invested interest in this bill, and you know, he did introduce it twice and that's why the lack of imagination on the other side is very clear, that they have to take one that was already presented once, to bring it forward. So, that's why we are going to take the time to do that, to look at that and I thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for at least starting this conversation in 2013.

So, I will say this once again, that this government will look at this bill, study this bill, go back out to stakeholders and make sure that we do this bill right, and make sure that the tax implications are not a burden onto taxpayers but an advantage to food banks, an advantage to Nova Scotians who need this and that is the kind of direction that this government is willing to do on this bill. So, thank you very much Mr. Speaker at this time, thank you to Minister Glavine - the Minister of Health and Wellness for bringing this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, I want to remind the honourable member once again not to refer to other members with their surname.

The honourable member of Halifax Chebucto.

MR. STROINK: I want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for bringing this bill forward in 2013, and I look forward to working with the Opposition to ensure that this bill becomes a good bill and make sure that this bill is one that can be successful to Nova Scotians. So, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, that was a very interesting presentation. I have to say that I would like to congratulate the member for Inverness for bringing this bill forward. I think it's a great bill. (Applause) Yes, let's give him a hand. Sometimes you don't have to reinvent the wheel, and if the wheel is already there and it hasn't been passed yet, why not reintroduce it and try to pass it with this government?

I love the bill, I love the spirit of the bill. I love the idea that our farmers are being recognized for their hard work and that they also need some help with tax credits and things like this. It also recognizes that people, our most vulnerable, need healthy, locally-grown food in order to be able to maybe get their lives back on track, to feed their children, and to be able to move forward in a healthy fashion. We know that there is so much poverty right now and as we've heard over and over again, just with the recent statistics, one in five children on the mainland of Nova Scotia, one in three children in Cape Breton are living in poverty, and the numbers of people going to the food banks is way up, especially for women and children.

My heart goes out to the mothers and fathers who cannot feed their children, who will go hungry themselves just to put food on the table for those less strong and powerful than them - something like this would go a long way toward helping families.

I think such legislation really serves to highlight to the public the opportunities and advantages of a strong, robust food system across Nova Scotia. It could also serve, too, as a launch pad for the further development of our food production processing and distribution sector. The food and farming sectors are so important and they are a major economic engine

to our province. In fact, I believe Bill No. 121, the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act, also serves for the further development of our food production and distribution sector. It will assist in strengthening this sector, and I believe it will help fill a current void.

Considerable work has been done on developing local food systems with local food markets, but I think that another extension of this bill could also be to strive to do more than just promote awareness, but to strive to improve procurement. I believe the key to really accomplishing the goals of a stronger food system lies in improving the basic food literacy of all Nova Scotians. In the short term this means food awareness programs including nutrition and food preparation programming, and maybe a longer term investment includes a strong food literacy component in our school curriculum - I'd even go so far as to suggest hands-on, food-skills training in our school system.

Not only would food literacy programming strengthen the food system, but it will surely translate to a healthier population in the medium or long term. I think that with Bill No. 121, we should also address the very fundamental issue of food access, the ability to procure nutritious and culturally-acceptable food at all times, and to encompass regional economic development opportunities. Perhaps these could strengthen our food and agriculture sector, resulting in social and economic benefits for communities right across our province. By recognizing the diversity and the potential of the various regions in Nova Scotia, we could be certain that we can further enhance the economic viability and the resilience of regional food and farming sectors.

Several environmental goals could also be part of this bill. We aspire to have a food Act that would include measures to further incent producers and processors toward environmentally sustainable practices. So using strategies that encourage the food and agricultural sector to continually move along the sustainability spectrum, we can actually strengthen the local food system both in the immediate term and in the future.

Of course, we hear that in November 2013, the Ontario Government did make history by becoming the very first province in Canada to provide a tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural product to local food banks. As an amendment to Bill No. 36, which is called the Local Food Act, in 2014 farmers in Ontario now receive a non-refundable 25 per cent tax credit based on the fair market value of product that they donate to their local food banks and community meal programs. If they can do it in Ontario, why can't we do it here?

This tax credit is actually ground-breaking for two reasons, the first being that farmers deserve and need a tax credit to help cover the costs of harvesting and transporting product to food banks. Up until recently, farmers donated thousands of pounds of fresh food, out of sheer generosity, to the provincial food bank network in Ontario. Secondly, by passing the tax credit, the Ontario Government officially recognized food banks and the necessary and important role that they play in providing nutrition and food security for thousands of people in the province each and every month.

The tax credit has been introduced to Queen's Park multiple times over these years, but despite all-Party support, it never passed due to timing issues. But then in 2013, Premier Wynne, who was also the Minister of Agriculture and Food, began to champion this tax credit and promised to bring it forward to Queen's Park. So I don't see why other provinces in Canada cannot do this and provide compensation for fresh food donations to hunger relief organizations.

Outside of some grant opportunities, food banks are not really governmentally funded; however, it's important to note that food banks and meal programs provide an essential service by feeding so many individuals each month in all of these different provinces. That said, I have to say that I find it sad that we have to rely on food banks. When we have a province with so many wonderful farmers and so much incredible agriculture, it's a shame to just waste it instead of being able to feed hungry children.

The idea that our children have to have parents and teachers scurrying around trying to hold little fundraisers and little raffles to raise money in order to feed hungry children breakfast programs is a disgrace as far as I'm concerned. I really, honestly think that we should have a provincial breakfast program.

In fact, our government, while we were in power, did have a plan on the books to have a breakfast program which we were planning to introduce. We had said that we would put \$750,000 a year into that breakfast program, and it would be designed in such a way that financially businesses, corporations, and individuals would also be encouraged to contribute to that fund to make it grow. That way they would also play a part in having their communities involved in feeding children.

Personally I do believe in two warm meals a day in schools for children. There are many other countries around the world, the Scandinavian countries, where I did live for a time, where they are served two warm meals a day, breakfast and lunch, for free. That's not just for poor children, that's for all children because all children are equal, and all children deserve to be able to eat. I think it also takes away the stigma of some people being able to say, well look, those are the poor people. They get to have this food over there, but we don't get anything.

Well, as it turns out, many people, no matter how far up the economic scale they are, are busy. They have busy lives. They're running around between sometimes two or three schools, dropping off kids, taking them to the buses. Sometimes kids don't want to eat first thing in the morning. Therefore, I think a breakfast program for all would be very, very beneficial for all children in Nova Scotia. Personally, I'd like to see breakfast and lunch. As I said, many other countries have, many countries as well, that are poorer than we are.

Again, I like the idea that farmers are being involved and that farmers can feel that they are part of the solution. So a tax credit for them to offer their produce that perhaps

may have gone to waste would be a wonderful idea, I think, as well for a breakfast and lunch program for kids, as well as for homeless shelters and also for the food banks, until we can reach a point where we don't need food banks or homeless shelters anymore and, in fact, people are looked after in the way that they should be.

I would say that if this government is at all serious about addressing poverty, about addressing the issues and problems and the challenges facing our most vulnerable citizens in Nova Scotia - and they seem to be growing - this would be a great opportunity to support this bill and see it go forward, especially since they already have a member who is now the Minister of Health and Wellness, who first introduced a similar bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Twice.

MS. ZANN: Twice.

Again, I really want to commend the member for Inverness and his caucus for introducing it today, and we, the NDP, would stand in support of this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure as a farmer to rise and be able to speak to this bill. I think the interest in the bill from the farming community is indicated by the presence of Marlene Huntley here, and Henry Vissers, who were introduced earlier. Their support and the support of the farming community is definitely there for this bill. I think obviously the interest is here from Feed Nova Scotia to see this bill go forward, with Nick Jennery, who was introduced earlier, also present in the House.

Before I talk a little bit about that, I want to just mention that I do believe that farmers have and do - and I think Feed Nova Scotia would confirm this - contribute to the food bank now. I want to mention two farms that I know of that do. One is the gentleman who was featured in that newspaper article asking for this a few weeks ago, standing in a field of leeks. That was my neighbour, Richard Melvin, VitaBite farms. He has been on the board of Feed Nova Scotia in the past and is very committed to the food bank. I just want to acknowledge him.

Another farm I want to acknowledge is actually in Kings West. That is Sawler Gardens, which I understand last year was the number-one donating farm in the province to the food bank. Mark, Peter, Roger, and Ron Sawler, three brothers and a father - the father being Ron - that farm is one of the premier vegetable farms in the province and donates food to the food bank. It is the number-one donating farm, and I know there are others too. I just wanted to mention those two in particular as farmers that are donating now.

I want to speak in support of the bill, the concept of providing a tax credit for donating. Clearly there are costs. Any time you handle product, there are costs associated with handling that. Having a tax credit would help reduce the cost of handling product that is not going into the market but rather being donated. I think it's a very positive move for the province if we do pass this bill.

