



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a petition, the operative clause being:

We, the undersigned would ask that the provincial government immediately focus attention and resources towards finding a replacement for Doctor Westby at the Weymouth, Digby County Health Clinic.

Mr. Speaker, I have 1,953 signatures on this petition and I have affixed my name to it.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

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

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to do an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: I'd like to draw attention to the east gallery. We are joined today by Ryan Leedham. Ryan is a graduate of the Nova Scotia Community College Aviation Institute and Skills Canada, and he is an international medal recipient. I would ask my colleagues to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2655

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is home to many skilled and talented students and apprentices; and

Whereas Skills Canada-Nova Scotia provides opportunity for these individuals to showcase their skills at Olympic-style competitions and promote career opportunities in the skilled trades and technologies; and

Whereas provincial and national gold medal winner in aircraft maintenance Ryan Leedham, of Brookfield, won a silver medal on the international stage in August at the WorldSkills Competition in Sao Paulo, Brazil:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Ryan on his outstanding achievement and for showing the world the talent and skill young Nova Scotians have to offer future employers.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2656

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

Whereas tomorrow is International Volunteer Day, a day when we recognize the thousands of Nova Scotians carrying out extraordinary work with over 58,000 non-profit and volunteer organizations throughout the province and around the world; and

Whereas this year I have the honour of acknowledging the selfless work of so many Nova Scotians who make a real difference in their communities and in communities around the globe, including Alexandra Anderson, a volunteer with GlobalMedic, a charity that provides disaster relief to large-scale catastrophes around the world; and

Whereas Ms. Anderson recently spent seven weeks in Nepal, responding to the devastating earthquake that hit the country earlier this year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature thank the work of all of our volunteers and applaud them for the important work that they do.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services on an introduction.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: If I could draw your attention to the east gallery - I'm sorry, I wasn't aware that she was here, Alexandra is actually here - if Alexandra Anderson could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

REGAN, GEOFF: HOC SPEAKER - ELECTION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, although it is not my custom in this House to congratulate Liberals on their election to things, I would like to take a moment on behalf of the Official Opposition and congratulate Liberal Member of Parliament Geoff Regan on his election as Speaker of the House of Commons in Ottawa last night. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'm told by high sources that it is appropriate to refer to the wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons as Mrs. Speaker, making this Chamber a unique place, as we have both a Mr. Speaker and a Mrs. Speaker in one place.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to conclude by saying I hope that does not cause any confusion at the Liberal caucus Christmas party for you, sir, this Christmas, and congratulations to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education as well. I ask her to pass our best wishes on to her husband.

MR. SPEAKER: I will most certainly have an interesting day on Wednesday at our Speaker's Christmas party when the real Mrs. Speaker will be there and the new Mrs. Speaker, so I'll have two to look after.

I did indeed jump ahead - so excited to get to that first members' statement that we skipped Introduction of Bills and Notices of Motion. So with the consent of the House, is it agreed that we revert to Introduction of Bills and Notices of Motion?

It is agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

[STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HFX. EXPLOSION (12/06/1917): FORT NEEDHAM - GATHERING

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Before I read my message I too, on behalf of our caucus, want to say congratulations to Member of Parliament Regan and Member of the House of Assembly Regan.

Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1917, residents of Halifax woke to a bright, sunny day, with no indication of the horror that lay ahead. By nightfall, over 1,000 people would be dead and another 10,000 injured - and many of those would not survive.

On Sunday, residents of HRM will assemble on Fort Needham to remember the events of that day, the bravery of the first responders, and the strength of those who survived the Halifax Explosion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**BEECHVILLE LAKESIDE TIMBERLEA SCH. PLAYGROUND COMM.
- PLAYGROUND NEEDS**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize the Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Elementary School Playground Committee formed under the BLT Parent-Teacher Coalition, for their proactive approach to addressing playground needs. The playground committee has invested countless hours in developing a plan to increase accessibility, add variety, and improve safety on the playground for school and community use.

This small but dedicated committee, led by Tara Rourke and supported by PTC Chairman Jenn Priske, has been successful in securing funding for Phase I of the project. New equipment will add accessibility to the existing playground and provide for some inclusive play for students who may struggle with social behaviour issues.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking the BLT Playground Committee for their ambitious undertaking, and wish them continued success in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

HFX. EXPLOSION (12/06/1917) - REMEMBER

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: On Sunday, people across our region will mark the solemn anniversary of the Halifax Explosion.

At 9:06 a.m. on December 5, 1917, the French cargo ship *SS Mont Blanc*, loaded with wartime explosives, collided with the Norwegian ship *SS Imo*. The resulting explosion devastated Halifax - more than 2,000 people perished and 9,000 were injured. It was a

tragic day and a day when so many showed the resilience of the human spirit. Brave survivors rallied to help each other and start the rebuilding process.

On Sunday, I urge all Nova Scotians to stop and take a moment to remember the victims of the explosion and the resilience that has shaped our province's culture and history. Thank you.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: DISPERSANTS - USAGE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, allowing the use of Corexit in a tidal flow area directly near the critically important closed nursery areas on Browns Bank and Georges Bank moratorium site is a major concern and should not be taken lightly.

There is concern that the current regulations are not in sync with the emerging scientific evidence. The government needs to ensure that dispersants will not be used in the event of a blowout until the fishing community is consulted and has endorsed the use of dispersants.

The fishing industry and the community have been co-operative with the situation that puts their livelihood at risk. They are not asking for a no-drilling policy; they simply do not want dispersants used until there is clear evidence that such use will create a net environmental benefit, as required by regulations.

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

GALLANT, DANNY - BIRTHDAY (100th)

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize Danny Gallant, who turned 100 on October 8, 2015.

I had the opportunity to stop by and personally wish Mr. Gallant a happy birthday at an open house his family had for him at the Carmel Centre in New Waterford. Mr. Gallant credited his longevity to eating right and walking everywhere, as he has never owned a car nor obtained a driver's licence.

Please join me in wishing Danny Gallant a very happy 100th birthday. Thank you.

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

**MURPHY, MAUREEN/STAFF/VOLS. - C.B. FARMERS' EXHIBITION:
ORGANIZING - CONGRATS.**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Maureen Murphy and her staff and volunteers for organizing the 99th Cape Breton Farmers' Exhibition.

More than 18,000 visitors entered their grounds to enjoy all things farming, including arts and crafts, rug hooking, entertainment, cooking, flower entries, the horse ring, and Hincheys Rides and Amusements. The exhibition is a mainstay in Cape Breton in mid-August every year.

Maureen and her team deserve a heartfelt thank you for making the exhibition such a great part of our summer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

COM. SERV.: INCOME ASSISTANCE COMPUTER SYSTEM - OVERHAUL

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, this week the Ontario Auditor General released her latest report on the Liberal Government. Concerning to me were her findings on the new computer system responsible for administering income assistance payments.

The Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) has now made a total of \$140 million in benefit calculation errors. She criticized the Liberals for rushing the system into operation last Fall despite knowing it had problems. The government so far has spent \$290 million on SAMS - \$90 million over budget.

Mr. Speaker, we do know that the Minister of Community Services is overhauling the income assistance program, and I hope this is not something Nova Scotians can expect.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

ADVENTURE EARTH CTR. (FLEMING PARK) - ENCOUNTERS PROG.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the Mysterious Encounters program offered to Grade 5 students. This program focuses on environmental education and encourages students to become more conscious of the environment.

This is a one-day program that takes place at the Adventure Earth Centre in Fleming Park and is led by high school students who are trained to qualify as mysterious encounter leaders. This program has been running since 1989, and the first leaders were students from J.L. Ilesley High School.

Since then it has expanded to other schools throughout Halifax. However, every year J.L. Ilesley High School students still participate in the program and train a team of leaders. High school students attend a weekend-long training session before qualifying as a mysterious encounter leader. This program allows young students to spend a fun day outside while learning about the environment. The program also provides high school students with a chance to learn leadership skills.

I'd like to take a moment to thank the J.L. Ilesley students on their continued involvement in this program and for volunteering their time to help teach younger children about the environment.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**CORCORAN, MICHELLE
- MCDONALD'S OUTSTANDING MGR. OF YR. AWARD (2015)**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Michelle Corcoran, a local fast-food manager, recently earned a significant honour from her company's head office. Michelle received the 2015 Outstanding Manager of the Year Award from McDonald's Canada. Michelle has been working with McDonald's Canada for 34 years, and with the New Glasgow restaurant for the past 15 years.

Owner Larry Swenson said "Michelle is a dedicated leader who always goes above and beyond to provide the quality service our guests expect and deserve from McDonald's." He continued, saying, "She is an integral part of our team and our community."

The Outstanding Manager of the Year Award is one of McDonald's Canada's top honours and is presented to select restaurant managers across the country for consistent outstanding performance. Congratulations, Michelle.

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

COM. SERV. - SENIORS: HOME REPAIRS BUDGET - ALLOCATION

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, we have seniors in desperate need of housing repairs, yet they are told they must wait a year for any help from Housing Nova Scotia. Some are even on a waiting list to get on another waiting list.

Yesterday I gave the Minister of Community Services two examples of Chester-St. Margaret's constituents who are living under potentially unsafe conditions due to roof rot. Unfortunately, the only explanation the minister could give was to blame it on the lack of available contractors. What an appalling non-answer from the minister. It has nothing to

do with contractor availability and everything to do with the minister holding onto millions of home repair dollars to artificially make the provincial budget look better.

Mr. Speaker, how is it that the Liberal Government can find tens of thousands of dollars to redecorate their ministers' offices but will not help seniors with money that is purposely allocated for senior housing repairs?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

WILLIAM D. LAWRENCE - HISTORICAL FAIR (MAITLAND)

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Nova Scotia history is alive and well in Maitland. Maitland is the first designated historical district in Nova Scotia. A walk through Maitland can include a stroll through the Acadian dikes, from Dawson Dowell Park to Frieze & Roy, the oldest continuous general store in Canada.

The visit will take you by the grand Victorian homes of the original wooden-ship builders, with perhaps a visit to Lawrence House Museum. The walk would end at the Selma School, a fine example of the Victorian two-room schoolhouse. This building has been brought back to the community from a tumbled-down state to a first-class art gallery, Gallery 215, and is a community centre.

Mr. Speaker, every summer the village celebrates the 1874 launch of the *William D. Lawrence* by having an historical-themed fair, complete with games from the era, a street parade of period costumes, and, of course, lots of local fare and crafters.

As an interesting note, the *William D. Lawrence* was the largest wooden ship ever built in Canada and was 263 feet long. William D. Lawrence was elected to the 23rd Assembly of this House in 1863, representing Hants County.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**NATL. DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (12/06/15)**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, Sunday is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women or White Ribbon Day. It marks the sad anniversary of the 1989 l'École Polytechnique massacre, where 14 young women were murdered simply because they were women.

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is a time to mourn the loss of those women and all women who are victims of violence. It is also an opportunity to think about the impact violence against women has on our society and to take action to stop it. It is an opportunity to speak out and to resolve to make this

issue a priority, not only on December 6th, or during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, but every day and in any way we can help.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: CENTENNIAL BLDG. REPLACEMENT
- CONST. START DATE**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm calling on the Minister of Health and Wellness to provide a start date for the construction of the new building that will replace the crumbling Centennial Building.

The Capital District Health Authority had a plan in place to replace the Centennial Building outlined on their website for all to see that outlined steps to be taken from 2012 to 2020, with construction beginning in 2016. Capital Health, of course, no longer exists as the minister has replaced it with the new Nova Scotia Health Authority.

I'm calling on the minister to tell us and all Nova Scotians when his new health authority will begin construction.

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

SYDNEY MINES EARLY LEARNING PROG. - IMPACT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Early Learning Program in Sydney Mines. This group was one of four to pilot the program in the province and after their second year it has been a raging success.

The purpose of the Early Learning Program is to help young children learn the skills they will need to be successful in school. It's a true honour to have this opportunity to thank the dedicated staff at the Early Learning Program in Cape Breton. Their work will have a real impact on the children who will benefit as they prepare to enter the educational system.

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

NICKERSON, BILL & BERTIE - ANNIV. (80th)

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on December 2nd, Bill and Bertie Nickerson celebrated their 80th Wedding Anniversary. They have a love story that has lasted for more than 83 years. Their anniversary is a record for Queens County, perhaps even Nova Scotia.

Around 1940, Bill joined the Liverpool Fire Department. He is the oldest, living, former member of that organization. Bertie worked at Queens General Hospital when it

first opened in 1949. She was employed there for 14 years. In 1950, they built their home on Bristol Avenue, where they continue to live today.

Bill is now 101 and Bertie recently celebrated her 98th birthday. They have one of the longest marriages in Canada and I wish Bill and Bertie all the best as they continue their lifelong love and thank them for all of their contributions of life to Queens County.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

FLEUR DE SEL REST. - ACCOLADES

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, Lunenburg's Fleur de Sel's restaurant is sending a representative to the Canadian Culinary Championships. Chef Martin Ruiz Salvador, who owns and operates the restaurant with his wife, Sylvie, recently won the right to represent Nova Scotia on the national stage by conquering the Gold Medal Plates event. His winning dish, rabbit and snails, consists of four preparations and includes a small snail shell filled with a sauce.

Despite this more recent recognition, Fleur de Sel is no stranger to acclaim. It has won numerous national awards including a top 10 national ranking in *enRoute* magazine. I wish to take this time to congratulate Mr. Salvador on winning the Gold Medal Plates event and to wish him the best of luck at the Canadian Culinary Championships.

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

INTL. VOL. DAY (12/05/15) - VOLS. THANK

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is International Volunteer Day. It is a day to celebrate volunteerism and to pay special tribute to volunteers. In Nova Scotia we are so fortunate to have thousands of volunteers in every community. We all know someone who gives of their time and talent without expecting anything in return.

Nova Scotians are very resilient people. We celebrate together in the good times and we pull together when times are tough. That means lending a hand, opening our homes, our hearts, or our wallets. That generosity of spirit strengthens every corner of this province. It makes our province better, and I know it makes us all proud.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to have this opportunity to publicly thank the thousands of volunteers in our province who work so hard for their friends, neighbours, and communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**NATL. DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (12/06/15) - MEMORIES HONOUR**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: This Sunday is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

Established in 1991 by the government of Canada, this day marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal. They died because they were women.

