



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

12:03 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine, under Rule 12(3) I am requesting that the member for Kings South take the Chair should the Deputy Speaker or myself need to be absent at any point in today's proceedings.

We'll now move on with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 3090

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

Whereas Nova Scotians were saddened to hear about the tactics employed by the Liberal members at the Standing Committee on Law Amendments on Wednesday; and

Whereas yesterday the member for Cumberland North followed his treatment of Mr. Tupper by reading excerpts from Mr. Tupper's statement, but has accepted no accountability for the illegitimate (Interruptions)

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

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shall I start from the top?

Whereas yesterday the member for Cumberland North followed his treatment of Mr. Tupper by reading excerpts from Mr. Tupper's statement, but has accepted no accountability for the illegitimate votes he orchestrated from the Chair; and

Whereas the current Attorney General, who under Rule 60(5A) is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, has never actually chaired the committee;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly vote to remove the member for Cumberland North from the position of Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, and require that the Auditor General take her rightful place as the chairman.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

AMBASSATOURS-GREY LINE: PRES./FOUNDER ET AL - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I rise this morning to acknowledge one of Nova Scotia's great success stories in the Ambassatours Grey Line tour company, which had yet another busy summer. Mr. Speaker, 141 cruise ships visited the Port of Halifax this year, and in 2015, the company served 118,391 passengers across Nova Scotia in its fleet of 73 motor coaches and double-decker buses, many of which you can see stop here outside of Province House on a daily basis during the summer months. Seventy-eight professional tour guides took passengers from both Sydney and Halifax and fanned out across Nova Scotia to such destinations as the Annapolis Valley, Lunenburg, Pictou, Baddeck, and Louisbourg. The company employs over 200 people seasonally and many year-round on its charter service and at its Murphy's on the Water operation.

I want to congratulate president and founder Dennis Campbell; CEO Mary Dempster; Director of Port Operations Paula Foster; Director of Recruitment Janice Stuthard; and all of the guys and staff who help make Ambassatours Grey Line such a fantastic operation. Here's hoping for an even better 2016.

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

LEGISLATIVE SERV.: STAFF - THANK

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I'm just assuming that we're coming to the end of our time here, so just in case.

Mr. Speaker, as the session winds down, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the many people who make our jobs easier. They work long, unpredictable hours, and never fail to provide the advice and assistance that we need. The staff of the Legislature, Mike, Peter, the Pages, Kenny and the Commissionaires, the Legislative Library staff, everyone at Legislative Television, and the custodial staff, thank you for all you do. Thank you to the staff of the Committees Office and everyone at the Queen's Printer.

I want to thank the Chief Clerk, Neil Ferguson, as well as Assistant Clerks Annette Boucher and Nicole Arsenault, for keeping us in line. Finally, thank you to Gordon Hebb and his team at Legislative Counsel, and Bob Kinsman and everyone at Hansard. I'd be remiss if I did not mention the staff in our caucus offices who work so hard to make us look good.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to wish them all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy holiday season. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LIB. GOV'T. - GRINCH ACTIONS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, a week from today, 75,000 Nova Scotians will look under the Christmas tree and find nothing in their stockings from this Liberal Government. It's too bad the Ghost of Christmas Past hasn't visited the Premier to remind him of the last time a wage freeze was imposed through legislation. It was the Savage Liberal Government in 1994, suspending collective bargaining and taking money out of the pockets of public sector workers, leaving them demoralized and, in the case of doctors and nurses, leading to an exodus out of the province.

The story sounds eerily familiar. One can only wonder if this Liberal Government's Christmas future will look anything like that of the recently-departed Harper Government - defeated by its own Grinch actions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

GLACE BAY MLA - HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Over five years ago - I believe it was on June 10th - the member for Glace Bay and I got elected on the same day during a by-election. Since that time, we've become very good friends, and I've come to know him as a good person who is dedicated to his people, his community, and the cause of reason when it comes to politics.

Today is a very special day because it's his birthday. I'd like to stand and wish our very capable and caring colleague, the member for Glace Bay, a happy birthday today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

HMCS WINDSOR: OFFICERS/CREW - MERRY CHRISTMAS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on Thursday afternoon, the officers and crew of *HMCS Windsor* returned home to Halifax after a 101-day overseas deployment, the longest trip yet for Canada's Victoria-class submarines. *HMCS Windsor* took part in the coordinated NATO exercises called Joint Warrior and Trident Juncture, designed to enhance our combat readiness.