One of the interesting things when we think about food is that, in fact, there's a fair bit of food wasted. I don't know if this statistic is true, but I think I heard somewhere that over half of the food produced actually never gets consumed. It gets wasted. I do have a statistic for 2014: apparently \$31 billion worth of food in Canada was wasted. The number-one source of this waste - and I don't think I'll surprise any of you when I tell you this - is apparently \$14.6 billion worth of food that was wasted in your fridge and mine - food we bought and never consumed. So there's a very, very large amount of food there that would feed a lot of people, and apparently the airline industry wastes huge amounts of food.

We live in a culture of food excess, but we know that not everybody in our culture has that food excess. There are many homes that probably do not waste any food. If you think about that and why we need food banks, it's a rather staggering thought. There's a lot we can do as individuals, and I think that's an important thing to think about in terms of our own buying habits and consuming habits and all that stuff. Those are important things we can do.

Apparently only 10 per cent of the food wasted in Canada is wasted on farms, so we're talking about food that is on farms that does not get to the food bank. I believe this bill will help divert a little bit of that stream of food, possibly some to the food bank, and I think that's very positive.

As a farmer, I can tell you that in farming and in horticulture we have amazingly sophisticated seed products for our vegetables now. When I planted a field of cabbage, every one of those cabbage would be genetically identical, and every one of those cabbage would, in theory, produce exactly the same-sized head of cabbage. This is true for almost every crop. In fact, one of the last crops to reach this level of hybridization was leeks; my friend was in the picture.

The reason I point that out is when you go to the Superstore or Sobeys, or any food retailer, you see an amazing amount of uniformity in the vegetable products, fruit and vegetable products in the store. The industry in Canada has an incredible uniformity and if you think about that, right away it should trigger in your mind - not every one of those cabbage or squash, or if it's oranges or bananas, were produced that exact size, right. So the question is what happens if things are a little big or a little small?

Those are all good food products and one of the nice things about farm markets is that you can sell those products in farm markets. But for those who are selling to the grocery stores, there's this demand for uniformity, for the visuals of that. And if you think about

apples, you usually don't see a misshapen apple in a grocery store, but not every apple comes out perfect. So there's a place for some of these food products that are perfectly good, these types of products we would eat on our own farm. Those items we would eat ourselves.

One of the things that I did in one of the businesses that I was involved with - I'm no longer a shareholder in this business, in fact the business went broke - I was involved in a partnership with the Republic of Cuba. There were about eight or nine of us Canadian farmers, and we were trying to do business with Cuba. The logic of the business was, in our summer we have the vegetables that they don't have and in our winter, which is their winter also, they're growing the vegetables that we don't have. So there's this opportunity for two-way trade which did work really good for a few years and then there were some problems with accounts receivable and that business kind of petered out a little bit.

One of things that we got the Cubans to do was grow squash for us. One of the most difficult things that we had to try to accomplish in this squash production was the idea that was when they packed the 50 pound bag of squash, a bigger squash wasn't necessarily better. We wanted every one of those squash exactly the same size and that was a struggle to get the people of Cuba to do. The reason that was a struggle was that island has just a little bit short of food and they don't waste anything, and if you're growing squash you're going to get all sorts of sizes. What we wanted in that container was a bag of squash that had 20 squash in it, and the next bag had to have 20 squash in it and the next bag had to have 20 squash in - they all had to be exactly the same size.

The Cubans had to sort out those ones that were slightly bigger and slightly smaller and in fact, at that time it wasn't even a product that they were eating, that exact squash. They started eating that squash pretty quickly when it was left over. That's the kind of thing that we deal with in the farm industry. I believe in having a credit for this food, there's an opportunity there for a product that is slightly too large or slightly too small for the pack that you are doing to go somewhere else.

Another issue in the vegetable business is there is sort of this unpredictability of harvest. If you have an order for 200 bags of cabbage - and I've done this many a time - I'll say to the lads, let's go cut 200 bags of cabbage in the field and put them in the barn and pack them. We're not going to come back with 199 bags. I'm going to make sure that there are 200 bags, so we're going to end up with 215 or 220 because the last thing we want to do is go back for more. There's always this packing to order and you never want to short an order so there's always a few left over and I know that that's where some of these products come from, just the way the orders flow in that sort of business. So there's opportunity there.

Honestly, what does happen on farms is that there are a lot of issues in handling the product and the farms are very focused on efficiency and trying to cut costs. I can tell you that when we were harvesting crop - if we didn't have a sale for it, we didn't cut it or pick

it. We left it in the field because the cost incurred in harvest is fairly significant. So this would provide an opportunity. As I said earlier, many farmers do donate to food banks but I think having this tax credit in place would solidify this system and encourage more farmers to see this as an option and participate in it. I think once they started to, it would make that all flow a little better.

As I said, I would like to speak very much in favour of the bill. In fact, we know these types of foods that we are producing on the farms that are fruits and vegetables are very healthy foods, very good for people and oftentimes are possibly what's missing in that food bank mix. It is easier for the food banks, as you can understand, to handle boxes and canned stuff than to have fresh fruit and vegetables; that is the missing link.

Another aspect of this is that I think that in Nova Scotia we are very privileged to have Feed Nova Scotia. There is a level of coordination between food banks, which I'm not sure exists in every other province. I really don't know if it exists in any other province, but we have this one central organization coordinating this. Hats off to Feed Nova Scotia for the way in which they coordinate the distribution of food to all the food banks. In fact, I see that as a tremendous advantage in passing a bill like this, where you have one central organization managing the distribution of these products. It has trucks, infrastructure and volunteers, paid staff and all of these things. It means that this bill, if it goes forward, is much more likely to succeed.

So again, I just want to say hats off to Feed Nova Scotia for being here and for wanting to participate in this. I know they want to solidify the links between the farm community and themselves and be involved with more farms. I think that's an aspect of what we have going on here in Nova Scotia that is very positive.

At the same time we know, as my colleagues have alluded to, food bank usage in the province continues to rise. We have enormous challenges in feeding people, particularly children and all of those heart-rending statistics that arise in food banks and the increase in food banks, all of those things speak to the economy of the province and our challenges as legislators to try to create the environment that will allow the economy to go forward in a positive way.

I think you all know that I'm very interested in seeing our agricultural economy achieve all that it can achieve and be all that it can be. I think that one small part of that is this type of bill that provides an economic incentive and maybe a small return to the farmer for a little bit of product that didn't quite make it to market for some of the reasons I have already alluded to, to get some sort of return on that, that's actually an economic benefit back to the farm that there is this tax credit. I don't believe it's huge numbers, but it would make a difference. I think that's an aspect of this which would encourage agriculture production.

We live in a world where - and I talked earlier about the amount of food-wastage in our society, but that's not true around the world. I had the privilege of working in Kenya in 2013, for three weeks with very poor farmers. Again, I can tell you the product that was a little smaller, that got eaten too. If it had a little bit of bug damage on it, it got eaten too. We're very privileged to live in this part of the world, but, in fact, around the world we know that there are many places where there is food insecurity.

One of the things I know about our province is that I believe it's going to be important for us to have local food production in the future. Someone has said that if anything happened to our road connection to New Brunswick or if anything happened with the worldwide, global transportation of food, we'd be running out of food in our grocery stores in two weeks. In reality, when people figured that out, we'd probably run out of food in three days.

That speaks to the fact that we need to have local food production and we need to be utilizing the farmland in the province in ways that - I know 100 years ago, the Margaree was farmed, the Musquodoboit Valley was farmed, Pictou County was farmed, the South Shore was farmed. I know if you were to travel from Kentville to Chester Basin on Highway No. 12, you would have driven by farm after farm. A lot of that is gone now.

We don't see farms here anymore, but that land still could be farmed, it's waiting to be farmed again, and I think that we need to do things that will encourage the return of agriculture to all parts of our province, encourage food production so that we have a strong, safe, secure supply of our own food, and that we have a prosperous rural economy. Hopefully we have fewer people needing food banks and more prosperous farmers. So, with those few words I'd like to say I support this bill, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: It's a pleasure to rise today also in support of my colleague's bill. It is a good bill and I was thinking of this bill this morning actually, I had a constituent call me who had been at the food bank in Pictou County this morning. We have a very busy food bank in Pictou County and, obviously when we hear about these things we should be conscious of that.

My colleague from Kings North raised a few excellent points and I do want to amplify him. He did talk about his experience going into the field, looking for 200 bags of cabbage, how you certainly are going to come back with 200 bags of cabbage to make sure you fill that order, and in most cases you're going to have more; a few extra bags just to make sure. This would be the type of thing that could incentivize that farmer. It could be a little market, a small market for those extra bags that we know are getting picked with each order, Mr. Speaker. Thinking of the food banks, the member for Kings North raised a good point when he said that fresh food and vegetables are often what's missing from the mix of the food bank - that's just the way that they have to operate their business.

So unlike my colleague from Halifax Chebucto, who was concerned that maybe the food banks might not know what to do with this food - I think he said it might be too much - it's interesting that Feed Nova Scotia has effectively said bring it on, because the people at Feed Nova Scotia know there are Nova Scotians that can use some help getting healthy food.