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, on any given day in Canada, more than 3,300 women, along with their children, are forced to sleep in emergency shelters to escape domestic violence. On average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

On Sunday I, along with members of this House, will honour the women who have tragically lost their lives and honour the resilience displayed by survivors of violence across Nova Scotia.

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

HFX. EXPLOSION (12/06/1917) - REMEMBER

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on the morning of December 6, 1917, at 9:04 a.m., the City of Halifax and our province were changed forever when the French cargo ship the *SS Mont Blanc*, fully loaded with explosives, collided with the Norwegian ship the *SS Imo* in the narrows of the Halifax Harbour.

The blast was the largest man-made explosion prior to the development of nuclear weapons. Nearly all structures within a half-mile radius were obliterated. Thousands were killed, many more injured, and our entire province affected by the aftermath.

There are many stories of survival by happenstance, but a story that has been told to me for my entire life was that of my grandmother Mary, whose school was destroyed by the explosion with next to no survivors. She happened to be sick that day and stayed at home, a cold that quite surely saved her life.

Let us all remember this tragic event, which still shapes many of us to this day.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HILL, DR. AMANDA - TOP 50 UNDER 40

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and congratulate Dr. Amanda Hill for being chosen as one of the top 50 under 40 in Atlantic Canada and a delegate to the 21Inc Under-40 Summit.

Amanda excelled in education, graduating from Pictou Academy, St. Francis Xavier University, and Dalhousie Dental School. She has been a valuable member of countless organizations and is a co-founder of Pulse Pictou County.

Amanda was nominated by a member of One Nova Scotia. There were 600 nominations with 100 finalists. She participated in interviews and an essay-writing contest before finally being chosen as one of the top 50.

As her friend, I am honoured to congratulate Amanda on this achievement and thank her for her enthusiasm and for using her natural leadership abilities to help Pictou County move forward in challenging times.

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

**100 WOMEN WHO CARE/CENT. NOVA WOMEN'S RESOURCE CTR.
- COMMEND**

MS. LENORE ZANN: The 100 Women Who Care gather four times a year in Truro. Each person brings \$100, and we receive presentations from three local non-profit organizations and present around \$10,000 to the group that receives the most votes.

Recently all of the Women Who Care in Truro donated more than \$12,000 to the Central Nova Women's Resource Centre. The centre offers support to women of any age and socioeconomic background to encourage personal and social growth in all facets of life.

Mr. Speaker, both the Women Who Care and the Central Nova Women's Resource Centre are trying to make a difference in Truro. I want to commend everybody's spirit and commitment to making our community a better place to live.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

PIE R SQUARED: ECONOMY - CONTRIBUTION RECOGNIZE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to acknowledge a thriving small business, Pie R Squared, co-owned by entrepreneurs Heather Lunan and Ray Burton. From

the basement of a home in Wolfville, Pie R Squared provides families with delicious, nutritious gluten-free food.

Heather and Ray moved to Wolfville in 2009 to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the country. After visiting the Saturday farmers' market, they decided they wanted to participate in the burgeoning local food movement. Pie R Squared makes food from scratch in small batches with local and seasonal ingredients that families feel proud to put on their table.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I'm happy to recognize Pie R Squared's contribution to our economy as an innovative and growing local business and to our dinner tables as a provider of healthy and delicious food.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**TIMBERLEA-PROSPECT MLA:
MASTER OF ARTS IN INTL. POLITICS - CONGRATS.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the importance of continued education with any profession is paramount. Increasing your educational capacity is usually a very motivating experience. Everyone benefits when we grow as individuals within our own knowledge base. Education is an essential part of intellectual freedom, and one of its main values is improving how we view, exist in, and participate in the world.

One of our colleagues, the member for Timberlea-Prospect has recently completed a degree, a Master of Arts in International Politics at CERIS in Belgium, summa cum laude. Sacrificing weekends, finding the time and energy to focus on coursework is a large commitment. We salute our colleague for his decision to pursue and complete his educational priorities.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): ECONOMY - ACTIVE ROLE

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: This government is setting a new bar for (Interruption)

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

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: This government is setting a new bar for politicians who say one thing while in Opposition and something altogether different in government. That's especially true when considering the government's record on jobs. Back when the crew across the aisle was in Opposition, they met every negative monthly jobs report from

Statistics Canada with a press release critical of the former government. Never mind the fact that those numbers were a reflection of previous decades of not properly managing job creation, which the Liberals were a part of.

Today this Premier and his ministers are desperate to try and take claim for the bright lights on our horizon (Interruption)

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

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Do you want me to start from the beginning?

MR. SPEAKER: No, no.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Today this Premier and his ministers are desperate to try and take claim for the bright lights on our horizon from the work done before their time. Be it renewable energy or manufacturing ship jobs, this government is now resting on its laurels. It's time for this government to get off its hands and acknowledge government has an active role to play in the future of our economy.

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

UPSHAW, MARVIN - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Marvin Upshaw, owner and operator of Ascension Barber Shops. Marvin is a young, dedicated entrepreneur and I'm very impressed with the level of his professionalism and the pride that he puts into his trade.

Marvin is the owner of three locations, a shop in Lower Sackville, a shop in Bedford and his latest shop just opened recently in Halifax. At his Lower Sackville and Halifax location he also has female stylists who do both women's and men's hairstyling. He is a role model for the youth and has many young people honing in their skill through his direction.

He is currently in the planning stages of opening yet another shop on the Dalhousie campus. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank has the floor.

MR. GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, we need more positive young entrepreneurs like Marvin Upshaw in all of our constituencies, to help to grow stronger communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**“SCOTS JEWS: IDENTITY, BELONGING & THE FUTURE” EXHIBIT:
ATL. JEWISH COUN. - CONGRATS.**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday evening a very special photo exhibition opened at the Chase Gallery at the Nova Scotia Archives. Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future, an award-winning documentary by photographer Judah Passow made its Canadian premiere with a reception. Linda Kislowicz, president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of Canada was a special guest.

The photographer spent a year capturing Scotland’s Jewish community, travelling across the country producing portraits which capture the complexity and diversity of Scottish Jewish life at the beginning of the 21st Century. It tells a remarkable Jewish story and a remarkable Scottish one too.

I want to congratulate the Atlantic Jewish Council for bringing these Scottish portraits to New Scotland and I urge all members to visit this unique exhibition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**NATL. DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (12/06/15) - ISSUES**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in two days December 6th marks the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Twenty-six years ago, on December 6, 1989, 14 young, aspiring women violently lost their lives at l’École Polytechnique in Montreal. This Sunday women and men across the province and the country will honour those women who lost their lives to gender-based violence.

December 6th is also a day of action as countless women and girls continue to face violence. According to the Canadian Women’s Foundation, half of all women and girls in Canada experience at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lives.

This Sunday let us all reflect on the issues of violence against women, and act on ways we can help end it.

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

**STATION NO. 15 FIREFIGHTERS:
SO. WOODSIDE BBQ ATTENDANCE - THANK**

MS. JOYCE TREEN: On September 21st I hosted a barbecue for the community of South Woodside. After contacting Fire Station No. 15, they agreed to attend without

hesitation. The firemen arrived right on time and stayed for the entire event. They enjoyed speaking with the community members and showing the children the inside and outside and all the workings of the fire engine.

The fire chief informed me at the end of the event that there were several young girls who had asked all sorts of questions regarding females becoming firefighters. We were both excited by the interest these girls expressed.

Thank you to the firefighters from Station No. 15 who took the time to come out and pique the interest of our young people.

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

CHISHOLM, MARY - SHOEBOX PROJ.: LEADERSHIP - THANK

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Shoebox coordinator Mary Chisholm for the countless hours of volunteer work she has put into the Shoebox Project over the last three years, and for what is amounting to yet another successful year at Halifax.

The National Shoebox Project was founded in 2011, by the Mulroneys sisters, with a mission to collect and distribute gift packages in shoeboxes to women in shelters across Canada. Last year the Shoebox Project in Halifax was able to provide shoeboxes to the women in shelters in HRM, such as Byrony House, Barry House, Adsum House, and the Marguerite Centre. Because they surpassed their goal and more than doubled prior years' totals, they delivered shoeboxes to Truro, New Glasgow, and Antigonish shelters. These shoeboxes let women who receive them know they are not forgotten.

Through this process the Shoebox Project is able to let Nova Scotians living through difficult times know their community cares while at the same time raising awareness about homelessness, addiction, poverty, abuse, our shelter system and the thousands of Canadians who rely upon it.

Shoebox donations will be accepted this year until December 12th. Thank you to the members of the Legislature who have helped support the Shoebox Project in Nova Scotia, and a special thanks to Mary Chisholm for her leadership in this endeavour.

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

SIMON CASE - ANNIV. (30th)

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked 30 years since the historic Simon case. In 1985 James Matthew Simon from the Mi'kmaq community of Indian Brook was charged with hunting outside the government-designated hunting season.

Simon argued that his nation had a treaty that allowed him to hunt and fish outside of government-sanctioned seasons and, for the first time ever, the Supreme Court agreed. This was a landmark case, Mr. Speaker, and opened the door for other treaty challenges, including the Marshall decision in 1999.

Since then our understanding of treaties has changed and our school curriculum has been updated to acknowledge treaty rights. Now all Nova Scotian children will know this important part of our province's history.

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

DWYER, KAI - TRAMPOLINE CHAMPIONSHIPS (DENMARK)

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Fall River's Kai Dwyer. Kai, who is 14 years old, is one of five Canadians who will compete in the upcoming World Age Group Trampoline Championships in Odense, Denmark.

Kai began competitive trampoline when he was eight years old and has been competing against competitors six to eight years older. Kai is known for adaptability and the way he learns new tricks at warp speed, which has allowed him to quickly move up the national rankings.

Kai trains year-round in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, at the Titans Gymnastics and Trampoline Club, and practices 16 hours a week on trampoline and 10 hours a week outside the gym.

It has been nearly two decades since a Nova Scotian has represented Canada at the Trampoline World Championships and we are proud to have Kai representing our province at this international event.

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

**DIGBY OPTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES PROG. ET AL
- EAST FERRY BEACH CLEANUP**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Options and Opportunities students from Islands Consolidated, St. Mary's Bay Academy, and Digby Regional and East Ferry residents who spent a sunny September day cleaning up piles of

garbage from the beach at East Ferry. The volunteers spent the day collecting bags and bags of garbage and burning piles of wood.

Local volunteers helped move large pieces of debris with the help of their tractors. This was the second cleanup of the same beach. The previous cleanup in September 2013 had concentrated on a fish plant that had been toppled during a March storm. By next summer, the beach would have again be strewn with garbage after tropical storm Arthur flattened another abandoned fish plant.

Unfortunately since then, people had taken the liberty to add their own garbage to that pile. With the help of East Ferry Harbour Authority, Digby Salvage and Disposal, Waste Check, Clean Nova Scotia, and Small Crafts and Harbours, the students and locals once again cleaned up the beach. So, I not only commend them for their efforts, but admire their perseverance.

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

**WALSH, GARY/MACDONALD, JEANETTE/ORGANIZING COM.
- CABOT TRAIL WRITERS FEST.**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gary Walsh and Jeanette MacDonald and the rest of the organizing committee for their hard work in organizing this year's Cabot Trail Writers Festival. The Cabot Trail Festival is one of the only festivals that offers workshops with the guest speakers.

This year's star-studded cast included Linden MacIntyre, Lisa Moore, Lawrence Hill, Ian Hamilton, Miranda Hill, Joan Clark, Megan Gail Coles and Kathleen Winter. The festival book store is always a popular spot for festival goers and was, again, a near sell out as guests lined up to meet their favourite authors and have their books autographed. The festival also gives aspiring authors a perfect chance to sit down and chat with some of the country's great, professional authors and get some tips and advice on writing.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Walsh, Ms. MacDonald, and all the organizing committee and thank them for their hard work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

HFX. EXPLOSION (12/06/1917): VICTIMS/VOLS. - REMEMBER

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, Sunday marks the 98th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, something that we've talked a bit about in the Legislature in the past week, in the context of the Boston Christmas tree.

The explosion occurred at 9:04 a.m. on the morning of December 6, 1917, caused by the collision of the Imo and Mont Blanc and the detonation of ammunition stored on the latter of the ships, caused by fire. The city was wrecked by the blast and destroyed and damaged 1,200 buildings, took the lives of 2,000 Nova Scotians and injured an additional 9,000. Adding insult to injury, there was a massive blizzard that fell upon the city the following day.

As our city rebounded and rebuilt, we have always taken the time to remember and commemorate that fateful event, through things like the Christmas tree to Boston or the memorial at Fort Needham Park. I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering both the victims of the tragedy and all those both from here and abroad, who contributed to rebuilding our great city.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

BROWN, MRS. JANE - BIRTHDAY (100th)

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to congratulate Mrs. Jane Brown on celebrating her 100th Birthday. Mrs. Brown, a resident of Armdale, became a centenarian on October 22, 2015. A birthday party was held to honour this wonderful lady in this special milestone in her life.

With pleasure I attended the birthday party to present Mrs. Brown with a congratulatory certificate. She looked beautiful as she thanked everyone for coming to share this milestone with her family and many friends. I would also like to thank her daughter Diana Brown for being her main caregiver and dedicating so much of her time and energy for the comfort, health and happiness of her mum and commend them both for getting out to vote during this Fall's federal election. Félicitations et bonne fête.

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

YETMAN, GRANT: GENEROSITY - RECOGNIZE

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize an outstanding Cole Harbour businessman, Grant Yetman, owner of the Wing'N It restaurant on the Forest Hills Parkway. He celebrated his one year anniversary for his restaurant this October, but Grant's Wing'N It restaurant isn't just a restaurant, it's one that recognizes the value of charity.

Each Monday in June, Wing'N It donated a portion of their sales to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada Light the Night event. Over \$600 was donated to the society.