All Nova Scotians were proud when they saw the sailors reunite with their families on the evening news. I know we are all grateful for their personal sacrifices that they make to serve our country.

Today I want to wish Lieutenant Commander Chu, the officers and crew of *HMCS Windsor* a very Merry Christmas and a well-deserved "Bravo Zulu."

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

NDP - POSITIVE LEGISLATION

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this session the NDP caucus tried to establish a financial accountability office. You would think a government so concerned about this fiscal plan would be on board with such an idea, yet they are not.

This government said it was concerned about road safety, and to show their concern they have legislated a jaywalking fine that has curbed the credibility of the Minister of TIR. You would think a government so concerned about road safety would sign on to the bill brought forward by the NDP caucus providing an incentive for those who install winter tires on their cars, yet they have not.

The NDP caucus will continue to bring forward positive legislation for the betterment of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

CUMB. NO. MLA - TRIBUTE

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to recognize a fair and honest individual, someone whom we've always known to be honest, up front, and full of integrity. The person I'm talking about is my friend, and our colleague, the member for Cumberland South.

AN HON. MEMBER: North.

MR. MAGUIRE: North, sorry. Cumberland North - close.

Over the past two years I've watched as he has worked relentlessly for the people in his community, how he stood up for the underdogs and how he has been an example for all of us.

To the member for Cumberland North, we are all proud to call you a friend.

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

LEGISLATURE: CO-WORKERS - MERRY CHRISTMAS

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I want to mention a group of people who work very hard to meet the needs of the Province of Nova Scotia.

I'm very grateful to be part of this group of people and I dream about a new level of participation. I dream about this group having one heart to know what to do, one mind to know how to do it, and one voice to know what to say as we do the business for this province. Yes, it's a dream, and no one is going to take this dream away from me.

This group of people that I enjoy working with is the Legislature of Nova Scotia. At this time of year I want to wish all the peace, the hope, the love and the joy for the people who work with us in this Legislature, and to all of my colleagues in this place I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and God bless all of you. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**HALIFAX NEEDHAM MLA:
ACTING LEADER OF THE NDP (LAST SESSION) - THANK**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, tonight wraps up my first sitting in the Legislature as an MLA for Dartmouth South, but it also marks the last sitting of the honourable member for Halifax Needham as Leader of the NDP.

The honourable member has represented her constituents in this House for 18 years and has blazed a trail for women across Nova Scotia, including myself, who are passionate about politics. I have witnessed the Leader of the NDP as she is met with respect when she stands in her place to represent her constituents, day after day she rises in this Legislature.

I rise in my place to honour, congratulate, and pay respect to the honourable member for Halifax Needham on her last session as NDP Leader. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our great province. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: Let's see if we can keep this going, the room is full of love.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

NORMAN, CHRIS: DAL - HON. DOCTORATE

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lunenburg-based flutist Chris Norman. Mr. Norman, an accomplished, award-winning flutist, was recently honoured with an honorary doctorate from Dalhousie University. He was named an Honourary Doctor of Laws for his achievements with his flute. His work has appeared at Lunenburg's Folk Harbour Festival, the CBC, BBC, in concert halls around the world, and even on the *Titanic* sound track.

He continues to grow as a musician and to travel and share his works with the world. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me today in recognizing Chris Norman for all his accomplishments in music and the honorary doctorate from Dalhousie University.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BOYLES, FRASER: SACRIFICE/HEROISM - RECOGNIZE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about one of our wonderful veterans, Fraser Boyles, a resident of Trenton, Pictou County. Fraser, born on December 13, 1924, was 19 years old when he landed on Juno Beach, France, on June 1944 to help liberate France and continue the movement to Holland, and then on to Germany.

Boyles will be receiving the Legion of Honour, France's highest distinction, on Sunday, December 20, 2015. This medal of honour commemorates the 70th Anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy and Provence, France, where Canadian soldiers participated in combat and the liberation of France.

We are honoured to acknowledge the sacrifices and heroism that Fraser Boyles displayed while serving his country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**PARKER, MAKAIL: CAN. EAST TEAM
- WORLD JR. A HOCKEY TOURNAMENT**

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to extend my congratulations to Greenhill, Hants County native Makail Parker for making the Canada East team in the world Junior A challenge tournament taking place this week in Whitby and Coburg, Ontario. Team Canada East, attempting to play in the gold medal game Saturday, lost Thursday evening to Team Canada West by 8 - 5, and will now play in the bronze medal game Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. against the United States.