It might not be obvious to some of the members opposite, but those people exist all over Nova Scotia, and if we can do something to help them eat healthier, then we should absolutely be doing that, because what we often hear from the government side is that they can't reduce taxes. They can't do that because they are too addicted to the revenue, Mr. Speaker, and I know that that's very helpful when you're redoing Cabinet rooms and stuff to have a few shillings around. The reality is that it's not good enough to know the cost of something but not understand the value of something. I think this is a perfect example of members immediately throwing their hands up in the air and saying, well maybe it will cost too much.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a value to this, there's a big value, and that's helping people eat healthier. One of the things that doctors tell me most often is what we really need to do to improve health care in this province is help people be healthier, to be more active, to eat better. This is a bill that absolutely can help those people who need the help the most eat healthier, and it can help the farmers. It can help grow a sustainable farming industry, maintain what we have and grow it.

So, I think it's good for governments to understand cost, but they have to put it in the context of value and benefit and I think that's what we would ask them to do instead of quickly dismissing something as, we can't do that because it will reduce the revenue. I think you have to look a little further past that to say if we can help people eat healthier, what will be the intrinsic benefit to that in savings on the health care system - just a more productive society especially where you think about children. If we get children eating healthier they'll be more ready to learn in school and all these types of things, Mr. Speaker, that are so important. So any time we can take an action to help the food banks, we should absolutely be doing it.

I hope that the government does take a serious look at that and does take this seriously and tries to move it forward, a little beyond just the saying it, it's the action that will be interesting. We have a bill that's before us today. It's a bill that can absolutely move forward through a process. We could do that today, Mr. Speaker. We could absolutely start that today.

I was mindful when I was listening to the government side comments, of a little lecture the Government House Leader gave us yesterday about trying to get along. He said that the Opposition Party is always so critical, he said, always so critical. He referenced some stuff from his Facebook. Here we are one day later, looking at a very good piece of legislation, a perfect opportunity for agreement to move forward, and what did we hear,

Mr. Speaker? You may recall, as I do, that we just heard some criticism. We heard some criticism of this bill and some of the preparation of this bill.

I think there are lots of lessons to be learned from this experience. I just hope that some of those lessons are learned because it is important that this bill move forward now to help people now. We can get this bill passed before Christmas and maybe see some productive feedback - no pun intended, Mr. Speaker - for the people who need it.

Those are my thoughts on this bill. It's a good bill. It was a good bill when the member for Inverness introduced it back in 2011. It was also a good bill when the Health Minister introduced it not once but twice. It's still a good bill today. Now the difference is that the government has an opportunity to move this bill forward. I would ask them to do that.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of Bill 121, Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to thank the member for Pictou East for making the motion for second reading, but according to Page 22 of our rulebook, "Debate on Private Member's Public Bills, 20(2): Notwithstanding paragraph (1), debate under the order of business PRIVATE MEMBER'S PUBLIC BILLS shall not be for more than one hour and, upon termination of that one hour, no question shall be put."

With that, the honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Well, the hour didn't expire, sir, but I'll take your review of that.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill. No.142.

Bill No. 142 - An Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 142, an Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia. Let me just say, here we go again. We're going to try it again, Mr. Speaker. We are persistent, so we're happy to talk a little bit about this bill today. This is a bill that does provide all members of this House the opportunity to work together to ensure accountability and progress in achieving the goals set out in the Ivany report.

I think most members of this House may have heard of the Ivany report. I think there are a number of members who might be hoping to forget the Ivany report or choose

to not talk about it, but over on this side, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to talking about that and seeing if we can move that forward.

We may remember the spirit and the environment of the Ivany report. It was a very loving time. Everyone was embracing each other and getting behind the Ivany report and talking about how finally we have a report that can move this province forward, and furthermore, that it's now or never. That was the environment of the time; that was the sense of the committee, and quite honestly, the sense of many Nova Scotians, myself and my caucus included. That was the spirit in which we looked at that.

This bill is about ensuring that all members, regardless of Party, take that Ivany report in that same spirit and look for ways to hold each other accountable to achieving real progress on the 19 goals of the Ivany report - not just some of them, all 19. If we can work together to work toward achieving success on all 19 goals, then we will be better for it. (Interruptions) I hear the minister saying financial stability? So Goal 19, financial stability. The Minister of Justice is happy with that one, and presumably a few others, but I absolutely agree that that's an important one, and we do need to be mindful of that.

But you know, I think it was last week I stood in this House and I talked about the Financial Accountability Officer Act, a bill that the NDP caucus put forward. I don't really see that much difference between that bill and this bill, because the spirit of both of those bills is about accountability. It is only through accountability that this province will begin to reach its full potential, because as long as we have a lack of accountability, we are open to failure. It could be the smallest failure or it could be the most significant failure. I won't bore you with any of the many examples I have on both of those ends of the spectrum, because it might be offensive to some of the members opposite, but they should be embarrassed, particularly in the face of opportunities to protect the people - and protect themselves, quite frankly - from repeating the mistakes of the past.

So, the 19 goals of the Ivany report. Some of those are difficult. Some of those are very difficult goals to achieve, but that doesn't mean that we don't try. That doesn't mean we pick one or two and try to run with those. We should be going for all of them, so that's the spirit of this bill. The spirit of this bill is to recognize that it will take everyone, every member in this House holding each other accountable to move forward on things.

The Ivany commission talked about an urgent call to action. I think the Ivany report was a wakeup call for many Nova Scotians, but since then, not so much. I think maybe people are a bit tired of it, or worn out by references to it, but we can't let that complacency creep its way into the way that we operate, the investments of time and energy and money that we make in this House on behalf of Nova Scotians. We need to keep it at the forefront and keep continuing to strive toward them, continuing to strive toward doing better.

I absolutely agree with the Premier when he says that government can't do it alone. I think where we start to differentiate ourselves is that I absolutely believe that government

has a role. It's not something that we can delegate entirely to the business community, because government has a part to play, and they have to be leaders in helping us solve the challenges that we face. We have seen many communities across this province take up the call to action, but translating the work of those individual committees - and we have Pictou County 2020, it's a very hard-working group of volunteers tirelessly working to improve the fortunes of not only Pictou County, but the province and I certainly commend them in that.

The reality is that to translate the work of those groups into broader progress requires some focus, some assistance, some accountability from the province. I don't believe that is too much to ask for. I believe every member in this House should feel a sense of responsibility to support those groups and should be asking, how can I support them? For those members who are asking, how can we support those groups, how can we work toward hitting the targets of the Ivany commission, they need not wonder any longer. I have an answer for them on how they can support those groups. They can support them through supporting Bill No. 142. It's as easy as that to show that they care and that we in this Chamber care.

It's an interesting thing when you hear people say, like the Government House Leader yesterday, oh, the Opposition is so critical. Well, Madam Speaker, it takes two to tango when you're doing legislation. The first point is if you put good legislation through, they will obviously support that. If there are issues with it then we'll raise them, that's what we do and that's the way that is supposed to work. But, if you don't have a receptive partner then they go into attack mode - why are you so critical and you get into this vicious circle.

I look forward to the comments from the government side today and maybe we'll get a snippet so the people watching at home can see this government's reaction to ideas. Will we see an aggressive, argumentative response, or will we see an interested, sympathetic response? We'll see what the character of this government is and we won't have to wait too long because we'll see it very shortly.

I do worry about when you put a piece of Opposition legislation forward and we see this very attack-mode response from the government. Many of us in this House know the role of the Law Amendments Committee and the legislative process, but when we see that shut down or in any way diminished, the importance of that step in the process is in any way diminished, I think you bear that in mind when you hear the reactions of the government to the ideas from another Party. I think you'll see some pretty dramatic similarities as to how this government reacts to ideas that aren't their own. In fact, I think you'll see similarities to how they react to ideas that are their own, but they're their own from when they were in Opposition.

The tale is being told, Madam Speaker, I don't have to tell the tale, it's writing itself. The narrative is really unfolding before all of our eyes. I don't give up hope. I always believe that tomorrow could be a better day and maybe a better day might start momentarily

here when we hear some actual constructive feedback on this legislation. Maybe it won't, we will see.

We are at a two-year point in this government's mandate. I once had a chance to listen to a recording that led me to believe that that was a very significant point in the mandate for the Premier and he was trying to set his objectives for the next two years, I guess. He wanted to know who was with him and who wasn't with him.

I would say that broader idea applies to this entire Chamber because if we want to advance the interest of Nova Scotians, then we can also know what ideas come from where we are willing to work with and if our response every time is no, we're not going to entertain that idea, you don't even need to interpret the theatrics that may accompany that no because the words will speak for themselves, the theatrics are just an added bonus for the people watching at home. It can really hammer home the character of a government. It's there, it's on display. Madam Speaker, you have the luxury to sit there and see it, front row seat for that too.