I always feel encouraged in knowing how generous businesspeople, like Grant and the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley community, contribute to events like this.

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

RAFUSE, DR. VICTOR/TEAM - ALS RESEARCH

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Dr. Victor Rafuse and his team of scientists: Dr. Philip Magown, Dr. Ying Zhang, and master's student Basavaraj Shettar at Dalhousie University's Brain Repair Centre. There is no question Dalhousie University is renowned for its findings through scientific research. Recently this team at the Brain Repair Centre made a discovery that could be an avenue towards improving quality of life for people afflicted with a motor neuron disease. Using genetic manipulation and an LED light, Dr. Rafuse and his team were able to bypass the nervous system in mice and activate unresponsive muscles. It's a key discovery for people suffering from ALS where their nerve cells degenerate.

Although there is still more research and analysis to be done with these findings, this discovery is certainly remarkable, and I would like to congratulate the team at the Brain Repair Centre on this achievement and look forward to their future work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**FRESH AIR FOOD TRUCK FEST. (BRIDGEWATER):
ORGANIZERS/VOLS. - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the first annual Fresh Air Food Truck Festival happened on September 12th at Shipyard Landing in Bridgewater. As this was the first of its kind in Bridgewater, organizers really had no idea what the turnout would be - a pleasant surprise when an estimated 2,500 people came out to enjoy a variety of menus from local and regional food trucks. Lineups snaked around the grounds, entertainment was on hand, and activities were available for many children.

The big winners of the day were Feed Nova Scotia and the local food bank. Over \$3,000 was raised and a hamper of food collected. I would like to congratulate the organizers and volunteers of the first annual Fresh Air Food Truck Festival and look forward to next year's events.

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

METLEGE, JOE - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a wonderful community member for a true selfless paying-it-forward act of kindness. That community member is Joe Metlege. Joe is a resident of Clayton Park and a proud father of two sons. He is also a friendly face known to many who frequent Costco Wholesale in Bayers Lake where he works.

Joe recently became aware of a co-worker who had missed a great deal of time at work due to his wife giving birth to their child prematurely. This co-worker confided in Joe he was missing a great deal of time from work to spend with his family because of complications with the birth at the expense of a lesser paycheque. Joe took it upon himself to rally many of his co-workers together and in a few short days raised over \$600 to give to that young family.

I would like this House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Joe for demonstrating what it truly means to be a good co-worker, community member, and friend.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

E. ANTIGONISH EDUC. CTR. & ACAD. WE COMM. - FOOD DRIVE

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in the Nova Scotia Legislature today to congratulate the East Antigonish Education Centre and Academy WE Leadership Committee on an amazing school initiative. The committee just completed a very successful food drive for the Antigonish Food Bank. The "We Can't Wait for Christmas" food drive was organized from November 16th to November 30th and it was actually a competition between classes.

Ms. Margaret Boyle's homeroom class of Grades 3 and 4 brought in the most food donations within the school, a total of 306 pounds, and have won a special prize. Ms. Boyle's class have won the opportunity to deliver all of the food collected to the local food bank and they have a special activity at the Antigonish Library People's Place.

I would also like to make a special mention to Ms. Maria Gough's Grade 6 class as they came a close second, collecting 279 pounds of food. With just eight school days to collect food items, students brought in an amazing 1,100 pounds of food; that's enough for approximately 900 meals.

I know the WE Leadership Committee is very appreciative to all the students and teachers who participated in this food drive and I would like to specially acknowledge Ms. Denise Bekkers and Christina Williams for initiating this challenge, getting the students and teachers excited to participate, and for supporting a community organization.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

HARRINGTON, ROSS/WINE KITZ STAFF - EXPANSION

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ross Harrington and the staff at Wine Kitz in Clayton Park West on the recent expansion of their store. Wine Kitz is independently owned and located in Clayton Park West since 2006.

Its owner, Ross Harrington, is a champion of U-Vints, having challenged the previous Progressive Conservative and NDP Governments to allow U-Vints to operate legally in our province. Ross reflected the needs of his customers in asking government to allow his customers to leave their wine at the store and return later to bottle it. This helps the elderly, those who live in apartments, and people with disabilities who want to make their own wine. In Nova Scotia, this need was not recognized by previous governments, either the Progressive Conservatives or NDP.

But after years of challenging our outdated liquor laws, Ross witnessed changes in legislation that were brought forth by this government and has since seen his customer base grow and his business grow. Please join me in wishing continued success to Wine Kitz and continued growth as part of our local business community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

HARRISON, PAMELA - RETIREMENT

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: On Sunday, December 6th, Canada will mark the 26th sombre anniversary of the murder of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal. I have worked for many years with courageous women who make the often difficult decision to walk away from violence, often to the safety of brilliant organizations in Nova Scotia that assist women every day in leaving domestic abuse.

Nova Scotia will soon be losing to retirement one of the leaders in our transition house community - Pamela Harrison will be retiring as coordinator for the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia. I first met Pamela when we co-chaired Bryony House together back in 1999. Over the years, Pamela's fierce commitment to transition houses but, more importantly, stopping violence against women has been unparalleled in our province.

I wish Pamela well in her next experiences and know the dedication to ending men's violence against women will no doubt continue in her life.

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

DEVEAUX, MARSHALL: SPORTS INVOLVEMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize New Waterford sports legend Marshall Deveaux. At the age of 94, Mr. Deveaux is a member of the Cape Breton Sports Hall of Fame, as well as the New Waterford Sports Hall of Fame for his contribution to baseball, basketball, and hockey.

After World War I, Marshall made a living playing hockey with the Pictou Royals. In his later years, Marshall had a 20-year career as a baseball umpire for the Cape Breton senior and junior leagues.

It's an honour to know Marshall Deveaux, and I'd like to congratulate him on his lifelong love of all sports. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MACINTYRE, MIKE - COMMUN. COMMITMENT

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of a businessman in Spryfield who not only owns and operates the local grocery store, No Frills, but also gives back to his community.

Mike MacIntyre managed the Atlantic Superstore in Spryfield, and when it changed to No Frills in 2010, he took it over as owner and operator. Mike is very involved in the Spryfield community and sponsors many of the non-profit organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Spryfield, the Dunbrack Under-18 Girls Soccer team, the Urban Farm, Harvest Festival, and the Natal Day party at the Dingle, just to name a few. Mike is known as one of the most generous and supportive business owners in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Mike MacIntyre for his generosity and commitment to his community. It is local businesses such as Mike's that make our community such a great place to work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

JOSEY, DAWN - ART WORKSHOPS

MS. MARGARET MILLER: I rise today to recognize artist Dawn Josey from Enfield, a mixed media artist. Her work uses a variety of different mediums on the same piece. Dawn studied art therapy at NSCAD, and she feels that creating art helps develop self-esteem and self-confidence, which is especially important for people with mental health issues, autism spectrum, and many other disorders.

Dawn believes that there is artistic ability in everyone, and that anyone can find it with a little help and a little fun. She has developed a number of workshops to help people discover their creativity, so whether they have dabbled in art before or are trying something new, students walk away with a feeling of accomplishment. Class number sizes are kept very low to allow for specialized attention.

Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that you or any of my colleagues check out Dawn Josey's Discovering Your Artistic Spirit workshops. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH (LUN.) - ANNIV. (130th)

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, in 1885, the Central United Church in Lunenburg first opened its doors. November marked the 130th Anniversary of the opening of Lunenburg's largest church. The local church was founded by Methodists in the early 1800s, and in 1925 became part of the newly-established United Church of Canada.

Over the years the church has been a gathering place for musicians and community groups from all denominations, and continues to be so.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this time to recognize this important anniversary for the Central United Church in Lunenburg.

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

BADDECK LIONS CLUB: KIDSTON ISLAND BEACH - CONTRIBUTIONS

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, the Baddeck Lions Club have been running their swim program on the beach on Kidston Island for over 50 years. This summer six students worked supervising the beach, teaching swim lessons, and operating the ferry carrying beachgoers to the island. Thirty-five children took swim lessons during the summer, and the ferry carried over 4,600 passengers on the 55 days it operated.

The Lions replaced the roof on the main shelter, built a new lifeguard stand, painted one of the buildings, and replaced all the beach signage. I'd like to thank all 43 members of the Baddeck Lions Club for providing the community with this wonderful service and congratulate them on another successful season.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**BEAIRSTO, PERLY/FALCONER, LES:
NOVA SCOTIA FISHERMAN - ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a New Minas business whose strong core values and unique products are propelling sales internationally. Nova Scotia Fisherman, launched in 2012 by uncle-and-nephew team Perly Beairsto and Les Falconer, has taken the beauty world by a perfect storm.

Nova Scotia Fisherman uses locally sourced and all-natural ingredients, including sea kelp, and prepares each product by hand. Products are sold by more than 800 retailers nation-wide and a portion of every sale benefits the Nature Conservancy of Canada in

recognition of the importance of giving back to the beautiful landscape they call home. Nova Scotia Fisherman measures their success based on how they are contributing to our rural economy and community.

Mr. Speaker, by all measurement Nova Scotia Fisherman is an outstanding local business. On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to congratulate and thank entrepreneurs Perly Beairsto and Les Falconer for their hard work.

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

SACKVILLE GREENWAY TRAIL: CONST. - ASSISTANCE THANK

MR. STEPHEN GOUGH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to report that after almost 20 years of planning, the Sackville Rivers Association is thrilled to see the Sackville Greenway Trail under construction. The first section of the trail will follow the Little Sackville River from the Old Sackville Road, intersect Sackville Drive, and continue on the Glendale-Beaver Bank intersection. Construction is slated to be completed by October 2016.

The Sackville Greenway Trail will connect areas of Lower Sackville to the business core and offer residents a pedestrian-friendly alternative to access shops and services. If they don't want to use a car, they can walk or bike safely, at the same time experiencing nature, improving their health, and meeting their neighbours.

A special thanks to HRM, the provincial government, particularly Health and Wellness, and Connect2 with the Department of Energy.

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

BURNS, JANNIFER & BOBBY/DEPEND ON ME DAYCARE - ANNIV. (10th)

MS. JOYCE TREEN: On November 14th, Depend on Me daycare centre in Eastern Passage celebrated their 10-year anniversary. The day care and before- and after-school facility is owned and operated by local residents Jannifer and Bobby Burns. The majority of the staff they employ are from the community as well.

On Friday the 13th, they hosted a celebration for this important milestone where many community members came out to enjoy the fun. The bouncy castles were filled with laughing children and the barbecue was enjoyed by the people who stopped by to say thank you and congratulations.

Congratulations to Jannifer and Bobby Burns on a successful 10 years, and best of luck in the future.

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

**HATT, ELLEN/MILLER, LAUREN/RICE, KELSEY
- ACAD. UNIV. BASKETBALL**

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate three hard-working young ladies who played basketball together at Lockview High and are now playing together again for Acadia University.

Ellen Hatt had an Achilles injury her senior year that kept her sidelined for much of the year. She initially went to Queens University last year, but missed the sport and decided to transfer to Acadia and try out for the team.

Lauren Miller, entering Acadia last year, decided to focus on her academics, but realized athletics played a huge role in who she was and began training to try out for this year's team.

Kelsey Rice, a star forward with the Dragons, had numerous recruiting opportunities that could have taken her elsewhere, but she decided on Acadia.

Believing their days of playing together were done . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

ENERGY: HIGH-VOL. HYDRAULIC FRACTURING - DEFINITION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Mr. Speaker, over 15 months ago the government announced its ban on onshore gas development here in Nova Scotia. All that time has passed and here we are, and people still don't know exactly what the government banned. We worry the government itself doesn't know what it banned, other than jobs and opportunity and hope in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, the government bill banned high-volume hydraulic fracturing. We are all still waiting to see what that is. I would like to ask the Minister of Energy, can he share with us today the government's definition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for the question. Since the time that the legislation was brought in, our staff have been working diligently, especially in reaching out to other jurisdictions, both in the United States and here in Canada that do have hydraulic fracturing taking place, to see exactly what regulatory regime they have and to try to learn best practices, working to identify what areas of the province may be suitable for this type of activity. That is work that continues to take place and I'd be more than happy to provide an update in the very near future.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, while the government continues to study its navel on this, I regret to report that the unemployment figures are out for today, Mr. Speaker, and it shows an increase in the unemployment rate for Nova Scotia from 7.8 per cent to 8.6 per cent. Sadly 2,300 jobs have been lost in the last year, while the government tries to figure out exactly what it is it banned.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians need jobs. Nova Scotians in rural areas particularly need hope and opportunity from this government. So far what they've got is a ban on one of the ways that can responsibly turn the rural economy around. While the government thinks about it, I would like to ask the minister, will he at least tell Nova Scotians when they will get a definition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I think what's important to keep in mind here, while the Leader of the Official Opposition is focusing on a definition, what we need is a social licence and what we need is that Nova Scotians in the communities where it is deemed that there is a potential hydrocarbons there to allow this activity to take place, that they buy into this and that the communities say we're in support of this, we're prepared to have this take place.

We are working on establishing the regulatory framework and the definitions, absolutely, that needs to take place. But I would encourage the member to work with us, especially due to the fact that a number of his own members live in some of the areas that have been identified as having potential for this industry, if we do get that social licence. There is a lot of work that needs to be done and I certainly think if it's one that's being done by all sides of the House then there might be a better chance of seeing it have success in our province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what Nova Scotians need is jobs. What they need is opportunity. What they need is a chance to develop their own resources here at home instead of doing that same work out West. Who knows how many opportunities have been pushed farther and farther away, because the government can't provide a definition of what high-volume hydraulic fracturing is.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces and states are moving ahead. Small towns are repopulating, rural schools are becoming more effective and sustainable, because they have

done their homework, but this government does not. They don't even meet their own deadline. They told Nova Scotians they would have this settled by the end of 2014. It's almost the end of 2015. Why did the government miss its own deadline for a definition by almost a year?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, again it's important to keep in mind that this is an industry that Nova Scotians - like so many others not only in our province but in Canada and in the United States - have expressed concerns about. So, it's not as cut and dry as the Leader of the Official Opposition would like to suggest. At the same time we don't want to create false hope, because even if the industry were given a green light to proceed, it could take years before there would be a significant amount of employment levels that he has mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is when you look at British Columbia for example - we met with their Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, trying to understand how is it that British Columbia has a successful fracturing industry for so many years, and his response was quite interesting. He said while we have a social licence to do oil and gas development onshore, if we talk about our offshore it's a non-starter with the residents of our province.