To date, Parker is tied for third place in tournament scoring with four other players, all with four points. They have defeated Switzerland, lost to Russia while rallying to beat the Czech Republic three to two. Parker scored a goal while adding two assists against Switzerland and garnered an assist in a Czech game.

Parker is the only Nova Scotian playing in Canada East and is one of the top scorers for the South Shore Lumberjacks of the Maritime Junior A hockey league this season, having scored eight times while recording 16 assists for 24 points.

Makail is the son of Jeff and Linda Parker and the proud grandson of Earvin and Gail Parker. Makail, now 19 years of age, has worked tremendously hard at hockey since his minor hockey days and no doubt is a welcome addition to the Canada East team.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Makail Parker, and if I know his father Jeff and grandfather Earvin, they no doubt are in Ontario watching every one of his moves and enjoying the game.

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

PREM.: 2015 - REFLECTIONS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: The holiday season is the time of the year that we reflect on the past year, therefore we hope the Premier takes the time to reflect on 2015. What he will see in the mirror is a leader who hired a man guilty of domestic violence, who publicly supported a Chief of Staff who resigned because of a secret employment offer, who stood by a minister until it was a choice between the Premier's career or the minister's, who betrayed teachers and 75,000 public servants, who leads like the now disgraced Stephen Harper, who does not believe in democracy.

Wow, Mr. Speaker, what a year for Nova Scotians to discover the real Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HENNY PENNY'S FARM MARKET - PAY IT FORWARD PROG.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, we are all grateful for our local businesses that are an important engine of our rural economy. We must be doubly grateful when a local business goes above and beyond to help support and sustain the community.

Henny Penny's Farm Market in New Minas has recently come under the new ownership of a mother and daughter team, Nadia and Renee Gerrits. In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Henny Penny's has implemented a pay-it-forward program to combat food insecurity in the community. Every time a customer purchases a \$10 food bag, Henny Penny's donates 50¢ towards the purchase of another bag - delicious, nutritious, local produce; enough to feed a family of four is then shared with people who could not otherwise have fresh produce.

Mr. Speaker, this program is good for farmers, farm markets and consumers and I would like to commend and thank Henny Penny's Farm Market for their caring and cooperative approach to business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SMITH, ROD: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I rise today to pay tribute to a son of Cumberland County and my friend - Roddy Smith, who passed away at the age of 64 on Sunday, July 12, 2015.

Roddy had a lifelong career in the insurance industry, where he met and enjoyed working with many people. Never at a loss for words, he brightened any room with his easy manner and pleasant conversation.

Roddy was always an avid sports fan who closely followed football, baseball, and hockey. He was even a Leafs fan. Golf was also a passion of his, as he enjoyed playing the game and socializing with his golf buddies at various courses across the country.

Roddy will be missed by all of us in Cumberland South for his many volunteer issues and leadership in the community. My condolences go out to Rod's family and his many friends.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LIB. GOV'T. - ACTIONS (2015)

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, 2015 will be remembered as the year this Liberal Government embarked on a series of poorly executed actions that left observers watching in disbelief.

An increasingly flustered Minister of Health and Wellness repeatedly fired a respected arbitrator until he had to finally accept the proposal put forward by the health care unions to leave their membership intact. This was followed by the elimination of the Film Industry Tax Credit and boarding up the door to Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia; cuts to CNIB, Eating Disorders Nova Scotia, and mental health groups. Who could forget the debacle in the Premier's office over the affair involving a member of Cabinet and an incident at the Dingle, then the attempt to manage the member, which was digitally recorded, and then a failed attempt to have him evicted from this House?

Finally, the government made good on its threat to impose wage-restraint legislation, breaking a promise made by the Premier . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for the member's statement has expired.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

IMPERIAL OIL LTD.: SOUTH WOODSIDE ELEM. TURKEY DINNER - HOSTING

MS. JOYCE TREEN: On Monday, December 14th, Imperial Oil Ltd. hosted a turkey dinner at the South Woodside Elementary. They did not stop at feeding the children and the staff at the school; they invited the whole community to attend. The turkey and all the fixings were delicious, and some of the children had seconds and thirds. The Imperial

Oil employees happily served everyone, and you could see that they truly enjoyed doing this good deed. It was a really heartwarming afternoon to see a big company give back to such a deserving community. The giving spirit of Christmas was alive and well.

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

LIB. GOV'T.: LEGACY (2015) - REFLECT

MS. LENORE ZANN: On January 3, 2015, almost a year ago now, the *New Glasgow News* reported: Public Sector Unions Appear to Be in Nova Scotia Premier's Sites in 2015. Well, how right they turned out to be.