This is an opportunity and opportunities can be accepted, opportunities can be squashed but it doesn't mean that it wasn't an opportunity. The reality of our system is that when you're in Opposition against a majority government, you don't have a lot of control over what opportunities are accepted. You have very little control but it doesn't discourage you from bringing opportunities forward. So just like the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act, we're bringing an opportunity forward, with this bill we're bringing an opportunity forward and we will see how those opportunities are received. We will get a glimpse into how the government chooses to receive those opportunities and respond to them.

I think that 2025 is not that far away. That is the date that the Ivany commission challenged us as Nova Scotians, challenged us as legislators to try to take some action by. It's not too late and I don't give up on that report. I think that the goals that that commission laid out are admirable goals as we stand here today. I accept that they are difficult goals but that doesn't mean that they are not necessary. It doesn't mean that they are not admirable.

I would remind the members of this House that when we look at the historical data around the economy of this province and the demographics of this province, it's not pretty. It's not pretty and it also tells a story very clearly that we need to act and we need to change things because small, incremental improvements, they are probably not going to cut it. They're probably not going to cut it so I would suggest that the status quo is not enough. I was looking at this and I was thinking about a couple of bills and I was mindful of Emma Watson's comments to the UN Commission, I think on gender equality actually - we had some statements today about gender issues and we always hear about many of those important issues in this House, but Emma Watson said at the time, "if not me, who? If not now, when?" This government has the chance to be the "who" and I ask them to do it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to address this bill, Bill No. 142, an Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia. I'll say that in referring to the name of the bill but I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to agree with that as the concept that will actually be effected by the implementation of this Act. I do want to start though by agreeing in principle with the member who last spoke, the member for Pictou East.

The oneNS Coalition, or the Ivany report, as we call it, does set out some "admirable goals" - I'll use those words, but they are much more than admirable, Madam Speaker. They are realistic, they are attainable, and they are something that we actually have to get to work on. I just think that we differ pretty dramatically between the members on this side of the House and the leadership on this side of the House, and the members on that side of the House and their leadership on how to actually implement those goals.

His statement, "getting behind the Ivany report", well I would submit for the consideration of the House, Madam Speaker, that the Premier and the members of this government have gotten solidly behind the Ivany report. The Premier did that when he formed the oneNS commission, a group of government and private sector leaders that were set up to implement the oneNS goals - the same group that the Leader of the Official Opposition was appointed as the vice-chairman of, unfortunately, the same group that he walked away from. I'm sorry to say that he had his chance on that one and he blew it.

I don't necessarily want to get into an adversarial mode here and I promised myself some things before I stood up today, Madam Speaker. I promised myself that I wasn't going to slip into the mode that I have in the past in making my remarks on similar legislation where I stand here and I would add up all the lost revenue from all the tax cuts that have been proposed by the Official Opposition. So I'm not going to do that today. I'm not going to add up the costs of all the additional spending that they harangue the government about on a regular basis, that they propose they would do in order to curry favour with groups and people across the province in their vacuum of no responsibility when they can do that without any corresponding responsibility.

I'm not going to stand here and itemize all those things because I really can't get that high, I'm not that good at math. I really can't count that high. I believe they are in the billions now. I know that Nova Scotians can't afford this, and so I'm just not going to go there today, Madam Speaker.

What I would like to see from the other side is some consistency. If there is collegiality to be had in the House it would come with some consistency from the members of the Opposition, some recognition that there are genuine efforts being taken here and

through things like the creation of the oneNS commission and the invitation of the Leaders of the two Opposition Parties, that there is an attempt to institute a province-wide effort to implement those goals and to turn things around in Nova Scotia, to get us away from the edge of that cliff, because it's called Now or Never for a reason. We are in a position where everybody has to pull together, not by coming into the House with meaningless legislation, but by actually working together.

I think that aside from the types of discussions that I've already referred to with respect to tax cuts and program spending, I think we've really got to focus on the issue of red tape as it relates to this bill, Madam Speaker. This government has made concerted efforts to reduce the administrative burden on business in the province. These are real efforts that have been taken, real measures that have been effected through legislation and other actions.

Now we've listened to submissions on something called the Red Tape Reduction Act which was introduced by the Opposition. We've stood in the House and we've listened to the member for Cumberland South condemn and criticize this government's important efforts around reducing red tape. We have an opportunity here, as the government, and we are jumping on that opportunity, Madam Speaker.

The regulatory reform and actions that are here that are being taken are greater than that of any other government in recent memory. We've created a red tape reduction task force. That exists. It's there to drive interprovincial co-operation with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to tear down the regulatory walls that are hindering economic growth in the region. It's just that simple. It's there, Madam Speaker; it's done. It's taking effect. It's working.

We have repealed outdated and underperforming legislation. The government of the day, the Liberal Government, is cutting red tape at every turn and making Nova Scotia a jurisdiction where business large and small can thrive.

On one hand, the Leader of the Official Opposition says that the government is not doing enough, that we're not doing it fast enough, and that we're not going far enough in reducing red tape. On the other hand, Madam Speaker, the same member has introduced this flawed piece of legislation that achieves only one tangible outcome: the creation and the enshrinement of more red tape - more bureaucrats and more offices.

To even call it a flawed piece of legislation is really a disservice to the other well-intended bills that have been presented in this House. Bill No. 142, at its very core, is really a weak political attempt to wave a magic wand over economic development in the province and cure all our ills in one fell swoop. It's just not going to work.

Putting red tape aside for a moment - the one thing that this bill actually does, which is create red tape - but let's not talk about that for a minute. Let's look at how it puts in

place an additional bureaucracy, more hoops to jump through that will hinder growth and flexibility and economic momentum.

Does the Leader of the Opposition truly believe that we can simply legislate prosperity? That's a very important point here, Madam Speaker, because in an environment where we have people from both the government and the private sector out there working to implement these goals - these admirable goals, as my friend has called them - they're standing in this House saying, let's just legislate this, and economic prosperity will result from this piece of legislation.

Have all governments past - Liberal, New Democrat, and Progressive Conservative - missed the point before? Has that answer been staring us in the face for all these years since the beginning of time in Nova Scotia? You mean we just have to make a law ensuring our economic success as a province, and it's just going to happen? I think that would be great and wonderful and well and good if that was the answer, Madam Speaker, but I think we all know the answer to that.

I'm very skeptical about the proposition that economic development can be created and enhanced with a piece of legislation. My big question is, does the Leader of the Official Opposition actually believe that? Does the member for Pictou East actually believe that? Do they think that economic prosperity can be legislated or is what they really believe that Nova Scotians are naive enough to buy into this brand of politics, this brand of partisan, oppositional politics, where they walk away from the real business of the oneNS report and then try to come in and fix it with the magic band-aid of Bill No. 142?

I for one, Madam Speaker, do not think that (Interruptions).

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Cumberland North has the floor.

MR. FARRELL: I for one, Madam Speaker, don't think that the people of Nova Scotia are that naive. I think the people of Nova Scotia can look at the work of the oneNS commission. They can look at the work of community groups like the one that my friend referred to and the work of groups like the Cumberland Community Living group in my community that are actually studying the report and are working in their communities to implement it and who are doing so not only without the aid of legislation but without the intervention of government, without the direct intervention of government.

Those groups have taken the oneNS report to heart. They have taken the One Nova Scotia report to heart where it says that government does not have all the answers. The answers have to come from the private sector, and the Pictou group that my friend has referred to and the Cumberland group that I have watched blossom in my community are taking that message to heart. They don't need a piece of legislation. They don't need Bill

No. 142. They need government to listen and government to get out of the way where it's appropriate, and to reduce red tape like we have been doing.

Madam Speaker, the One Nova Scotia report was clear - it isn't and it never was a political document. From where I'm standing, a Leader of a Party who continues and tries to use the report through successive pieces of legislation as a political document to serve his own political interests is exactly the problem that we're dealing with in this province. A member who is more concerned with taking the report and trying to turn it to his own political fortunes is never going to be part of the solution. He's going to remain part of the problem and part of what has left us where we are now and part of what we are working to turn around. It is legislation like this that makes me wonder if the Leader of the Official Opposition has concerns over his own political future.

Red tape and more bureaucracy is not the answer for our province. It's not the answer to our economic woes. It is thinking like this that has had this province stalled for the last 20 years. It is legislation like this that reminds us that the Leader of the Official Opposition is the embodiment of the status quo, politics as usual. If we're to take anything from the Ivany report, it's that the status quo is never going to be the answer.

Bill No. 142 and the other economic measures that I hear being put forward by the Opposition are fantastical and crippling economic ideations that, when you combine the tax cuts, the additional spending, the red tape that is proposed to substitute for real leadership - the kind of leadership that our Premier and our government have shown throughout - I think that the efforts of the community groups as have been put forward by my friend from Pictou are what we have to look to. The efforts of the One Nova Scotia commission and the people who have been appointed there from the private sector, who are genuinely concerned with moving forward and turning things around - those are things that we really have to look to.