Nova Scotia is almost the exact opposite in that we have had a very successful history of offshore oil and gas development. We have work that remains to be done to have Nova Scotians give us a social licence to do onshore development.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NURSING HOMES - BUDGET CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In the Spring budget, the Liberal Government cut \$3.6 million from the operating budget of long-term care facilities. Now we have a memo that shows just how much each facility has been cut. I'll table that information.

The operating budget for Melville Lodge was cut by over \$145,000; Ocean View Manor saw their operating budget cut by \$105,000. So I would like to ask the minister, can the Minister of Health and Wellness explain why he has cut the operating budgets of 63 out of the 87 nursing homes in the province?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: As the member opposite knows, we are putting more and more money into home care but we also had a number of our long-term care nursing homes that were well above the average for the province. It was an opportunity for all to take a look at how they could create greater efficiencies within their nursing homes. I know that is taking place across the province.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, people are still living in long-term care facilities, calling it home. They should have invested in home care first, to limit the amount of individuals in Nova Scotia going into our facilities, not the other way around.

The list of nursing home residential care facilities that I just tabled, Mr. Speaker, affected communities across this province: Wolfville Nursing Home, cut by \$74,000; St. Vincent Nursing Home, by \$87,000; Villa Acadienne, by \$50,000; Mahone Nursing Home by \$67,000; and the list goes on and on.

Can the Minister of Health and Wellness tell us the impact these cuts to their operating budgets have had to long-term care facilities and the Nova Scotians that they serve?

MR. GLAVINE: What the member opposite fails to point out is that we now have \$567 million going into long-term care and last year we actually increased the budget by \$6.9 million. While there were some mitigations that were taking place, there was actually an overall increase.

One little segment of their budget did have some mitigations take place. This in no way - I've been in 25 of our nursing homes since Budget Day - this has not impacted the quality of care in our nursing homes.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't when the last time was that the minister visited a nursing home or talked to the staff or the residents or their families. I wonder if he would have a different answer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter from the president of Northwood Care. Hundreds of seniors in Halifax and Bedford call Northwood Care their home. They have already cut their administration budget to bare bones and the planned savings were meant to go to improve frontline care.

I'm wondering if the minister could answer the question of why balancing the budget is the priority and not the quality of health care being provided to our most vulnerable Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker. These cuts have had an impact on those services.

MR. GLAVINE: Look, any time we get a change in how much money a facility is going to have to operate, it does initially cause some alarm and some wonderment. Just a couple of weeks ago I had a wonderful time visiting, first of all patients and also staff at Glen Haven Manor. The message the supervisor there, the CEO of the site, gave me is that we can make further cuts and not impact quality care.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - ABERDEEN HOSP. MENTAL HEALTH UNIT:
CHANGES - CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. On August 3rd the mental health unit at the Aberdeen Hospital was closed, causing many residents in need in Pictou County scrambling as far away as Yarmouth to get the help that they require. They were assured by the Minister of Health and Wellness that this was a short-term closure and that it would be reopened within 90 days, which would be November 3rd, Mr. Speaker. It is now well into December, that unit is still not open, and reports are reaching us that in fact the units are being converted into administrative offices.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, are those mental health units at the Aberdeen Hospital being changed over to administrative offices - yes or no?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: We know that the provincial health authority has the responsibility for operations across the province and what I know is that in fact the word from that community, from those clinicians who are providing mental health care, in fact the service is stronger today than it was a year ago.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that answer will be cold comfort to the people suffering from mental illness in Pictou County who took him at his word that those beds would be reopened.

That answer was not a yes or a no, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, how symbolic of this government's failure in health care, in mental health, if they're adding administrative offices where the mental health unit beds used to be. I hope we get a straight answer from the minister on that question, because it's very important.

So, I'll ask him a follow-up question. Will he assure the people he told that that would be a short-term closure, that those beds on that exact site will be open as he promised?

MR. GLAVINE: What I know is that when I speak with the provincial team and now the provincial lead in mental health, Dr. Courey, I know that there have been recruitment problems. We know that in the new emergency department at the Aberdeen there will be direct triaging of those who are experiencing episodic mental health events, are in trauma, and I know that there is a path to improve services that are already being strongly delivered in Pictou County.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

FILM INCENTIVE FUND - ISSUES: RESOLUTION - TIMELINE

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister in charge of the Film and Television Production Incentive Fund.

In November we heard testimony at the Economic Development Committee from Scott Simpson with Screen Nova Scotia. Mr. Simpson said there were two significant issues with the new fund in addition to the cap on it - the loss of the equity program and the percentage or level of the incentive fund itself. And I will table that.

So I'd like to ask the minister, when will these issues be solved or resolved?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. There's been tremendous work done with the film industry over the last several months; representatives of the film industry have worked and engaged government and department representatives. They've advanced a number of areas that we believe are helpful to the industry.

Three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, we announced around \$500,000 in support to the industry itself. They're focused on a strategic plan; they've asked for a state-of-the-art web portal, specific to location services; they've talked about marketing and promotion; and they've talked about additional support in full-time equivalents - and we've provided that to the industry.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering about a cap though. Screen Nova Scotia film and TV producers and IATSE have all stated that they need the cap on the new Film Incentive Fund lifted, to remove the cloud of uncertainty that's hanging over the industry.

On November 20th I asked the minister when he will lift the cap, but he didn't answer the question - and I will table that Hansard; on November 27th I asked the minister again, but he didn't answer - and I will table that Hansard.

Perhaps the third time is a charm, Mr. Speaker. When will the minister lift the cap to ensure more Nova Scotians aren't left packing their bags and heading for film work out West?

MR. FUREY: I know optimism and progressive work obviously is not something that my colleague understands. I don't know how many times I have to repeat it in this House - we've worked close with the industry, they've asked us, we've asked them for their priorities, we've responded and addressed their priorities and I want to table an article published in the *Halifax Metro* on August 31, 2015, titled, "Nova Scotia film industry gives up on pushing government to reverse tax decision." Marc Almon, chairman of Screen Nova

Scotia, said himself, “We’re not looking to have that returned. We’re trying to move forward.” I wish my colleague would look at moving forward.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - ABERDEEN HOSP. MENTAL HEALTH UNIT:
CHANGES - DETAILS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I actually can’t believe my ears from his answer earlier. He wants to pass everything on to the new health authority but nobody elected them to be on top of these things. They elected the Minister of Health and Wellness. I ask him just to confirm, very simply, whether that mental health unit at the Aberdeen Hospital is being changed over to administrative offices or not and he has not answered the question. I’m going to ask him simply, does he even know if those mental health beds are being converted to offices?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, just a little over a week ago, I met with Dr. Courey, who is now heading the mental health services in our regional hospitals across the province. I met with Dr. Vienneau from Pictou and at that point in time, there hadn’t been a final decision made on what exactly there would be in terms of care around the short-term psychiatric unit. What I can offer the Leader of the Official Opposition is that next week, I will make a very clear statement on what is happening at the Aberdeen.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. It goes to the heart of mental health service in Pictou County. If the minister knows what is going on with that mental health unit, he should just tell us when asked in this House today and not save it for some time next week. That’s the problem with a government that tries to point the finger at someone else when they are the ones that are responsible for making sure that mental health services are provided across the province.

Today we know of people who go to that short-stay unit and are told to go to Yarmouth if they want help. If the Minister of Health and Wellness truly believes that mental health services are in good shape in Pictou County, will he explain how going to Yarmouth is better than having the short-stay unit open, like he promised?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition is pointing out here is a very small part of the picture about the mental health unit at the Aberdeen. We’re starting to do something very positive, very constructive for both mental health and medical issues across the province. We are getting patients where they need treatment in as timely a manner as possible. We’re operating as one strong system. This is what the member opposite fails to see.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - MENTAL HEALTH UNIT:
POLICE SERV. - BUDGET**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. This question is of course, dealing with the delivery health care services to not only mental health patients, but 46,000 residents in Pictou County. Traditionally the month of December has always been a very busy time for the mental health unit. With this unit closed, the New Glasgow police officers are often required to travel to different locations. As it was mentioned earlier in the House today, we see police officers taken off their normal routine of the day, not just one police officer, but two, travelling to places like Truro and Yarmouth. My question to the minister, did the minister provide, within his budget, an allocation to cover this additional cost?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I guess I would have to refer part of that question to the Minister of Justice. It is in fact a policing issue and I know that as she backgrounds in the department, she has a very good handle on what is happening with policing across the province.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the eight-bed mental health unit closed in August 3rd. I believe the minister said yesterday, and also today, that the mental health services are better now than they were a year ago. With all due respect to the minister, he must be listening to hospital personnel, because that's not what we're hearing from patients and families. I've done a bit of research and have talked to some of these families that need these services. The example of Bobby Brooks, who was forced to drive to Yarmouth, is one of many. Irene Limburg is another resident who relies heavily on this assistance.

When someone is facing a suicidal crisis, they need immediate mental health treatment and family support. My question to the minister is, will the eight-bed mental health unit at the Aberdeen Hospital reopen soon?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I know is that as part of the clinical services review that we must have the strongest health care delivery, whether it is mental health or the medical health of residents of Nova Scotia. We know that there was a needed review of what was taking place at the Aberdeen, but there will be a very clear picture for the future of mental health services that the residents of Pictou County will be able to see very shortly.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: AT-HOME ORAL CANCER TREATMENT
- COVERAGE**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. When asked for an update on the province's coverage of at-home

oral cancer medication, the minister said the cost would be in the range of \$40 million to \$50 million. He stated that he was looking for help from the federal government. That was some time ago.

I would like to ask the minister, if the new federal government does not come through with the national Pharmacare plan or catastrophic drug coverage plan this winter, will the minister fully fund take-home oral cancer medication this Spring?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I'm pleased to say is that we finally have a federal government that is going to involve Ministers of Health across the country in very strong discussions. First of all, in January, they will open the Health Accord, and we as ministers will get an opportunity to talk about priorities, and I will certainly be bringing those to the national table. We know that oral cancer drugs are very, very important to Nova Scotians. Our Family Pharmacare and Seniors' Pharmacare currently do a great job in providing the vast majority of assistance for those patients.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I hope the federal government does help out, because the minister definitely needs a lot of support when it comes to health care delivery in Nova Scotia.

Health care delivery is primarily a provincial responsibility. That's a point raised quite strongly in a letter that I'll table from Deb Maskens on behalf of the CanCertainty Coalition, which represents over 35 Canadian cancer organizations. She indicated over a year ago that in October 2014 the minister was on CBC saying that he was addressing the delays and difficulties for Nova Scotia cancer patients in accessing take-home cancer drugs. Tragically, several of the patients who spoke to the media at that time are too unwell, and some have actually passed away.

Cancer patients deserve a clear answer. I would like to ask the minister, how long is the minister prepared to wait on the federal government to come through with a plan to support these Nova Scotians?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I'm pleased to say is that we currently provide over \$10 million for oral cancer drugs in the province. We are a part of a number of ways to assist cancer patients. This is a new reality that we are facing right across the country, where more and more oral cancer drugs are becoming available. It will be one of those discussion areas that we will have with the national government, and we hope there will be a better day, more certainty in terms of that coverage for the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

LAE: JOB SITUATION - UPDATE

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. In all the years that I've been in this House, there has been much discussion on jobs - the lack of jobs, young people leaving for other parts of the country and the world, for that matter.

I wonder what the minister and her department are doing to better that situation.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We actually have a number of things that are under way. I would point to the recent announcement from the Public Service Commission around hiring young people and doing away with the requirements for experience. We're working on increasing co-op opportunities across the province. We're also working on transformation of our Careers Nova Scotia system here in the province because one of the things we know is that 45 per cent of the young people who leave this province do so because they can't see reaching their career goals staying here in Nova Scotia. We're working on that as we speak.

MR. PORTER: I appreciate the minister's answer. We hear this morning about the numbers yet again with regard to unemployment. I also know it's a seasonal time of year. Some of that probably has an impact, Mr. Speaker. But I also come from a rural area of this province where there are a number of people unemployed, constantly looking to better themselves and to find work. A lot of people do travel back and forth which, as we all know, has been a hard situation for families. Time is of the essence, and I wonder if the minister could speak to details a fair bit in her answer. I wonder if she could speak to a time frame where we may see some results from what it is that this department is doing.

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. For example, the Careers Nova Scotia transformation is under way. We are in the process of rolling that out. Just to acquaint the honourable members with the current situation, the responsibility for Careers Nova Scotia was given to us by the federal government in 2009. It's a \$23 million system. The way it is set up right now, it's not working - 90 per cent of job seekers don't actually know that they can go to a Careers Nova Scotia centre for assistance, and employers don't know either. We have some terrific people working in the system, and we just need to give them the opportunity to make sure this is distributed equitably around the province to rural areas where there is often not a lot of coverage.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - PICTOU CO. MENTAL HEALTH SERV.:
QUALITY - CLARIFY**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The short-stay unit at the Aberdeen Hospital closed on August 3rd. I'm hearing from many

constituents who believe that the services that are being provided to residents of Pictou County are less than they were before that time, that there are not as many services available to the people of the county as there were before. I think I've heard the minister say a couple of times that the people of Pictou County are getting better service over the last three months than they ever have. I'd just like the minister to clarify that. Does the minister really believe that the people of Pictou County are getting better mental health services today than they did just three months ago when they had the short-stay unit?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm sure the honourable member has done some full research not just on the Aberdeen but perhaps on mental health treatment. We know that putting a person in a bed only is not the final answer. We need strong psychiatrists, psychologists, and people who we need to be able to get in place at certain times. Recruitment is very often difficult, especially at this time of year, as people usually go with a school year when they make a move. We know that recruitment is still going on, but when I hear from the top people delivering psychiatric services in Pictou County, they talk about having moved in a more positive direction.