This past week, the threat became a reality. Why this Liberal Government waited until the week before Christmas Nova Scotians don't know. Why they insisted on calling us here in the middle of the night to pass their shoddy legislation raises even more questions about the transparency of this government.

As we get ever closer to the end of 2015, I hope all members of the Liberal Government, including the backbenchers, take a moment to reflect on what their legacy has been over the last 12 months: the threats, the intimidation of nurses, teachers, members of the creative economy, and now doctors. Is that really the way they want to begin a new year?

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

SIMPSON, VANCE/SNAIR, DARREN: HARBOURVIEW INN (SMITH'S COVE) - EXPEDIA SELECT HOTEL

MR. GORDON WILSON: Amongst the famous hotels and inns of New York and London, the Harbourview Inn has been named Expedia's Insider Select Hotel for 2015 - quite an accomplishment for this 10-guest Smith's Cove establishment built over 150 years ago by a sea captain.

This crowd-sourced ranking of the best world-wide accommodations considers such factors as superior services, exceptional guest experience, and value for money. The naming of Harbourview to this prestigious list is but one concrete example of the quality of tourism products offered by local businesses to our visitors.

Given the importance of tourism to my riding and the province, I commend the efforts of the owners and staff of this establishment as well as many others in this industry for striving for excellence. Congratulations to Vance Simpson and Darren Snair, the co-owners of the B&B, and their team for being so welcoming to the visitors of our province.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): HEARING IMPAIRED - TREATMENT

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I know many members on both sides of the Legislature felt that a Liberal member crossed a line this session when he yelled at my colleague to get a hearing aid. This government's lack of regard for the hearing impaired was again on full display this week at the Law Amendments Committee, when the chairman and a number of Liberals used their majority to ensure that Mr. Tupper would not be allowed to make his presentation.

Perhaps the Liberal MLAs are familiar with the words of the late John Lennon, "Instant Karma's gonna to get you, gonna look you right in the face." I ask Liberal MLAs to remember these words before they childishly mock others.

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

**HALIFAX BASKETBALL WARRIORS:
N.S. SUMMER GAMES - GOLD MEDALS**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Halifax Basketball Warriors, who brought two teams to the 2015 Special Olympics Nova Scotia Summer Games in Halifax in July. Both teams battled hard and won gold medals for our region.

Team members were Patrick Morgan Little, Kathy Anne Morgan Little, Grace Gillam, John Barrett, Chase Burton, Krista Poirier, Nick Boudreau, Kenneth Barrett, Cheyenne Arbour, and William Whalen, with head coach Luke Adamson and assistant coach Amanda Stothart.

Another team was Alex Burke, Robert MacLean, Tristan Dunn, Jared Rose, Sandy Morrison, Amanda Bailey, J.R. Barrett, Kyle Angevine, Graham Robertson, Ian Wright, Natalie Branscombe, with head coach Doug Branscombe and assistant coaches Alicia Wilson and Roger Angevine.

Inclusive and accessible participation in sports is vitally important for our province. The gold medals are a testament to their determination and hard work. Congratulations to the members of both teams on their outstanding achievements.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, 'twas the week before Christmas and all through this House, Opposition was stirring while Liberals sat quiet as a mouse. The stockings were hung by the Pages with care, in hopes that Christmas vacation soon would be here.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. As the honourable member knows, poetry is not allowed in members' statements.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

QUAKE MATTHEWS: MUSICAL TALENT - RECOGNIZE

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very talented member of the Fairview community by the name of Quake Matthews. Quake is a Halifax rapper. He first made a name for himself in the underground battle rap scene in his early teens. His raspy voice and raw emotion have given him a signature sound, creating a captivating listening experience for his audience.

The award-winning MC just received his fourth studio album, which earned him a No. 4 spot on the iTunes hip hop charts, as well as coverage from a host of major outlets such as the Source, All Def Digital and Funk Master Flex ND Spotlight.

In light of the donair recently announced as the official food of Halifax, Quake has released a catchy, donair anthem called Down with the King. Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud to call Quake, also known as Matthew Arab, my constituent and my cousin. I ask that all members of this House of Assembly please join me in recognizing and thanking Quake for demonstrating how musically talented Nova Scotia can be to the rest of the world.