I think that across our government in all of the departments you can see efforts that are underway that are having success in growing the sectoral economy - which is also a prime recommendation of the report, one of the main things that we've been encouraged to focus on, that sectoral growth. Ask the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture what's going on in his sector and the growth that he has been able to encourage through the measures that he has taken in his department. Ask him in his role as the Minister of Agriculture what's going on there to encourage growth in the wine industry, growth in grape growing, growth in other sectors that are increasing the exports of our products across the world.

That is where our economy is going to grow. Our economy is not going to grow as the result of a piece of legislation that merely lifts recommendations out of the One Nova Scotia report, puts them on paper, and then hires somebody at a high bureaucratic salary to try to be a watchdog on those things.

We have true sectoral growth going on here. We have true sectoral growth going on in the energy industry. We have offshore exploration that's going to bring long-term prosperity to our province, that's being facilitated by the attention that we are paying to good regulation and good management of that resource. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Time has elapsed.

The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand in my place on behalf of the NDP caucus to speak on Bill No. 142, an Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia. This is a really serious matter and I think we all recognize the importance of this issue.

You know, I think that there are times when we need to look at a more collaborative kind of working relationship around the future of our province and the prosperity of our province and the serious challenges that our province faces. In that spirit I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Official Opposition caucus for bringing this bill forward. Whether or not it's the best piece of legislation we've ever seen on the floor of the House is irrelevant to me, in many respects. What this does is give us an opportunity to stand here and represent points of view about the economic direction of our province and the economic direction that this government is taking the province in and what are those things that we agree with and we can get behind and what are the things that we are concerned about and why are we concerned about them.

First of all, the Ivany commission report was an excellent report in many respects, but not perfect. I think Ray Ivany and his commissioners would be the first people to say that. Like all reports, it is only capable of dealing with so much. So it offered to whatever the government of the day would be to receive that report and its recommendations, some excellent ideas and recommendations after hearing and canvassing a very wide opinion from the people of the province and additionally to work with the Public Service that had a lot of very good information about what the challenges are for our province.

Everybody in this Chamber knows that this province has essentially two pretty significant problems; one is with respect to population and population growth. We are a province whose population is in decline, there is stagnation in the province in terms of people migrating into the province and our own birth rate has dropped dramatically. The demographics of the province - a growing population proportional of people who are retired and no longer in the labour force and a shrinking number of people in the labour force which is going to continue out for a number of years - leaves us vulnerable as a province. It means fewer people will be working and will be contributing to the revenue base of the province. This is a problem for any jurisdiction.

Ivany had recommendations about dealing with this, immigration being one of them, but not necessarily the only one. We legitimately need to talk about what this government is doing and has done with respect to that pretty significant and serious problem in front of us. On this side of the House and this caucus, we're critical of a number of things that the government has done that will not only not address that serious problem, but will contribute to the out-migration, particularly of our young people and people in the creative industries.

The Film Tax Credit was a bad, bad piece of public policy with respect to the out-migration and the loss of people from this province. We will pay for that, as a province, for many, many years. The damage that has been done to that industry will not be turned around overnight. In fact it may never be turned around if this government isn't prepared to make some adjustments and show some flexibility. That is one example.

The elimination of the Graduate Retention Rebate is another example. That was a program that took \$50 million out of the pockets of recent graduates from our post-secondary institutions, and many of those graduates used that rebate to pay down student debt. We have a stack of correspondence from young people, or recent graduates - they're not necessarily all young - from all over the province that in many respects used that rebate, in some cases to start a small business. (Interruptions)

Well, I've heard all about the wealthy banker's wife getting the family allowance. Paul Martin cut family allowance to poor families in this country because there was a bank manager's wife that got the family allowance, and guess what, Madam Speaker? (Interruptions) Guess what?

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

MS. MACDONALD: Guess what, Madam Speaker? Child poverty went up in this country. So because one bank manager's wife wasn't getting the family allowance anymore, didn't help poor families whatsoever. What happened was, we eliminated a really effective family allowance program for something that creates lots of problems. These guys want to defend those kinds of deep cuts to social security; they can go ahead and defend them. Families and communities are living with the impact of that. This is the other problem with the Liberal Government. The Liberal Government is an austerity government. (Interruptions) There is nothing in the Ivany report that recommends that government embark on . . .

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

MS. MACDONALD: They can yell as long and as hard as they want, Madam Speaker. The truth hurts. They don't like to be told what people out in the public are saying

about this Liberal Government, and the contrast between this Liberal Government and the new Liberal Government in Ottawa is being noticed. People in Ottawa are saying they thought they got rid of Stephen Harper but all they have to do is look at Nova Scotia. They think, wow, what is it that Justin Trudeau learned from talking to people like David Dodge, the former head of the Bank of Canada, about the impact of making cuts to public services when your economy is stalled? What do they say about that? (Interruptions)

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

MS. MACDONALD: They don't like to be reminded of the terrible impact that their cuts are having on people in our province. They have impacted students and former graduates, they have impacted people with mental health disorders, they have impacted health care workers in the health care system; they cut long-term care where our most vulnerable seniors live. There's ample, ample evidence that cuts to public services will actually harm your economy, and they seem to be oblivious to that. They seem not to understand that, perhaps.

I don't know where they get their information, but they certainly have not bothered to look at some really credible financial analysis that is available (Interruption) The Halifax Media Co-op, I hear the member for Yarmouth, making fun of the Halifax Media Co-op. Well, you know what? The Halifax Media Co-op is a very, very good source of information, particularly for poor and marginalized voices that have a hard time finding a place.

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

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's hard to believe that I do have the floor, because it's very difficult to speak when you have seven and eight members of the government caucus harassing speakers when they're up on the floor of the Legislature, all at once. But, you know, this government blew up the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. We're watching contracts to promote Nova Scotia tourism going to companies in Ontario. We're watching security contracts in our health care sector going to British Columbia. We're seeing local architectural firms in the Province of Nova Scotia being unable to bid on government contracts for hospital expansion and renewal.

You know, this government is not about growing the economy, this government is about really catering to people in the backroom, lobbyists, and they have not invested in really turning this economy around in any realistic way. During a period of limited growth, what do they know? They know to attack the public sector, that's what they know, that's the only thing they know, is attack the public sector, shrink and reduce the public sector, make the next generation of workers in our province worse off than their parents. You

cannot cut your way to prosperity and, in fact, they're not prepared to see themselves held to any standards or any measurements, which I believe is what this bill is all about.

This bill is to attempt to set some measurements, some goals and then to hold government accountable in a meaningful way, but this government is not prepared to do this. Just like there is no discussion with members of the Opposition, there is no collaboration with members of the Opposition, there isn't. There's no more collaboration or discussion with us than there is with the public. They don't want to hear the public when they come to the Law Amendments Committee. If people don't agree with them then they make threats and they bully - I take that back, I understand that's not parliamentary - they push people around, they make threats, and they make fun of people. That's their response to people with legitimately different points of view. So this legislation . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The member's time has elapsed.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I just want to remind you, Madam Speaker, and the folks who may be watching this at home, that we're actually debating an Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia, so for all those who are watching, let's return to that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. It is unparliamentary to refer to the television audience.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I didn't realize that. My point is to all those who are watching, wherever they may be, that we are actually debating an Act to Ensure Economic Growth in Nova Scotia. It has been a very interesting debate. We now know what the NDP are against, we clearly know what the Liberal caucus is against but isn't it time we actually talked about what we can do, what we're in favour of that actually might get the economy of Nova Scotia going, create jobs for people here at home, bring back Nova Scotians who have had to leave to do work they have been trained to do and have done in other places, bring in refugees and immigrants and ensure they have a livelihood when they come here. That is really what this bill is all about. It's exactly why it includes a youth employment strategy.

You ask any Nova Scotian, whether they are watching right now or not, what is the most important thing they want us to work on? This is it, this is what they want us to work on. You ask Nova Scotians what happened to the government's resolve on the Ivany report, they're going to say we haven't seen much, Madam Speaker.

This gives us a chance to get refocused on those very goals that Nova Scotians rallied around two years ago. These are the things they want to see us talking about. I

understand what the government is against, I understand what the NDP are against but what are we for?

Madam Speaker, here we are on this important point and let's just take a look at how we got here. It was almost two years ago that the Ivany report came out. It included 19 goals to turn our economy around, fix our demographic challenges, give people opportunity. It challenged all of us in this House to work together to make them happen. It actually recommended an all-Party committee of the Legislature.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The chatter in the room is quite loud.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: It actually recommended an all-Party committee of the Legislature to give us an opportunity to come together in search of some common ground.

The Premier rejected that advice from the Ivany report and formed the oneNS Coalition. I know there have been some comments on that coalition here in this debate, Madam Speaker. I worked in those meetings with the members of the oneNS Coalition and they produced their report. You know I have said over and over, they have done what was asked of them and they have produced a report that does make a positive contribution to how we get our economy going, how we kick-start this great province.