MR. HOUSTON: With all due respect to the minister, I believe if you ask somebody if they think they're doing a good job, they're likely to tell you that they are. If you ask the people who are receiving the services, you might receive a different answer, minister. I would encourage you to try and talk to some of those people who are relying on the services.

Since you brought up recruitment, I would like to revisit recruitment because . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to quickly remind the honourable member not to refer to members opposite directly. Keep your questions through the Chair.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for that. I would ask you to encourage the minister to speak to the people who actually want to receive the services.

But in terms of recruitment, we know that the minister met with people up there as recently as a week ago, but he came back and said recruitment never came up, yet the main message to the people of the county is that we can't recruit. The minister goes to the county and doesn't talk about recruiting. People onsite are telling me job postings go up and down as many as four times. They were down last week, now the minister says they are back up. So is this a staffing issue or not?

MR. GLAVINE: Staffing is certainly part of the issue at the Aberdeen Hospital or for services throughout Pictou County. He knows, as well as all Nova Scotians, that delivery of mental health services is in fact community-based and having the right number of providers in a community is the goal of the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

We're going through a clinical services review and having the appropriate mental health services in the right centres, and the right amount in fact is what is being accomplished.

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

**COM. SERV. - SERV. TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:
ROAD MAP - IMPLEMENTATION**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services.

In 2013 the government established a committee to transform the Services to Persons with Disabilities program. Members of the disability community, service-providers, and others, developed a document that has become known as the road map that represented transformational change.

The road map, I gather, has been removed from the government website. Is the minister still committed to implementing the road map, as the committee envisioned?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. Yes, we are. We came into office in October 2013, the road map had been adopted two months previous by the previous government. We are committed to the road map - and I understand the frustration of families who feel we are not moving quickly enough.

I have often said from the outset that this would be a decade-long process. As we reduce reliance on larger facilities and move folks with very complex and unique needs into the community of their choice, we have to make sure that we do that safely and securely and responsibly. We know there are other jurisdictions in Canada that have not done that in a safe way and there have been dire consequences to that, and I am committed to that not happening in Nova Scotia.

MR. HARRISON: In a recent information session, service providers learned about modifications the Liberal Government is making to work identified in the road map. Some were surprised to learn that in some cases the modification meant doing the exact opposite of what the road map intended.

Does the minister believe the department's modification of the road map recommendations still are true to the original document?

MS. BERNARD: As we talked to families throughout the province and from one end to the other, it was clear that some of the commitments of the road map, particularly around moving everyone from larger facilities - there are many families that have come

forward and said they would rather their loved ones remain in larger facilities and we have to respect that choice.

What I have committed to is that as of June 2016, there will be no new, permanent placements in larger facilities. I've stopped renovations and expansions of larger facilities - and you can talk to your colleague in front of you, who is glaring at me - but we are committed to the road map and we will continue to be committed to that road map.

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

STATUS OF WOMEN - WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT CTRS.: CLOSURES - CONSULTATION

MS. LENORE ZANN: We seem to be on a roll here. We heard last week that the Women's Employment Outreach Centre in HRM, which has provided counselling and employment services to women for over 35 years, will be closing this summer because the provincial government has cut its funding.

We've also heard of the pending closure of the Ann Terry Project, which has provided similar services for women in Cape Breton for three decades. It will also be forced to possibly close, as their executive director told the CBC yesterday about her dealings with the government: "Did they listen to what we had to say? There are only two women's services across the province - it would appear to me that they didn't."

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act. Was she or the Advisory Council consulted before the decision was made to close the only women's employment centres in the province?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I'll defer to my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I was indicating earlier, we have a patchwork of centres across the province. We don't have equitable distribution of our services across the province. At this time there are only two centres for women. What we would like to see is that the services that they provide and that they work with their other service providers in their areas to actually expand that across the given area. There is a place for them in the system at the end of the day.

I want to be very clear, I have not cut any funding. No decisions have been made. They may have made a decision with their board that they don't want to participate, but I would hope that they would. My understanding is that WEO is planning to participate in helping to rollout across other areas, but that they may in fact close their centre, but we have not - and I want to be very clear about that - we have not closed any centres.

MS. ZANN: Yes, actually I said that the funding has been cut and they'll have to close. Mr. Speaker, not only are the women's, Mr. Speaker (Interruption) Excuse me? Get a hearing aid, I heard? Wow, that's really nice, as I said there are a lot of low blows going on here today, Mr. Speaker, and yesterday. Not only are there two women's centres...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, the honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River has the floor.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you it's quite amazing how rude people are getting . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. ZANN: I sure do. Not only are there two women's employment centres in the province slated to close, but we're also hearing today that Our Thyme Cafe, which provides concrete job experience for women facing homelessness or have been involved with the justice system, is also losing funding, because of the government's new policies.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know if the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act is supportive of her government's decision to cut funding for the Our Thyme Café, which is operated by the Elizabeth Fry Society.

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to be very clear here - there's a \$23 million budget for the delivery of employment assistance services across this province. That budget remains intact; we have not closed any one at all in terms, of . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: That wasn't the question.

MS. REGAN: Yes, actually it was the question, it was - you asked if we had cut their funding. We did not their funding, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, I'd like to remind the honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education not to refer to members opposite directly.

MS. REGAN: In terms of Our Thyme Cafe, they were alerted in January that under the new terms of the Canada Job Fund, which is a federal program that gives us money, the then-federal government cut the funding that is available for programs like theirs and we can no longer, unfortunately, offer core funding to a program like that. I have a high regard for that particular organization and I am very unhappy (Interruption) Well, we could actually continue to give them core funding but then that would mean that we would have to cut other funding to other organizations.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TOURISM - VICs: CLOSURES - NOTIFICATION

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Business. People working at Visitor Information Centres are well trained, they have experience. I know in the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre last summer alone they counselled about 75,000 visitors. Yesterday the minister had said that all 51 municipalities will have Visitor Information Centres, but he did confirm support for provincial Visitor Information Centres like Port Hastings.

Mr. Speaker, these people have lives, they've got bills to pay; they have decisions to make. If the government's intention is not to reopen these visitor centres in the Spring, why are they stringing along these people for months to come?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things that Tourism Nova Scotia has undertaken is community dialogue. They've reached out to stakeholders in both Port Hastings and other communities around the province that have provincial VICs. That dialogue continues, we want to ensure that it's exhaustive, it's thorough, and it addresses the objectives of Tourism Nova Scotia and their requirement to double revenues in tourism over the next 10 years.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, there is always consultation going on in the tourism industry. In fact, I have a stack of letters from people who have visited the province, people who were appreciative of the service that they got at the Visitor Information Centre in Port Hastings, people who valued the service they received there. The question is, why didn't the government let workers know in August if their intention is to close these visitor centres? These people were in the civil service until September and they could have applied as internal candidates for jobs in other departments.

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. Let me be clear, there have been no decisions made yet. Until decisions are made, it would be inappropriate and premature to share or to tell people that they've been impacted. No decisions have been made and I indicated to my colleague earlier in the week, when a decision is made, we will clearly communicate that both to my colleagues in the House and employees within Tourism Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: HEALTH IMPROVEMENT
- PROACTIVE MEASURES**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. A very small part of the Health and Wellness budget goes towards proactive efforts to improve people's health, but an even smaller part under this government, with the apparent elimination of the Recreation Facility Development

Program. That's coming up in 2016-17. Has the Minister of Health and Wellness changed his mind in this matter, or is the government choosing to invest less in proactive measures that improve people's health?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, I don't have to deliver any speech here in the House today on how important preventive and proactive measures are needed to balance health care with the health of Nova Scotians. First of all, I'm pleased to say that our new Nova Scotia Health Authority has started to engage Nova Scotians on speaking about health. Supporting health, of course, are recreation facilities and there will be recreation grants in the 2016-17 budget year.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, that is positive and I hope that that is the case and I hope that that program is funded the way it has been funded at least in the past. This is about wellness, it's about investing today in people's health to save money that will have to be spent tomorrow in our health care system if that doesn't happen. Can the minister answer why the government is not issuing applications for the RFD Program - to all the ball fields, rinks, community centres, and other organizations that depend on this funding?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member has done a bit of research in this area. In fact, over the years we've not had any one government's or department's responsibility as to why things happened as they did, but we've had some organizations receiving three and four different grants through different departments. We're taking a look at how we can grow and improve community facilities and we will have grant programs, it's just that we're committed to doing a better job.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES - BUDGET CUTS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, thousands of Nova Scotians and their families rely on the care they receive from long-term care facilities across the province and a cut to their operating budget has an impact on how they provide that care. I would like to ask the minister, how much is the minister prepared to cut the budgets to those long-term care facilities across the province?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, if he had left the state of the books of the province in better shape, we wouldn't have had to go through the kind of mitigations that had been required last year. In fact, having been in about 20 nursing homes since April 1st, there has been very little comment about having to absorb some dollars and do things differently. That is what strong administration, strong leadership that is in our nursing homes - that's what we have in our nursing homes and they're prepared to work with government to make sure that they're there for the future.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that's a load of baloney.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid that I'm pretty sure "load of baloney" is unparliamentary. I'll look it up just to be sure and get back to you.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I do retract that. It's a load of something, I know that much, because we've seen \$9 million wasted in the amalgamation of the district health authorities that could have gone into expanding long-term care facilities, expanding home care - \$9 million-plus and we know it's going to go even higher as they finish calculating how much the amalgamation just cost taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

I'd like to ask the minister, if he was responsible, has he evaluated the impact the cuts to the long-term care facilities have had with the budget cuts they've seen last year - will he commit to doing an evaluation if he hasn't?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the next half-hour and talk about the strengths of the one provincial health authority that that minister and that government never had the courage to do. I know the strength of the one provincial health authority, but here's the measure of what's going on (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. GLAVINE: Here is the measure of what's happening in our long-term care homes. Just a few weeks ago I was in St. Vincent's Nursing Home and what were they putting on the table that day and that week? Locally-grown food, high-quality food for the patients in that home. So I think he has some missing facts in his premise.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

EECD - EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION: WINDSOR - ACCESS INFO.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I've recently been contacted by a group of parents in the Windsor, West Hants area, with regard to an early French Immersion Program in our elementary schools. We have written a letter to the AVRSB and specifically, Mr. Dave Jones - of which I will table a copy. There are only two elementary schools that provide this program for early French immersion in the Valley. I wonder, how do we go about getting that in the Windsor area for those parents who are interested?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question and for working through the school advisory councils because I think it's important for parents in the communities to know that they have a voice and how they can bring their concerns forward. One of those avenues to get their voices heard is through their school advisory council, but I would say to the member, I think it's also important for the parents

to go to their local school board member to raise that at the board table, because the decision about offering French immersion or other programs is a decision that is made by the board.

There is federal funding that comes through our department that boards can apply for if they're setting up a new French immersion class. That special projects funding will fund one FTE to begin the process of delivering a French Immersion Program to the students, and I would encourage the member to work and ask his parents and constituents to work through the school advisory council and the board. The board makes a decision, but they need to be reminded that there are funds available from the federal government through our department for start-up costs for those French immersion classes.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: I rise on a point of sanctimonious order, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of the Public Service Commission indicates, and I will call that minister out.

Mr. Speaker, during Question Period when one of the members of this caucus was asking a question, I heard, and I think other members heard, someone from the government side yell out "get a hearing aid," and I think if that is not unparliamentarily it certainly is a great insult to those who have hearing loss and it's an inappropriate comment to make in this Assembly.

I would ask that you review the tape and make a decision, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that under advisement and report back. (Interruptions) Order, please!

The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, during the same discussion in Question Period I also heard the same comment "get a hearing aid," and I know that my father suffered from hearing loss and hated wearing a hearing aid. I believe this is a very serious type of comment to make in this House and I would like to request it, too, that you review the record and look into this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that under advisement as well.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess for a couple of minutes while it resolves into a Committee of the Whole on Bills.

[10:51 a.m. The House resolved into a CW on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[11:39 a.m. CW on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

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

Bill No. 127 - Labour Standards Code.

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

without amendments, and

Bill No. 118 - Heritage Property Act.

Bill No. 134 - Liquor Control Act.

which were reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole, without further amendments, and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 144.

Bill No. 144 - Antiochian Maronite Catholic Church - Our Lady of Lebanon - Corporation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Immigration.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 144, an Act to Amend Chapter 38 of the Acts of 1996, the Antiochian Maronite Catholic Church - Our Lady of Lebanon - Corporation Act, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to move Bill No. 144, that moves the amendment to the current Act. This will substitute and make changes to the membership in two forms: we want to substitute “the Bursar” for “the Protosyncellus” - these are Latin terms that are used in church - and to also substitute and have four lay members instead of two lay members for the composition of the members of the corporation.

In addition, we are adding Clause 5A to that existing Act, which deals with providing for the use of proceeds from the sale of real property of the church by the corporation.

With that, I move that this bill now be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 144. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 128.

Bill No. 128 - Labour Standards Code.

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

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 128, an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, be now read a third time and do pass.

I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak about this bill, which is an important amendment to the Labour Standards Code. There was no representation at Law Amendments Committee for this bill.

I would like to quickly remind the members of the House what this amendment is. The proposed change will clarify and enhance protections for employees who make Labour Standards inquiries or provide information to Labour Standards officials.

Nova Scotians will not have to worry about what might happen to their job if they call Labour Standards to ask a question, to gather information for themselves or a colleague. The Code currently protects employees from employer reprisal for pursuing their Labour Standards entitlements and/or testifying in a Labour Standards matter. The proposed amendment will plainly articulate the kinds of reprisal situations employees could face and will ensure that employees are protected.

The amendment will clarify and enhance protection for employees who ask about their rights under the Code; initiate an investigation or other proceeding, like appealing a Labour Standards decision; make a statement or give information to our Labour Standards Division; ask or require their employer to comply with the Code or regulations; help a colleague who is concerned about their employment rights; participate in a proceeding, such as giving testimony; and have shown they intend to take or whom the employer believes will take a leave to which they are or will become entitled.