Now the member for Cumberland North may be satisfied that there is nothing more to do, that's not where I am, Madam Speaker. I think that we need to do more and I believe that's where most Nova Scotians are. As a matter of principle, I think we need to hold ourselves, particularly our government, accountable for its part of the puzzle and we need to show Nova Scotians that we're willing to lead by example. That's why, in addition to the oneNS report, we now have a supplementary report which deals directly with how to hold the government accountable and how to hold, quite frankly, all of us in this Chamber accountable for those Ivany goals.

I don't know why there are members on the government side against that but I am for it, Madam Speaker. That's why this bill reinstates the all-Party committee and brings into this House a bill to make the Ivany goals a matter of law, just as was recommended, measures that the government has abandoned but things that need to be done if we are going to take a report which says lots of nice things and turn it into real action. After all, this province has a long history of producing reports that say all the right things that never go anywhere. Nova Scotians know we've run out of time to keep doing things in the same old way. They know that if we treat the Ivany report and the oneNS report the same as every other report that has come and gone, that say nice things but never go anywhere, we will never move ahead.

More people move away. More young people graduate from our schools and colleges and have to go somewhere else to get a job to pay off their student loan and start a family. We can send notice that we want to bring in all the refugees and immigrants that are out there, as we should, but if we don't have work for them to do, if we don't have a growing economy to attract them, they're all just words and we need more than words, we need action and we need accountability here in this House, and with this government, to make it happen.

That is what Nova Scotians want, that's exactly why, as a member of the coalition, I added a supplemental report that adds what's missing which is, who's responsible? Who is going to do these things? When are the deadlines that they're going to have them done? How are they going to report back to the people of Nova Scotia about their progress and what happens when they don't hit those goals? Unless you have those things in place, any report, no matter who wrote it, no matter how nicely it is worded, will not move this province forward, and we need to move forward and that starts here. That's what leadership is all about. It starts with accountability and being held accountable and responsible for getting things done.

In a non-partisan way, I tell you having a chief economic officer of the House, who comes and audits the decisions of the government to make sure they are consistent with growing the economy, is a way to ensure that happens. Just like an Auditor General in our accounts, just like a privacy commissioner on our privacy laws, just like a conflict of interest commissioner on our conflict laws, we need someone who has the talent and the independence to hold the government's feet to the fire on getting those Ivany goals done. None of that has been done to date.

A chief Ivany officer who comes here and looks at government decisions and gives an opinion on whether they are moving the province forward or not would have been very helpful in the last two years. When the Ivany report says to develop your natural resources, particularly in rural areas so people can have jobs and do it in a way that is sustainable for the environment, and then the government bans onshore gas without even trying - that is where we need a chief Ivany officer to stand up and say, you can't say you're in favour of growing the economy on the Ivany goals if you make decisions that do the opposite. Then we can have that debate in this House and the people can decide.

Until someone is held accountable for those decisions, none of that is going to happen. That is the problem and that is a problem that needs a solution and that's what this bill is about: providing that solution as opposed to just taking shots at each other as Nova Scotians just watched, wherever they watched from. This is a solution. It gives people hope that we can actually get some accountability around here for moving our economy forward.

When we look at developing our resources and growing our economy, Nova Scotians quite rightly want to know what it means in their own communities and they want to know who benefits. The only way we are ever going to move forward with social licence

or in any other way, is if the very people who own that resource, who live in that community, who know that the risks that are being taken are theirs, are also the people who benefit.

What better way to align the community's interests and the benefits received than to make sure that when we develop new projects - whether it's the Donkin Mine or onshore gas or some other activity that creates jobs - that the royalties that are generated stay in the community where that activity is occurring. What better way to bring down debt at the municipal level. What better way to build up resources for infrastructure, whether it's roads or sewage systems, than to allow that money, which is new, to stay in the local area.

What better way to give rural communities an opportunity to have jobs, to have economic development, to have hope than to say, if you take that task on then you get to keep the royalties that come with it instead of sending them to Halifax where they just go into the big pot. This is what we believe is the way forward. It is a sharp contrast to just banning new ideas because they are not politically popular. I acknowledge that there are positions that we take that aren't always popular, but they need to be done. That is a matter of principle.

Now, I heard the member for Cumberland North give his remarks on behalf of the entire Liberal Government a few moments ago, and you know what? We all have a role to play in this House. His is clearly just be the critic of anything that we stand for on this side. That is fine, I'm not going to get into that kind of game, Madam Speaker. What he clearly doesn't know is that when we write supplemental reports, when we stand up for those that are not satisfied with the status quo, we're also doing our job as a matter of principle. That it's no longer okay to just go along to get along when you know we could be doing so much more. That's what the driving momentum supplemental report is about; that's what this bill is about.

One other thing that the bill does which is so important, which has been lost under the government, is that when you're confronted with 19 priorities in the Ivany report, all the problems of the province, all the opportunities that go unfulfilled you have to set priorities. The Ivany report itself says "pick some priorities." The bill actually picks the six parts of the Ivany report that we really need to get going on.

Madam Speaker, in Clause 7 of the bill - increase the number of new permanent residents; develop a rural jobs strategy; increase the number of firms doing exports; improve the province's fiscal health; establish sustainable levels of taxation. These are things that we should be working on now, and to be perfectly honest there are things that we should be much further ahead on two years after the Ivany report than we are, and the bill allows us to finally get going on those things.

I will conclude by pointing out none of this is rocket science, it has actually been done, and it has actually been done here in Nova Scotia. Where, when we were confronted

with a stagnating economy and real concerns about our environment, the PC Government of the day brought in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act to balance both our vision for a growing economy with our equal vision for protecting our pristine environment, and set real goals and brought them to this House, and put them in law and it got all-Party support and, Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia is now, eight years later, seen as a leader in those areas. There are other provinces and states in the United States and places around the world that look to this little province and the progress that it has made on renewables and on emissions into the atmosphere and a bunch of other things, and said, there, something good got done in Nova Scotia in the Legislature with all-Party support.

The same is expected of us when it comes to the Ivany goals, Madam Speaker. The government may be satisfied that they're done, we are not satisfied. There is much more to do and it starts with holding the government accountable for its part of the deal, and showing Nova Scotians there is hope that we can hold people accountable for achieving the goals that they all have for this great province. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, that concludes Opposition Business for today. I want to thank everybody for a lively round of debate. So, with that, again that concludes our business for today, so I will pass it off to the Deputy Government House Leader to call business and hours for tomorrow.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order please. Earlier today, during the Question Period, the Minister of Community Services indicated that the member for Dartmouth South had perhaps deliberately misled the House and provided erroneous information.

Madam Speaker, I would like you to make a ruling with respect to whether or not that was parliamentary and, additionally, I want to table emails between an employee of Housing Nova Scotia and the treasurer of the Brunswick Non-Profit Society, which indicates that Housing Nova Scotia had indeed extended subsidy to that housing co-op or non-profit after that mortgage had expired, for four months, and I'll table that.

MADAM SPEAKER: I will take that matter under advisement.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, if I may begin on the point of order, I think that what we are dealing with there is a disagreement with respect to fact, which would not properly be a matter for a point of order.

I move at this point that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow, Thursday, December 3rd, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. At that point, we will call

Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 142 and 143; Private and Local Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 144; in the Committee of the Whole we will call government Bill Nos. 112, 118, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, and 136, and Private and Local Bill Nos. 125 and 137; and such other government business as may arise. With that, I move that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on December 3rd between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

We have reached the moment of interruption. The Adjournment motion was submitted by the member for Lunenburg and reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the special relationship between the City of Boston and the Province of Nova Scotia, commemorated annually by the delivery of a Christmas tree, and thank Andrea and Bill MacEachern of Lorne, Pictou County, for their generous donation of the 72-year-old, vibrant 49-foot white spruce.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

BOSTON/N.S.:RELATIONSHIP - RECOGNIZE

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: I'm pleased to rise today and speak of the friendship between Nova Scotia and the City of Boston.

On December 6, 1917, at about 9:03 a.m., Clarence Barnhill, a young clerk in the Department of Treasury of His Majesty's dockyard stood in panic at the corner of North and Barrington Streets having evacuated via the north gate of the dockyard, with the impending explosion looming. The tram car to safety closed its doors in his face, filled to capacity, and went on down the street. At 9:04 a.m., that tram car, like many others, blew up, killing everyone on board.

Clarence never forgot that devastating walk home to Lucknow Street in Halifax's South End, where he found the windows of his own home blown out and found out days

later that his own father, had he not been leaving the dining room to return his dishes to the kitchen, would have been blinded by the shattering glass. Clarence was my grandfather, and I never passed that corner of North and Barrington without thinking about this story. I've taken my children there and stood them on that corner as a remembrance to that fatal day for the City of Halifax. Even last night, I drove by that corner and I thought of my grandfather.

Not everyone was as fortunate as my grandfather. Many lost their lives or their homes. The Richmond District of Halifax was levelled completely. Many were blinded by the debris, mostly from glass from windows.