Mr. Speaker, if employees don't feel safe to ask questions about their employment rights or to pursue the things they are entitled to, then the spirit of the Code is defeated. The proposed amendment adds clarity and will make sure employees are protected. I look forward to hearing the closing remarks from other members.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I'll take a few minutes just to speak to this Bill No. 128 on third reading today. As we know, it's very important that all Nova Scotians, regardless of where they work, are afforded protection under the Labour Standards Code.

Jobs in this province are becoming very valuable to those who have them, and for those jobs to be at risk because an employee either checked with the Labour Standards Code, or helped an employee look into a violation of the standards code, maybe even instigated an investigation, made statements about the labour code, asked about compliance or participated in a hearing, that to me is no good reason for an employer to terminate the job of an employee, especially if that employee is just looking out for the betterment of himself on the job and his colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, we know that provisions in the bill are worthwhile, and with no representation coming to Law Amendments Committee, we would only assume that because of that, employers and employees would think that the bill would be a good bill. If there were concerns, I would expect we would have seen some representation in Law Amendments Committee from either the employers or the employees, who would have come out to either speak for or against the bill. I'm assuming that because there was no representation that both groups would be for the bill.

Knowing how important it is to have a job in the province, afforded that protection to make sure the working standards and working conditions are enforced or enhanced and that anyone who contacts a labour standards official, for no other reason than just to make an inquiry, not necessarily to put forward a complaint, would be protected under the code. We know that this has happened in the past where an employee would be let go because of the possibility that he would be contacting the Labour Standards Board and, Mr. Speaker, that's no good reason for an employer to terminate a job of an employee, because of the possibility that he may be checking into possible labour standards violations.

We know when there are real concerns, for an employee to bring this up with the Labour Standards Board and protect his rights, and the rights of fellow employees, is a good thing. For an employee to feel safe on the job and for an employer to know that the employees are concerned about an issue, and/or happy on the job with what they're doing and how they're doing it, can only be good for all Nova Scotians. A worksite that's safe and a worksite that's free for people to voice their opinions can only enhance the quality of the worksite itself.

So if a person has a concern and it's brought up and it can be resolved before it gets to the Labour Standards Board, or know that the Labour Standards Board, being contacted, will help improve the safety and the working conditions of all employees, unionized or non-unionized, or the employers themselves, because this could help them as well if there was a case or a concern where something might be solved before it gets to the Labour Standards Board.

The real concerns that come up because of this can be addressed, and that the person bringing these concerns forward will not be disciplined for bringing these concerns forward, can only enhance the labour relations and the working standards in our province. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this bill and I'll take my seat.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: I, too, want to stand in support of this piece of legislation. It's worthy of the support of the Opposition because, Mr. Speaker, labour standards are extremely important to workers throughout our province and we want to make sure that we have an environment, we have a province that allows for people who are working to be treated fairly, not to be treated in a discriminatory manner and often that happens. The only recourse they have is to turn to maybe putting a complaint in through the Labour Standards Board, especially for those employers, or employment opportunities that aren't governed under a union contract, for example.

Often there are procedures set out when an employee does belong to a union, in that if they have an issue with that employer that there's a process that they can go through to make sure that their rights are protected, not only under the Labour Standards Code, but also under the contract that is between them and that employer.

I believe this change is due to a recent decision through the board in June 2014. Through that decision, it was clear from the indication of the board and the decision that they made that they were somewhat limited in what they could do to support that worker who they identified was mistreated and was let go from their employment because of that individual's request of what is under the board and what is deemed to be appropriate on how they should be treated as an employee.

The board indicated that there was a requirement to change the Act, if we were to ensure that people have the opportunity to make sure that they go forward. I believe under the current Act, before the change will hopefully happen, they were very limited on siding in the case with an employee, if they hadn't made an official complaint prior to their firing or dismissal. We know through that case, the individual was just inquiring about what rights that individual would have, and that led to the dismissal.

So I hope that this piece of legislation is reflective of the government's commitment to strengthen labour standards, to make sure that the labour board has every tool at their fingertips to ensure that people are treated fairly in our province, and I hope it doesn't just stop here once it's passed. I know there may not have been representation at Law Amendments Committee, but I think the government has a responsibility to make sure that employers throughout the province recognize and know about the changes. I hope that's part of what the department and the minister will do, once this piece of legislation passes third reading and becomes law in the province.

As I said, this is worthy of the support of our caucus, and I look forward to the changes. I look forward to future changes that strengthen the protection of workers - quite a change from what we've had in the last two years. I'm more than happy as the Labour and Advanced Education Critic, but as a caucus, our caucus is more than happy to work with the government to propose changes into the future that strengthen and improve and support the workers of our province. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank my honourable colleagues for their thoughtful submissions around the bill.

I do want to just clarify for the honourable member that in fact in the past this particular bill was simply interpreted more broadly. This particular time, they came back to us and said, no, we think it needs to clarify. In the past simply inquiring about what your rights were under labour standards was protected.

We had a different ruling this time, and that's why we acted, because we want to ensure that workers have the right to inquire about their rights under labour standards and that they can initiate contact with their employer because, of course, what we'd like them to do is solve it before they have to ever get into a big convoluted case.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I now move to close debate on third reading of Bill No. 128.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 128. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 143.

Bill No. 143 - Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. MARK FUREY: I move that Bill No. 143, the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act, be read a second time. The Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act is a key outcome of the work to date in the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness.

The office, as you will recall, was created jointly with New Brunswick in March of this year, and became a Maritime initiative with Prince Edward Island joining as a partner last month. This legislation has been considered very carefully. The irony is not lost on anyone - we know that we're adding more regulation to make regulation better. But this legislation does not impose any cost or obligation on any business, citizen, or other party. It is directed at government alone. The legislation places a binding obligation squarely on government to be accountable for delivering on its commitment. As Laurel Broten recognized in a review on taxation and regulatory policy, one of the reasons that red tape reduction doesn't last is because commitments are not legislated. With legislation in place, forgetting or ignoring won't happen.

With the introduction of this bill, government is delivering on a key recommendation from both the Broten report and business groups by making this a lasting and continuing part of government operations. Not surprisingly, many leading jurisdictions in the country have already adopted legislation in support of their commitment to reduce red tape. Those provinces include Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

This bill also recognizes and describes the role of the joint office. Second, it establishes guiding principles of regulation which include: regulation in itself should never be a first resort; regulate only when all other non-regulatory options have been shown not to work; regulate based on objective evidence and sophisticated measures of impact; regulate when evidence establishes that regulations are the only solution and, on a cost benefit analysis, will not do more harm than good; if the decision is made to regulate, it should be with the lightest possible touch; stakeholders and affected parties should be consulted early and throughout the process; and after enacted, regulations should be monitored for unintended consequences and to compare actual with expected impact.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the bill is the requirement of the office to annually and publicly report on its progress in reducing regulatory burden. Three things have to happen to meet that commitment: the regulatory burden has to be measured; there must be a plan to reduce it; and progress in reducing it must be publicly reported. As important groups like CFIB, Restaurant Canada, and the Chamber of Commerce recognize, this requirement is the one of the strongest guarantees of action in cutting red tape. The bill

requires that the Act and our office be subject to review at the end of the three years. In addition, the Act automatically expires after five years unless this House takes steps to continue - a sunset clause, in other words.

This bill is really a milestone for improved, more accountable regulation in Nova Scotia and across the Maritimes. As I shared earlier, past efforts to reduce red tape in our province failed in part because they were without legislative authority or commitment. This effort has that commitment. This, combined with the focus on regional alignment, including legislative alignment, makes this legislation unique.

Many of the members of this House have been small business owners and know better than most the impact of red tape on our region's entrepreneurs. Citizens, communities, and businesses, large and small, have all told us that there are too many things standing in the way of growth. Both the Ivany and Broten reports said action on regulatory reform is vital to help the province and the region build an environment that gives our businesses a competitive edge.

Government cannot be the one standing in the way of growth and opportunity; nor can we afford to be diverting our finite resources to unnecessary areas. It's our responsibility as government to create an environment that makes it easy for business to start up, for business to grow, and for business to expand and take advantage of the opportunities within and outside of our region. We set the stage for success; they, business owners, are the ones that take it from there. If we set the stage properly, we all stand to gain - our communities, our businesses, our citizens, our province, and our region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to see legislation come forward from the government on red tape. We support this. We've introduced this kind of legislation ourselves in the past and when we see another Party bring forth similar legislation, we're not afraid to support it.

I say that with a bit of a giggle, because I think about our tax credit for farmers who donate to food banks. I know we are not debating that, Mr. Speaker, but it's important that if we bring something to the House, we are willing to support it when we are in a position where we don't necessarily have the power to support it, because that's the principle.

It is good to see the government taking steps. In other parts of the country - I know in the western provinces they formed an alliance between provinces there to reduce the regulatory burden in those jurisdictions. From what I hear, it's working quite well, so it's good to see the Atlantic Provinces getting together to do the same.

While we support this bill, we also respect the fact that some regulations, some red tape, are important. I guess we wouldn't necessarily call it "red tape" in that case, but some regulations are important. Certainly there are good reasons for many regulations.

We understand the focus of this legislation is to reduce regulations that are perhaps not having the intended or necessary effect. Perhaps as times change, things can be reviewed, and regulations may not be as important as they once were; perhaps they are doing nothing more than to inhibit positive activity. If that's the case, it is good to see government acting to remove those regulations so that we have a more vibrant economy, so that people are happier, and so that things are easier for people to do. Those are all good things, things we need in the province.

I recognize the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is supportive of this bill. They carry a lot of weight with many of us in the Legislature here. They do represent independent business in the province, and we all know how important small independent business is in terms of creating employment for people and in terms of bringing money from outside our province into our province. That money gets redistributed, they pay taxes, people buy goods domestically in the province, and that money gets recycled around. That's all good. When we see the CFIB speak in favour of this legislation, we have their interests at heart as well, and we want to be supportive.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's timely as well, because we know that between 2014 and 2015, our province dropped a full letter grade from C- to D-. This was a report the CFIB put out on red tape. Presumably they lowered the grade for our province because they weren't seeing a lot of action taken on red tape, so it is good to see this legislation.

We also want to see that this legislation is about action. We want to see results from the legislation. We aim to hold the government to account for that. I know with the often-mentioned Ivany report, one of the things that members on this side of the House have said is that we should have those Ivany goals put into law so that it holds the government to account. In much the same way, this legislation is all about holding the government to account to ensure that unnecessary red tape is removed, to make things easier for people in the province. Perhaps the government will revisit its position on the Ivany goals and about whether or not to put them into law, because the same principle applies here with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for this bill. I also note that Nova Scotia was rated, I believe, by the CFIB as the second worst, only after the Northwest Territories, in terms of the burden of regulation to business. (Interruption) The member says, highest business confidence. Well, isn't that a tribute to the positive attitude of Nova Scotians who despite the regulatory burden, do have a very high degree of confidence in their ability. Mr. Speaker, if I may say, their confidence may be more than their ability.

So, Mr. Speaker, one thing that is missing, and we're not going to get into too much of the finer points here on second reading - but I know it has been mentioned the need for a definition of what an actual "red tape burden," is and, also, direction for government officials to reduce red tape. I know often there are very good intentions by governments of all political stripes to commit themselves and their governments to action.

Sometimes that commitment is not shared by people in government, officials in government, and that can lead to unintended consequences. It can lead to ineffective action or no action at all being taken on matters. So Mr. Speaker, there is no specific language with respect to that in this bill and of course, that puts more of the onus on the government of the day to ensure that there is action being taken, and that the government's wishes, and by extension the public's wishes for less red tape, that those wishes are respected and acted upon.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned we are supportive of this bill. As a political Party, we have introduced a bill named the Red Tape Reduction Act. I know it has been done a number of times. I know the member for Argyle has, in fact - I think the name of his constituency has changed since this time but this was back in 2012 when the member for Argyle introduced a red tape reduction Act. So, we are definitely supportive.

One of the things that we considered at that time, for that bill, was reporting requirements, to legislate that each department was responsible for reporting their progress. So, that gets back to accountability and ensuring officials in government are taking the direction of the government of the day seriously, and that was one measure that we felt would be beneficial in a bill like the one we are debating here, because that would foster a reduction in redundancy, which is the aim of this legislation, but it would do so with stronger language.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have some other comments on this bill, but I think I'm going to wait until third reading to do that. I do look forward to this bill moving forward to the Law Amendments Committee. It will be interesting to see if any organizations come in to offer their thoughts on the bill. We are always open, certainly in this caucus, to what Nova Scotians have to say and we want to ensure they have a chance to do that and the time to reflect upon how these changes can impact the province. So, with that Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from what other members have to say, thank you.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand in my place for a few moments and speak to Bill No. 143, the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act.

Like the previous speaker, our caucus is as well in support of this initiative, although we don't see it as a panacea that will solve all of the world's problems. Anytime

that you can reduce some of the regulatory burden that is a duplication of service, or is a barrier to the efficient operation of business transactions and business development, it's a good thing, but like the previous speaker said, there are certainly times when regulations are appropriate and are required and indeed serve a different purpose in upholding the interests of the public.

It is certainly a good thing anytime to see the relationship between the Maritime Premiers or the Atlantic Premiers strengthened in terms of working together to bring down barriers, because a lot of businesses in our region function across our provinces here in the Atlantic and the Maritime region. Quite often they encountered different requirements in different provinces that didn't really make a lot of sense. So indeed I think it will be a good thing to see greater harmony, greater collaboration and co-operation. That can only work for everyone to the extent that this bill will set down a framework, I guess I would say, to allow some of this work to go forward, and that certainly is a good thing as well.

So we are in support of the general thrust of this bill, and we look forward to hearing from members of the public at the Law Amendments Committee before we make our final decision on the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BILL HORNE: I rise today with great pleasure to discuss Bill No. 143, the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act. I'm pleased to see that our Opposition Parties are in agreement with such a good bill brought forward by our government.

We're kind of taking the lead on this in the Maritimes at the moment. This bill is fundamentally about regulatory reform and the reduction of red tape throughout the bureaucracies of the Atlantic region, including New Brunswick, of course, P.E.I., and Nova Scotia. It is a crucial point to reduce red tape in order to help Nova Scotians and the Atlantic region to have a competitive edge, not only regionally but also nationally and globally.

With the introduction of this bill, Mr. Speaker, this government is delivering on a key recommendation from both the Broten report and the business groups by making this a lasting and continuing part of government operations. As we mentioned earlier, many provincial jurisdictions in the country have already adopted legislation supporting the commitment to reduce red tape, including Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan - and also our federal government through the Red Tape Reduction Plan Act, which received Royal Assent on April 23, 2015. Nova Scotia's efforts received support from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and New Brunswick and P.E.I. have committed to introducing similar legislation in the Spring.

As was mentioned all along through the description of the role of the Joint Office, this bill will establish guiding principles for regulations. I would like to take a moment to reiterate some of these guiding principles: regulation in itself should never be a first resort;

regulate only when all other non-regulatory options have been shown not to work; regulate based on objective evidence and sophisticated measures of impact; regulate when evidence establishes that regulations are the only solution and, on a cost-benefit analysis, will not do more harm than good; if the decision is made to regulate, it should be with the lightest possible touch; stakeholders and affected parties should be consulted early and throughout the process; and, after enactment, regulation should be monitored for unintended consequences and to compare actual with expected impact.

Most importantly perhaps, this bill fosters further government transparency by reducing requiring the offices to annually and publicly report on its progress in reducing the regulatory burden.

As was mentioned in the previous discussion of this bill, Mr. Speaker, in order to achieve this goal, three key things must occur: the regulatory burden has to be measured; there must be a plan to reduce it; and progress in reducing it must be regularly reported publicly.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is undoubtedly a milestone for improved, more accountable regulations in Nova Scotia and across the Maritimes. I trust this bill will go a long way to furthering an environment that makes it easy for business to start up, grow and expand and to take advantage of the opportunities within and outside our region.

Mr. Speaker, that's all and I will take my seat at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to take a few minutes to talk about this bill, too. I would like to commend the government on an effort to reduce red tape. We know that red tape chokes up business across our country and in this province. On the other hand, we know that we need some regulations for some types of things - to improve public safety and do good things.

I know that in my farming background, some of you may know, my brother-in-law and my sister farm in Holland and I can tell you that the regulations in Holland in agriculture are far more extensive and severe than here. It is simply a factor that 17 million, 18 million, 19 million people live in an area the size of mainland Nova Scotia. And the more people and as things progress, the more time that goes on, the more conflict there is between neighbours, the more some of this stuff gets encoded in regulation.

On the same hand, we can see clearly in this as we deal with other provinces in many things, differential regulations between provinces can cause serious impacts on the conduct of business. I would like to highlight one case which is of concern to me, in fact which I have spoken about in the past to our federal counterparts in Transport Canada - the

fact that there are differential regulations across our country in regard to the X One super single tire that Michelin produces.

Michelin is a company that is of great importance to our province and to the Annapolis Valley. The production of this Michelin super single X One tire is occurring in the Annapolis Valley in Waterville - actually it's a green tire because it will give truckers 10 per cent better fuel economy. It's difficult for me to understand how that's possible that a tire could have that impact but, in fact, that's what is the case. Apparently it has less rolling resistance and the whole insulation of this tire is lighter on the truck so the truck can haul more weight and in fact has better fuel economy.

If you know anything about the trucking business that's a very significant number. Yet we see that in this province the truckers of this province have not, by and large, adopted the X One tire. The reason they have not adopted the X One tire is simply because of what I would say are red tape reasons. It has to do with interprovincial laws so that they can have the X One tire on their trucks, if they want, but weight restrictions on that tire style, that type of tire differ in Ontario and Quebec and in the United States. Basically what they will do is shut out that truck and tractor-trailer combination from carrying heavier loads.

The trucking industry being as competitive as it is, when you send a truck to Ontario, say with a load of - maybe it's a load of something that is very light (Interruption) Cabbage, my friend says. Cabbage would actually be on the higher end of that weight scale since it's mostly water. But if you send it out with a very light load, you could have the trailer set up with these X One tires but when you are there and you have a load back, the backhaul load, you don't what you are going to get and you have effectively limited that truck from what it can haul back, it has to haul back something that meets this weight scale.

The thing is in Ontario and Quebec, the X One tire is used on the heavier weight loads and I believe the United States, Ontario, and Quebec are harmonized. It's New Brunswick that is not in sync and Nova Scotia is not in sync. It doesn't make any sense to change the regulations in Nova Scotia, if the regulations don't change in New Brunswick.

This is an incident where a company that is of great importance to us locally. Because of differential regulations in other provinces and in fact in this province, the companies locally cannot effectively take advantage of this tire produced in our province and as a result of that, the fleets in our province, by and large, don't have this X One tire. Like I said, 10 per cent fuel economy savings is a very - and I actually just looked at it on the Internet and it said 10 per cent. I understood it was five per cent, but even five per cent in the trucking industry, that is a huge number.

It's good for the environment. It would be good for Michelin if we would have harmonization of this rule across the country. In talking to the CEO of Michelin a year ago on this, he gave me an actual number. They estimated that their business would increase by a certain percentage. They know the number, it's significant. It's not massively huge,

because we don't represent that big of a part of the trucking, the Maritimes are not that huge a part of the trucking in Canada. The vast amount of trucking in Canada of course occurs in Quebec and Ontario and the United States.

It is still very significant for us and I believe, just off the top of my head, the number was in the 12, 13, 14, 15 per cent extra business that could be achieved by Michelin if this legislation was harmonized. This is an example of interprovincial differentials in the regulations that we, in the Maritimes, are not in sync with Ontario and Quebec. New Brunswick is not in sync with Ontario and Quebec. There is probably very little incentive for New Brunswick to harmonize this regulation but we in Nova Scotia have three Michelin plants and if there are things that we can do in regulation to improve the business of Michelin then we should be doing that. As I said, in reality we cannot do it in isolation. Without New Brunswick being on side, it doesn't make any sense.

I believe this type of body could address this issue and do something positive for Michelin. I can't begin to tell you - and I know everyone in this House knows - how important this type of factory is to our area, the Waterville factory and I know that the Granton and the Bridgewater factories are hugely important to those areas too. The point is, as I understand it - I may be corrected because Michelin has many factories - there are two factories in North America that produce this precise X One tire. One being in South Carolina, I believe, and one being in Waterville.

There has been discussion of a \$750 million investment in the Waterville plant and that has been widely discussed. Will it happen? Will it not happen? In fact, that \$750 million investment in the sister plant to Waterville is in South Carolina where they make the X One tire, that plant received that \$750 million expansion to increase the production of this X One tire, as I understand it, but it hasn't happened yet in Waterville.

Maybe changing these regulations would be something that would be seen as a positive sign by the company that this would happen and possibly this cooperation with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island would make that happen. I think that is positive. That is something that's just waiting to be done that will increase production certainly in Waterville. Vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar and the Canadian dollar, this plant should be well-positioned to increase its production in Waterville and this is something that would be a very positive signal and something that I hope that this new body would address. It's a very serious issue, one of incredible economic importance to our province with a company that is immensely important to our province and I believe it would send a very good signal to them.

I realize that just talking about what New Brunswick should do is not so easy to accomplish. New Brunswick will do what New Brunswick chooses to do and likely has their reasons why they have not adopted this legislation to harmonize our tire standards with Quebec and Ontario. That is the main thing, that we need to have the same weight limits on trucks in the Maritimes as Quebec and Ontario, to harmonize this so that Nova

Scotia trucking companies can achieve these higher fuel economies, the lower cost of operation, and higher weight loads on their trucks, because these tires are significantly lighter - the whole combination.

In fact, even though we're going to one tire from a double-wide tire, they say that they are safer to operate, because what normally happens when you see those gators on the highway where an eighteen-wheeler truck blew apart and a big strip of black rubber - which is a very dangerous thing on the highway - normally that's the inside tire that blows, because they don't get the visual inspection as readily. I know truckers are very diligent, but it is normally that inside tire that blows, and having the super-single, because you're visually checking that one tire, is a positive thing. This is a proprietary product that Michelin through their research and development has achieved. Other trucking companies have not been able to duplicate Michelin's results in producing such an excellent tire, and the credit goes to them - a very clever, very well-researched tire; a very good product. I would like to see - this type of legislation will hopefully be able to address this situation.

Are there other incidents? Yes, there are other incidents too. Our winery industry in Nova Scotia cannot, as I understand it right now, ship and sell wine in New Brunswick, and the New Brunswick winery - it's probably one-tenth the scale of the Nova Scotia winery industry, but it's there - this is something that is waiting to be done, that they be able to ship interprovincially with the winery industry. I know that our local winery industry would like to see that happen.

Another example in agriculture of interprovincial laws is that Prince Edward Island has a law that no potato can be sold on Prince Edward Island that does not come from Prince Edward Island. In reality, that's probably not a huge market for us, but what has to happen is the potatoes in Prince Edward Island that are grown in Prince Edward Island go across the bridge into the warehouse in Moncton, and the companies that warehouse these distribution systems for the big grocery retailers in Moncton have to keep a separate area of storage for their P.E.I. potatoes. For the rest of the Maritimes they have another area, and they always have to remember, whenever they're shipping back to those four or five big grocery stores in P.E.I., to be diligent and remember to ship back to P.E.I. the P.E.I. potato.

That's a rule in P.E.I., and maybe this - my gut feeling is we're not going to change that rule with this committee. I think P.E.I. is pretty committed to their own potatoes.

But these types of rules exist in many industries, and this is the kind of thing that can smooth out the inter-provincial travel of products. It's something that people don't really understand sometimes, that there are inter-provincial trade barriers, and I hope that this type of red-tape reduction will take place because of this committee and the harmonization of our rules across the province - like I said, of weight restrictions on trucks, and what types of tires can be used - very, very significant.

So I want to optimistically speak to this bill in the sense that I hope that this committee will address these issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I just want to take a few very brief moments here to address the member from Kings North. We're in total agreement with the idea of the single-wide tire.

What's happening now is that in the Atlantic Provinces, single-wide tires are permitted, but the cap weight is 7,700 kilograms per axle. So what the Atlantic trucking industry wants, as well as Michelin, is to increase that weight to 9,100 kilograms per axle, which is what it is now for double tires. That is the conversation. New Brunswick is in lockstep. We've been having these discussions. In fact, we had a pretty full review with Mike Balsom, who is our manager of fleet services. He's in Montreal now, at the weights and dimensions conference that's taking place as we speak. Mike's part of a roundtable that includes Michelin, that includes industry players, and of course includes our counterparts in the other Atlantic Provinces.

There isn't much of a disagreement on the endeavour. It would help Michelin commercially, as the member mentioned. It would help make moving products around easier. We want our trucking companies, we want our private sector operators, to make as much profit as they can. That's the name of their game. So we do agree with this.

One of the challenges is with respect to the impact on the weight of the road. We have to figure that out. I know Michelin was part of a cost-benefit study that looked at some of those things, what the impact would be for Nova Scotia's taxpayers.

Also, of course, New Brunswick is in a situation now where they have a number of P3 agreements that are in play for their highways that they just built. So they have to make sure they're in coordination, in lockstep, with that agreement, because obviously there's an operational and maintenance component of those highways. If you're adding extra weight, there's extra wear and tear on the roads. That has to be considered and maybe opened for negotiations.

But at the end of the day, I just want the member to know that that's something we're concerned about. It's a particular question and conversation that I've had directly with the Premier on a number of occasions, and the Minister of Justice and the member for Kings South met with Michelin recently, and they voiced that.

We're in total lockstep. We just have to figure out the mechanics of it and make sure that we publicly release the impact study and what that'll mean on the whole for our highways. We're certainly hopeful that we can do something.

We don't want to tie up Michelin. Those expansions mean real profit, real GDP, and real jobs for the people of Nova Scotia. We understand, and we'll work closely with our Atlantic counterparts.

The member makes very good points, and we agree. I just wanted to have that on the record. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. MARK FUREY: I want to thank my colleagues for their input and dialogue on this subject. I look forward to further discussions and, I believe, very positive outcomes for our small business sector across the province.

With those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 143.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 143. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 129.

Bill No. 129 - Securities Act.

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

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I move that Bill No. 129 be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, before I make some comments on the bill, I'd like to first thank the members of the Securities Commission and staff; as well as the staff at the Department of

Finance and Treasury Board; legislative support from the Justice Department; Legislative Counsel and Clerks; and all of the individuals who worked on this piece of legislation, for the support that we do get crafting and updating all pieces of legislation we move through here. I'd just like to acknowledge that work first and foremost.

What did all of that work by all of those employees working on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia actually produce in Bill No. 129? Mr. Speaker, it's an update to the Nova Scotia Securities Act. With these changes, when this bill passes we'll have an up-to-date Securities Act that's consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions. Investors in Nova Scotia look to the Nova Scotia Securities Commission for confidence and protection in our provincial security markets.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments to the Act also support harmonization efforts across the country to strengthen protections and better serve our investors in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is committed to maintaining harmonized securities laws in Canada, and these amendments will ensure that investors are protected on a consistent basis and will facilitate innovation and reduce the regulatory burden through the expanded use of the passport filing system.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing comments from colleagues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: No further comments? We'll have the motion for third reading of Bill No. 129. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 130.

Bill No. 130 - Community of Sackville Landfill Compensation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, just a quick correction, I'm not the Minister of Service Nova Scotia but I will happily move third reading of Bill No. 130.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 130. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 131.

Bill No. 131 - Maintenance and Custody Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 131, amendments to the Maintenance and Custody Act, be now read a third time.

During second reading I heard from many members of this House who spoke about this bill. I want to thank everyone for bringing their important points forward. I appreciate them taking the time to speak in support of this bill and I want to thank all members of the House for that support. I also want to thank those members of the public who came to Law Amendments Committee, I know in particular Rollie Thompson, the professor from Dalhousie. I had an opportunity to read the submission that he presented to Law Amendments Committee.

The amendments that are included, Mr. Speaker, will modernize and update the language in the Act and will also include renaming the legislation as the Parenting and Support Act. The new name, along with revised language and terminology, will help to properly put the focus of the Act on protecting the best interests of children.