Madam Speaker, my uncle Charles, who at the time was just a preschooler, was sitting at the family piano at our home on Tower Road. Had he not been, he would have been blinded as well, as glass pelted that piano and the back of his head and he carried those scars for the rest of his life. My family continues to enjoy music from that damaged piano. It is a reminder of that day in Halifax.

The title *Shattered City* by Janet Kitz could be extended to be called "shattered lives." Families were ripped apart, buried under debris. They were separated. Unconscious patients arrived at hospitals without identification. The bodies of the dead were often delivered without any identifying belongings. Within hours of the explosion, my Uncle Robert's father, Arthur Barnstead, was made in charge of the mortuary for the Halifax Explosion. Days went by without my uncle ever seeing his father. Only men in suits arrived at the house to get changes of clothes, and perhaps leave a letter for his mother. Those were sleepless days and nights.

There were shortages of many things: food, medical supplies, warm dry clothing, and blankets. Authorities from the City of Boston received a telegram stating the desperate situation in Halifax. Right away they dispatched a train, organized through the Red Cross - relief for the City of Halifax. They left at 10 o'clock that evening, and through a terrible winter storm made it into Halifax in the early hours of December 8th. Can you imagine how welcome that train was?

In appreciation, the City of Halifax sent its very first Christmas tree to the City of Boston in 1918, in remembrance of the Red Cross and to the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee. That gift was revived in 1971 by the Lunenburg County Christmas Tree Producers Association. I proudly wear their pin. For the 44th straight year, we have sent a Christmas tree to Boston as a token of our immense appreciation for their assistance nearly a century ago. This is done through our Department of Natural Resources. Every year a tree is chosen, and it is to thank them for all their help and assistance in those dark times and times of need during the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

I have a local artist, Laurie Swim, who is doing a quilting project to commemorate the Halifax Explosion. It is called "Hope and Survival." It's to be completed in 2017, 100 years after the Halifax Explosion. I look forward to the completed work.

Two weeks ago, many of us gathered in Grand Parade in Halifax to celebrate the tree going to Boston and to thank Andrea and Bill MacEachern of Lorne, Pictou County, for their generous donation of their 72-year-old, vibrant 49-foot white spruce. We send this tree off to Boston with thanks and appreciation.

Our Premier mentioned just yesterday in a speech that this year's tree for Boston is dedicated to a special man who celebrated this special tradition for 20 years. The Premier, on behalf of Nova Scotians, dedicated this tree in memory of Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston's longest-serving mayor and a proud Nova Scotia supporter. Tomorrow, the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia will raise the flag of the City of Boston here on the grounds, and at the same time, our Premier and the Mayor of Boston will raise the Nova Scotia flag at the city hall in Boston.

Madam Speaker, our city was devastated by the blast caused by the *Imo* and the *Mont-Blanc*: 2,000 Nova Scotians lost their lives, and thousands more were injured and homeless as a result of its terrible tragedy. But in our moment of need, the good people of Boston were among the first to send and lend a helping hand. This incredible act of kindness solidified an already strong relationship. As we near the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, I urge this House of Assembly to recognize the special relationship between the City of Boston and the Province of Nova Scotia, commemorated annually by the delivery of a Christmas tree from Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, for many families Christmas trees herald in the holiday season. Traditionally they have been a symbol of life, rebirth and resilience. The Boston Christmas tree represents all those things and so much more. The Boston Christmas tree represents the long-lasting friendship between the City of Boston and the Province of Nova Scotia. It is a lasting reminder of the gratitude we have for the Boston Red Cross and all the organizations that provided so much assistance to Halifax immediately following that explosion on December 6, 1917. As was mentioned earlier, the very next day Boston authorities were in Halifax distributing food, water and medical supplies.

Madam Speaker, the relations between the City of Boston and Halifax date back to the founding of Halifax in 1749. Why? Well Boston businesses were very, very interested in the shipping and fish trade with Halifax so the relationships go back a long, long time. We are aware that the bond between the two cities became the strongest following the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

Madam Speaker, I am very familiar with this city. I have probably been in this city more times than in any other city in North America, I guess as far as visiting. I've made countless trips to Boston. My daughter attended school there a few years ago, Harvard University. I would go down countless times to watch her play hockey and softball in the Ivy League at the time. I would get out of school at 3:30 in the afternoon, at four o'clock I'd be in my car. I'd drive the 11 hours straight through, watch her play hockey or softball on Saturday. Sunday morning I'd get back in the car, 11 more hours back home and of course back in school the next day to do my duty.

Again, Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to go down and watch those teams play a very high calibre of hockey and softball. I had a chance to watch them win the Ivy League more than once and also win the Frozen Four, the NCWA Championship. So it's definitely one of my favourite cities. I have relatives in Boston and I've had the pleasure of seeing ballgames in Fenway Park, the Green Monster, TD North Bank facility where the Boston Bruins play, the Celtics, nearby Foxboro where the New England Patriots play. It's certainly an area where there's a tremendous amount of sports.

Madam Speaker, Boston is sometimes called the Cradle of Liberty for its role in instigating the American Revolution. Boston's rich history had its beginnings in the 1630s when the Puritans established a settlement there. Boston became home to 1,000 Puritans who had fled religious and political persecution in Europe. In the 1820s a rush of immigrants from Ireland and Italy began to change dramatically the city's ethnic composition. They brought with them a staunch group of Roman Catholics. This group played a significant role in Boston politics, with such prominent figures as John F. Kennedy and others.

Madam Speaker, when we think of Boston they have so many interesting sights. There is the Boston Common which is the oldest public park in the U.S., the oldest subway stations in the country, Boston's Trinity Church, prestigious colleges and universities: Harvard, Boston College, Boston University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The City of Boston is actually an educational and cultural mecca with its countless museums, art facilities and classical music. Of course we know it is legendary for its sport teams, which I mentioned earlier. When we think of sport teams we think of 1912 when Babe Ruth led the Red Sox to the World Series and then he was sold to the Yankees for \$100,000 and a \$350,000 loan, creating the curse of the Bambino. Imagine, yesterday, the Red Sox paying David Price \$217 million - quite a contrast in contracts.

However, Madam Speaker, back to Christmas trees - the first tree was donated in 1918, the year after the explosion. Every year since 1971 our province has sent a large tree that stands in the Boston Common throughout the Christmas season. As was mentioned earlier, this year we sent a 72-year-old, 49-foot, white spruce tree from the property of

Andrea and Bill MacEachern of Lorne, Pictou County. Most people in Pictou County know Bill because he is an avid marathon runner, and he ran in the 100th Boston Marathon.

The tree-cutting ceremony has been described as quite the local event for Nova Scotians and features representatives from the province; the United States Consulate in Halifax; the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia; hundreds of local school children; they have a Town Crier - and the Town Crier, of course, is Jim Stewart, the New Glasgow Town Crier and he travels to Boston to be there when the tree arrives and he is extremely grateful for having that opportunity. I spoke to him last year when he performed this ceremony for the first time and last year this particular Town Crier won the International Championship with regard to the best Town Criers - we have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and conservation officers; a bagpiper from Antigonish; and, of course, Santa Clause. Santa Clause is there to witness this great event.

In conclusion, the relationship between the Province of Nova Scotia and the City of Boston has been not only a very pleasant one, but a very positive one. Thank you.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place and join in this late debate. It was really interesting listening to both my colleagues from opposite Party caucuses and learning a little bit more about the background of the member for Lunenburg and her attachment to this historic event, the Halifax Explosion, and why it is that Nova Scotia continues to remember the contributions of the people of Boston when this horrific accident occurred.

I have the very great privilege of representing the constituency of Halifax Needham, in North End Halifax, where indeed probably the greatest impact from the explosion was felt, but certainly not the only part of our community that felt this impact. The impact was felt quite widely, including in Dartmouth on the Dartmouth side, but in my constituency the Halifax Explosion is very much in living memory, although the number of survivors who would have been children at the time is quite small now and is getting smaller all the time.

We remember on December 6th, which is occurring fairly soon, we remember the events of that day, we remember the impact that the explosion had on our community, on the families, and the neighbourhoods in the community. We all know that particular explosion occurred during wartime. We know that the ships that collided in the harbour, one was a munitions ship. We have parts of the constituency of Halifax Needham, where people still find shrapnel and artifacts from that explosion when they're gardening and digging around their properties.

We have an amazing exhibit at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, not too far from this place, that I would highly recommend if anybody has never been to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. See the exhibit. Go, because it's very informative and the staff there are very knowledgeable about this particular event in our history. People do come here from all over the world - particularly, I think, from the New England States - and a great deal has been written about that day and the aftermath.

I can remember not so many years ago being on Fort Needham December 6th, early in the morning, when the memorial service occurs. It was as cold as you could ever imagine, with the wind coming off the harbour and the beginning of a snowstorm. We were all reminded that the city was hit with this significant blizzard within 24 hours or so of the explosion, when people had been left without homes and the kind of post-traumatic shock and what have you. The Armoury was turned into a place for the injured to go, and various places throughout the community had to establish morgues, had to establish places where the health care providers could see and treat people.