This legislation will make our family laws clearer and more effective in guiding families navigating the many challenges that come with family breakup. Our amendments will also give the courts and others in the legal community guidance and support on parenting issues, the most challenging and emotional times for any family.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that our family laws put the attention on parental responsibilities and compassion and use language that recognizes the importance of always keeping the child's or children's best interests at the forefront of all decision making. Clear legislation will help everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I'll move third reading - if there's any other comments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we are happy to support this legislation with the hope that it does make a difference. We've all received calls from people who are struggling to get payment from spouses to support their children. I know I've had a number of times when I've had to call the maintenance enforcement office to see if they could direct their attention immediately because somebody was getting tight on funds and was being affected, their children were of course being affected by this, not just the financial impact but the emotional stress impact.

We're hopeful that this legislation will help empower the system to make things work better for those people.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: I have indicated previously at second reading that I am supportive of this legislation, the proposed legislation. I certainly think it has modernized our language.

I did note, though, at Law Amendments Committee, and the minister did refer to it, that Professor Thompson made, I think, a fairly significant point. It just raised the issue, one aspect of the legislation and that is dealing with the word "custody". In his submission he basically said, as he spoke very positively about overall the modern language, that we fix the language, we now say "parenting plans", we say "parenting orders", "parenting time". We got rid of access and the whole notion of parents being just access parents, but it was in his submission that the old idea of "custody of a child", the words that parents really do argue about, and that is that word and it is a source of parental conflict. So I would suggest and he provided wording to substitute that parental decision-making authority and if it was possible to make that change, I think we would have a very satisfactory piece of legislation to move forward with. Those are my comments.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I appreciate the comments from the members opposite as well, and with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move third reading of Bill No. 131.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 131. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre on an introduction.

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to do an introduction. In the east gallery we have Josephine Kennedy, who ran for the Liberals back in the last election. Please give her a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 133.

Bill No. 133 - Motor Vehicle Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I move that Bill No. 133 be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, the Motor Vehicle Act covers a wide range of topics and areas, but with one ultimate goal: providing safe roads for the people of our province. This is our department's top priority.

Through our policies and programs, government works with communities and stakeholders through education, awareness, and enforcement, to help instill a culture of safety in all of our road users. Mr. Speaker, for drivers this begins with providing a safe environment to gain experience while behind the wheel; it also includes making related fines consistent to emphasize all road users, including both drivers and pedestrians share equally in the responsibility of keeping themselves and each other safe. It means introducing amendments that allow staff to administer the Act in the way that it was intended, by clarifying and updating sections as needed.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is, when it comes to our roads we are all partners in safety - there are no shortcuts or silver bullets. It takes our combined efforts and continued collaboration to keep our roads safe for all users here in this beautiful province. Each of the 14 amendments in this bill helps contribute to the overall safety of our roads and it is my pleasure to bring them forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this bill on third reading. You know, I would say to the minister

and all members of the House, that we all have a stake in and a great concern for improving safety on our streets, and roads, and our highways. We all too often hear of tragedies and preventable accidents where pedestrians or people in vehicles are injured.

Over the years we have seen many improvements in road safety, you know this Legislature has passed legislation to eliminate or to ban the use of cellphones. We continue to be concerned about driver distraction and I think there's so much that we constantly need to do to improve road safety, because all too often there are tragedies that could've been prevented. Some of these tragedies can be prevented by better legislation and a better regulatory environment and then the enforcement of those regulations without any question.

There are many things about this particular piece of legislation that I and the NDP caucus can support and indeed do support. However, there is a section in this legislation that is illogical and excessive and that is the fine, the fines that have been introduced for jaywalking, a fine of almost \$700. I know that this bill will pass because of the government's majority, whether or not we support it, so we will not be supporting this bill because that particular section is excessive and could have been and should have been amended.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, yes, I have heard from constituents in this regard. I've heard from an organization called Walk n Roll, a community group who advocate for the benefit of walking. It seems to be - and I know that the minister is aware of Mr. Norm Collins who appeared at Law Amendments Committee and gave a very decent presentation. He was also on radio this morning, on CBC, again reiterating his concerns.

I think that Mr. Collins raised some interesting concerns. I understand that this is for the public good and I recognize the reasons why it's being put out there, but when we do something for the public good, it's always important that we make sure that we're doing the balancing and not doing something that will interfere with the public good. Essentially, Mr. Collins raised the concern about the fact that many more soft tickets will be issued as a result of these fines. That's a possibility.

The concern as well is that the police officers will end up having to attend court because people will try to fight these and there is nothing more a waste of time - anyway, it appears to be - than to see police officers hanging around the court house instead of being out on the streets doing their policing. Believe me, there is a lot of time wasted in that regard. That is just a factor and I thought Mr. Collins' point was well taken on that.

There is also concern that it is out of proportion to other motor vehicle violations. Where we're looking at a fine currently which is approximately \$200, it's going up to close to \$700. For texting, the fine for texting or using a cellphone is \$237. Again, the point is

made that that could be the distraction of drivers; it really is responsible for a large number of accidents that we do see on our roads and highways.

It just doesn't seem to balance out. I think that there should be an examination of this. We shouldn't be using this as some sort of anchoring technique for high billing or as a mechanism to levy an increase in fines. We have to look at it carefully and so I support the comments of Mr. Collins and the Walk n Roll advocacy group. I think that they are well-founded and for those reasons, as the Leader of the NDP has already indicated, I will not be supporting the bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues from Halifax Needham and Dartmouth South for their comments and their interpretation and perspectives on this bill. Just to clarify really quickly and give our perspective on this: first of all, there are a number of categories for these fines currently existing in the law for pedestrian infractions and for drivers related to pedestrian infractions. There are levels from B to G, where the fines range from \$200 to \$697, which is what we're proposing to be standardized today. It's different if it's at a signalized intersection versus a traditional crosswalk. It's different if there's a crossing guard versus not. The infractions, in terms of the fines, are all over the map.

One of the things that Norm Collins, our department, and other stakeholders would suggest is that there should be some consistency. I think we have accomplished that, notwithstanding the point about the high fine.

When we looked at coordinating these fines, we didn't want to bring the highest one down. We thought, among other reasons, that to make them all uniform with that highest infraction, \$697, was reasonable. There certainly has been some feedback from some of the folks that the NDP caucus had mentioned that are out there who don't support this. But I can tell you there is also support from those who do.

For us, this isn't about penalizing pedestrians and making this to target any particular demographic, to target people who are involved in active transportation. This is about a shared responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, this isn't as hot an issue for me, coming from Glace Bay, but it's something that I've probably heard the most about in Halifax during my almost six years here - the dangers of crosswalks, pedestrian travel, and everything that's connected to this particular issue. I think we're moving in the right direction with the fact that this is a deterrent. It isn't about punishment. That's a key piece for me.

The member for Dartmouth South talked about Norm Collins. I have a ton of respect for Norm Collins. We've spoken the whole way through this entire process. I think that he has taken this on as a champion for crosswalk safety because he believes in it, and for no other reason. We've had very close communication.

One of the points that he made, that I guess we disagree on: he was fine with the \$697 fine for pedestrians if they caused a collision. If they didn't cause a collision, he thought that was too high a fine. I respectfully disagree with that.

I don't think this is about punishment. This is not an issue of punishing for \$700 versus \$200. The problem is the deterrent. The problem is the education and the communication on what this means, what decisions people are making, both behind the wheel and when they're on their feet. This, to me, is not about the punishment and differentiating when you're guilty or not and the extent to which someone's hurt or someone's killed. This is about getting the message out that this is one of the very significant problems we have on the streets of Halifax and metro, but certainly across the province. So I support our initiative from that perspective, and the fact that this will make it all uniform.

Compared to other fines, again, that's a conversation for those other areas. I've mentioned to Norm that we're doing a full-scale review of the Motor Vehicle Act, which is over 100 years old, believe it or not, Mr. Speaker. In that process, we're going to look at the comprehensive impact on fines altogether. I do want to throw that out there.

Finally, with respect to police enforcement, I leave that to the great men and women we have in our province who are looking after our streets. Their decisions - obviously they use the law and their discretion to make these decisions. I won't go too far, but I can honestly say I'm proud to be here as part of this Bill No. 133.

There are more important things in this legislation as well, not just on the pedestrian piece. We're happy with where we are, and we're going to carry this to the public. Again, I appreciate the comments, and I look forward to when this bill finally passes.

With that, I'd like to move third reading of Bill 133.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 133. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I won't be calling third reading for Bill 135. To allow members who may want to speak on that next week, we'll wait to deal with that.

Would you please call Bill No. 136.

Bill No. 136 - Motor Vehicle Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I move that Bill No. 136, an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Motor Vehicle Act, be now read for a third time and do pass.

Safety was the consideration during the pilot project on Segways. The focus of the pilot was understanding the safety impact these devices would have interacting with other road users. During almost two years of a pilot project, the results were generally positive, with no negative impact on safety of all road users. We've received 429 rider surveys, 850 road user surveys, and while this does not officially close until January, Mr. Speaker, tourism in HRM has certainly stopped and with the winding down of the cruise tourism season that certainly makes sense, having received only two responses in the month of November.

The amendments include safe operating and equipment requirements of personal transporters, such as Segways, as well as strict rules of the road. It will help ensure all safety of the road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and personal transport users.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I open up the floor for a final comment.

MR. SPEAKER: Hearing no speakers, the motion is for third reading of Bill No. 136. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today, a very productive day. A couple of things: first, I can advise that Law Amendments Committee will be meeting on Monday, December 7th, at 4:00 p.m. I don't believe there are too many presenters who have indicated yet. The bills that will be

considered there will be: Bill No. 141 and Bill No. 143. That will be Monday at Law Amendments Committee.

The House will next meet on Tuesday, December 8th, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. During that time following the daily routine, we will be continuing third reading of Bill Nos. 118, 127, 134, 125, 137, 112, 130 and 135. There will also possibly be some other government business as well, but that's on the order paper.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish everyone a safe and happy weekend and look forward to seeing everyone next week.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again Tuesday, December 8th, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on Tuesday, December 8th, from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until Tuesday, December 8th, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 1:00 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 2657**

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the Town of Digby recognizes exceptional contributions of volunteer work in the Digby area, annually, with the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award; and

Whereas the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award is presented to a resident who has made a significant contribution to the betterment of the town; and

Whereas Jonathan Riley is the recipient of this year's Joe Casey Humanitarian Award, presented at a ceremony on July 24, 2015, by Mayor Ben Cleveland;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jonathan Riley for receiving the 2015 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award, and thank him for his outstanding contributions to his community.

RÉSOLUTION NO. 2658

Proposé Par: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

Par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que le Festival international de la poésie décerne le Prix Félix-Antoine-Savard annuellement; et

Attendu que cette année le prix Prix Félix-Antoine-Savard a été remis à Georgette LeBlanc, poète d'Acadie: et

Attendu que Georgette LeBlanc est bien connue pour ses écrits acadiens:

Qu'il soit reconnu que l'assemblée législative reconnaît le travail littéraire de Georgette LeBlanc, la félicite et l'encourage à continuer d'écrire.

RÉSOLUTION NO. 2659

Proposé Par: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

Par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que Lisa T. Café est ouvert en septembre 2015 sur le campus de l'Université Sainte-Anne; et

Attendu que le nom de Lisa Thibodeau est donné au nouveau café restaurant pour faire mémoire d'une personne qui a fait des efforts pour surmonter ses limites; et

Attendu que ce service de restauration favorise l'emploi de personnes avec des défis particuliers:

Qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'assemblée législative de la Nouvelle-Écosse appuient les efforts déployés au Lisa T. Café et félicitent la nouvelle équipe en place.

RESOLUTION NO. 2660

Proposé Par: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

Par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendue que notre société est de plus en plus consciente que l'exercice physique est essentiel à notre santé; et

Attendu que le vélo est reconnu comme un excellent moyen de faire de l'exercice physique; et

Attendu que le mouvement Gran Fondo fait la promotion de l'exercice en vélo et que la municipalité a connu un grand succès cet été avec 400 participants;

Qu'il soit résolu l'assemblée législative de la Nouvelle-Écosse tient à féliciter les organisateurs et tous les participants au Gran Fondo annuel à l'automne 2015.

RESOLUTION NO. 2661

Proposé Par: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

Par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure, l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendue que le sud-ouest de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse bénéficie d'une radio communautaire d'expression française, radio CIFA, depuis déjà vingt-cinq années; et

Attendue que la radio CIFA est dirigée par un groupe de bénévoles qui s'efforcent de répondre aux besoins de la communauté locale; et

Attendue que les fidèles auditeurs et auditrices se reconnaissent dans leur radio communautaire;

Qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'assemblée législative félicitent ceux et celles qui sont associés à la radio communautaire du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse et souhaitent longue vie à CIFA.

RESOLUTION NO. 2662

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 Robert Sandeski and his two fellow volunteer firefighters make up the Eastern Passage Fire Combat Team known as Team Fog Off; and

Whereas they have competed in various fire combat competitions in Canada and the United States and won gold this past summer at an event in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

Whereas he took gold in the Male Tandem Category at the World Firefighter Combat Challenge this past October in Alabama;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Robert Sandeski and Team Fog Off on their competition wins.

RESOLUTION NO. 2663

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 Cory Detchkoff and his two fellow volunteer firefighters make up the Eastern Passage Fire Combat Team known as Team Fog Off; and

Whereas they have competed in various fire combat competitions in Canada and the United States and won gold this past summer at an event in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

Whereas he recently took silver in the Open Male Tandem at the World Firefighter Combat Challenge this past October in Alabama;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cory Detchkoff and Team Fog Off on their competition wins.

RESOLUTION NO. 2664

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 Steve Gallant and his two fellow volunteer firefighters make up the Eastern Passage Fire Combat Team known as Team Fogg Off; and

Whereas they have competed in various fire combat competitions in Canada and the United States and won gold this past summer at an event in Newfoundland; and

Whereas he took silver in the Open Male Tandem and placed 3rd in the relay category at the World Firefighter Combat Challenge this past October in Alabama;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Steve Gallant and Team Fog Off on their competition wins.