The emergency services here in the city - fire, police, and others - came together very, very quickly. There were no emergency measures plans like we have today - you know, the communications system, nothing like today - so we can only imagine and feel a remarkable sense of awe at the rapid response in many respects, and the Boston States, in particular the American Red Cross, moved very, very quickly to gather up medical supplies and find health care personnel to come to Nova Scotia.

I don't know if any people here - there are so many amazing books that are both kind of historic, in that they aren't fictional. They trace out the reality of what happened, looking at documents and looking at the old newspapers, and they are quite amazing, but there are a lot of fictional works of literature.

There are so many good ones that I'm reluctant to single any out, but I've just recently read *The Blue Tattoo*, and I know if anybody else has read *The Blue Tattoo* - I see the Minister of Justice has. It's a lovely fictional account. It's very accessible, and the author - Steven Laffoley, I believe - did a lot of historical research to make the story of the characters realistic. I highly recommend that if anybody is interested in this event, to try to imagine what it would have been like to be providing - there's a story of a young woman who is in the early years of training as a doctor, who is one of the central characters in his book. It's a lovely book, and it joins a large number of interesting publications that revolve around the Halifax Explosion.

In my community this holds deep meaning. We remember every December 6th. There are services throughout the North End of Halifax and parts of Dartmouth, in the churches and at the fire stations. There's a very moving tribute to the firefighters who fell during the Halifax Explosion. That happens at the Lady Hammond fire station at the top of Robie Street in Halifax Needham in the North End of Halifax.

School children learn about this in the elementary schools in the North End of Halifax and probably throughout the province. You know *Barometer Rising* was on the curriculum in the school system for many years. It is really excellent, one of probably the best known publications around the whole story of the Halifax Explosion, so it's an important event in our province's history. Of course there have been films made as well. I remember the CBC aired a film that was made here in the province a number of years ago.

We are talking about the gratitude we feel to the people of Boston for the relief effort they undertook and it was significant. In addition to that I think we need to recognize all those fabulous Christmas tree growers around our province who annually, having nurtured a beautiful fir tree on their tree farms, provide those trees and we send a tree to Boston where it appears in the heart of Boston, just off the Boston Common.

I have to say that in the 18 years I have been here, I've never made the tree-lighting ceremony but my plan is that next year I will do that. It's on my bucket list, Madam Speaker, and I plan to attend. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I'd like to thank all members who participated in the Adjournment debate this evening.

The House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow. Have a good evening everyone.

[The House rose at 5:30 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2613**

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas the birth of a child marks the beginning of a meaningful journey in one's life; and

Whereas at 11:26 a.m. this morning, a very special occasion took place when Lucas Wide and Krista Trevors welcomed their daughter, London Rose Wide, into the world; and

Whereas as a parent, every day is filled with countless rewarding moments that far outweigh the challenges;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate Lucas Wide and Krista Trevors on their newborn daughter, and wish them and their family health and happiness for the coming years.

RESOLUTION NO. 2614

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas healthy vibrant communities are in the best interests of every citizen of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the One Nova Scotia Coalition found that municipal reform is an important vehicle to make sure the costs and benefits of economic development are shared more equitably; and

Whereas many municipalities in the Province of Nova Scotia are discussing, debating, or possibly avoiding structural change;

Therefore be it resolved that the Government of Nova Scotia develop a strategy to address how it will work in the future with our municipal partners, and citizens in the future, to accelerate the movement toward municipal structural change.

RESOLUTION NO. 2615

By: Mr. David Wilton (Cape Breton Centre)

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

Whereas the St. Alphonsus Stone Church Restoration Society bid to purchase the church from the Diocese of Antigonish and wish to open it as a tourist attraction and a non-denominational wedding chapel; and

Whereas the society has been having fundraisers such as dances, flea markets, and their sale of Christmas balls to help with the cost of purchase; and

Whereas the Stone Church Restoration Society consists of the following volunteers: Melanie Sampson, Ben Edelenbos, Raymond Hogan, Bill White, Rod Gale, and Jean Mazalin;

Therefore be it resolved that that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Stone Church Restoration Society in achieving their goal of purchasing St. Alphonsus Church.

RESOLUTION NO. 2616

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 Larry Orr, better known as Mr. Hockey, lost his battle with cancer in late September, survived by his wife, Sandy, and sons, Darcy and Derek - a good personal friend of mine, Larry devoted his life to the game of hockey; and

Whereas Larry was an incredible man who encouraged and inspired generations of young hockey players from Tim Bits to NHLers - as a skate sharpener and equipment manager, Larry dedicated his life to engaging people through hockey; and

Whereas Larry was recognized as the lifeblood of minor hockey on the Saanich Peninsula of B.C., where he and his family lived - his generosity and love of the game were truly infectious and acknowledged by Hockeyville's celebrities on Coach's Corner;

Therefore be it resolved that that members of the House of Assembly join me in honouring the memory of a real Canadian hero who touched the lives of many through his sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 2617

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 beautiful coastal community of Prospect is experiencing change with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and Hall presently on the market - a new generation of engaged residents has emerged to build on the foundation and tradition of volunteering and neighbours supporting neighbours; and

Whereas the Prospect Old Church Association has a vision of community ownership of these historic buildings, and the members are working with enthusiasm and passion to explore possibilities; and

Whereas the activities of the Prospect Old Church Association demonstrate the true essence of community development and innovation at the grassroots level - tech savvy and connected, the group uses social media for outreach and promotion, bringing young and old together to imagine the future;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in wishing the Prospect Old Church Association success in all of their endeavours, and all the very best for the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2618

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 Alexandro (Alex) Tsimikus first visited Canada in 1972 returning in 1973 as an immigrant from Greece; he worked hard, often holding several jobs at a time in a number of fine Halifax eateries; and

Whereas in 1975 Alex returned to Greece where he married his lovely wife Vesiliki, better known locally as Bessie, and in 1976 they had saved enough money to move to Lakeside to start their very own business, the Lakeside Restaurant, which has now been in business for close to 40 years; and

Whereas the Lakeside Restaurant was originally known for its hand peeled, hand cut French fries and fresh fish, they also have a great reputation for delicious pizza;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Alex and Bessie Tsimikus for their amazing service, kindness, generosity and fine fare for four decades at 1594 St. Margaret's Bay Road.

RESOLUTION NO. 2619

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 Nicholas Overton of Hatchet Lake is the artist behind "Nic's Notes", the eye catching prints made from carved wooden blocks, printed onto cards and notes; and

Whereas as a young entrepreneur Nicholas sells his beautiful handmade creations at local craft shows; and

Whereas Nicholas has autism spectrum disorder, a lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder, he gets unwavering support and encouragement from his parents who are fierce advocates for Nicholas and Autism Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nicholas on his beautiful creations and wishing him and his family well in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2620

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 Vince Norris of Terence Bay has dedicated many hours to his community, serving on planning committees, as a long serving member of the volunteer fire department, and as a founding member of the S.S. Atlantic Society; and

Whereas Vince, now retired, spends a great deal of his time running errands and looking in on local senior citizens to ensure that all is well with them; and

Whereas each December Vince dons his Santa suit and a long white beard and is joined by his long-time friend Gail Slaunwhite, or rather Mrs. Claus, at the community events to the delights of young and old alike;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Vince for his service to community and wish him all the very best in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2621

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 this year Lindsay Berringer of Upper Tantallon started a fundraising campaign “Hands Up for Brigadoon” designed to send six children to Camp Brigadoon in Aylesford in 2016; and

Whereas at the age of 10 Lindsay was traumatized by the death of her father and as a result attended the camp for bereaved children, which provided much needed support at an incredibly difficult point in life; and

Whereas despite being seriously injured in a motor vehicle accident herself this summer, Lindsay not only met her fundraising goal, but she far exceeded her own expectations, raising enough money to send 13 children to camp next summer:

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Lindsay for all of her hard work and for making as positive difference in the lives of others.

RESOLUTION NO. 2622

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 on June 11 of this year Gary Jones, a resident of Timberlea, set out on a trip of a lifetime, cycling across Canada, with a goal of raising funds and awareness of prostate and thyroid cancer; and

Whereas Gary had to cut his trip short due to unforeseen circumstances, but far from being deterred Gary plans to continue his journey and reach his goal of raising \$70,000 to be divided equally between Prostate Cancer Canada Atlantic and the QE II Health Services Foundation in Halifax; and

Whereas Gary is an active volunteer with Trinity United Church Outreach committee, organizing and helping with their very popular community meals;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in showing support for Gary's generosity of spirit and wish him well for his upcoming future.

RESOLUTION NO. 2623

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 Murray Elliot is a retired fire fighter from Station 17 and is a pillar member of the Kiwanis Club of Cole Harbour-Westphal; and

Whereas in summer months Murray and his fellow Kiwanis members host the Boys and Girls Club for a beach day at their Morris Lake park; and

Whereas his dedication and volunteerism to the community and the club make him an important asset:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Murray Elliot and his unwavering commitment to his community.