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

WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are nestled safe on the backbench while visions of protesters dance in their heads. Now I in my caucus will stay here all night to stand up for fairness and do what is right. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

BLACKFORD, WOODY (MICHAEL): GOOD WORK - SALUTE

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring your attention to a Nova Scotian that most people would not know about, his name is Michael "Woody" Blackford. He graduated from St. FX in 1993, a major in business administration and economics. During this time he worked in a little, outdoor store in Halifax and this started his passion for the outdoors. From there he worked in a couple of other stores in Ontario, where he landed as a designer for a company called Sierra Designs.

In 2007, Woody was hired by Columbia Sportswear, where he got the nickname, Mad Scientist. Woody led the team to over 200 patents; one of these patents that all members would recognize would be Omni Heat, which is the silver space blanket look in many Columbia jackets. He also developed a cooling fabric for shirts and between these 200 patents, he helped Columbia reach \$2.1 billion in sales.

Woody, who is originally from the riding of Halifax Atlantic, now lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and kids. He also has been promoted to VP of Design and Innovation where he continues to be one of the most influential designers in the outdoor industry. This is a Nova Scotian who represents us on the world stage, who all Nova Scotians can be proud of when we wear one of his products.

I salute Woody Blackford on his continued good work and a success story that we can call and celebrate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS KICK IT UP EVENT: VOLS. - RECOGNIZE

HON. LENA DIAB: I'd like to recognize the hard work of the many volunteers who planned and organized the Dress for Success Kick It Up! event held December 10th, where many of my friends attended, including the MLA for Clayton Park West and the MLA for Bedford.

Dress for Success is a mission to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support, and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

The night was a fun and fashionable fundraiser where many in attendance won beautiful shoes and handbags, shopped in the exclusive marketplace and socialized.

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

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as the time to celebrate Christmas is close, it is also a time to reflect on all the gifts we have - our health, our homes, and our families. It is also important to be mindful of those who are not as fortunate as we. Christmas should be a time about giving, not receiving, about looking out for those who do not have some family.

Mr. Speaker, it is a time to thank all those who serve in the military and who give us so much and do so much for us to be able to enjoy a way of life that we sometimes take for granted. I wish all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and safe new year.

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

SCALLOP DAYS (40th): VOLS. - RECOGNIZE

MR. GORDON WILSON: I would like to recognize the volunteers who year after year organize festivals and gatherings in our communities. This includes the people of Digby and the surrounding area who helped to organize the 40th Scallop Days of last August. Every year they volunteer and organize an assortment of activities - these include some old favourites like the quilt show, and some newer additions to the roster such as the bike rodeo.

At the core of the festival showcase are famous Digby scallops and the people who go out on the boats to harvest them. It is a great place to sample our scallops and watch the annual scallop shucking contest. Watching Tory Surette, the eventual champion, shucking scallops was amazing.

I'd like to thank the people of Digby who were responsible for the tremendous success of our Digby Scallop Days. They worked long hours to make this festival a great experience for our locals and visitors. It is because of them that people who come from away may arrive as strangers, but will most certainly leave as friends.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

OAKLAND INDIAN PT. RES. ASSOC.: WORK - RECOGNIZE

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Oakland/Indian Point Residents Association. About 50 members of the association have taken it upon themselves to make their community a cleaner, more beautiful place to live by picking up everything from bottles to car door parts as part of Adopt-A-Highway campaign. It speaks of the love they have for their community, to take the time and make the effort to undo the litter from people who disrespect the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me today in recognizing the Oakland/Indian Point Residents Association for the work it has done, and to recognize them as an example for all to follow.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**SPRYFIELD BOYS & GIRLS HOLIDAY DINNER:
HFX. ATL. VOLS. - THANK**

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to thank all the families and friends of Halifax Atlantic who will be volunteering their time this weekend, and food donations, for my third annual Spryfield Boys and Girls Holiday

Dinner. Last year we were able to feed over 100 families, including takeout, and hats and mittens on the way out the door. This year we are expecting to double that at 200.

Once again, thank you to the people of Halifax Atlantic for volunteering your time and all your food donations, Happy Holidays.

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

SULLIVAN, LISA: TREE LIGHTING EVENT - HOSTING

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a wonderful stakeholder and community member, Lisa Sullivan. Lisa manages Freeman's Little New York in Fairview. She does not manage just an ordinary restaurant in the neighbourhood, but rather a wonderful establishment that brings the community together for a variety of events.

Lisa did a fantastic job at organizing and executing a successful 2015 edition of the Fairview Family Fun Day in July, but more recently she and her team hosted a tree lighting event at Freeman's. This event was a wonderful success. Donations were collected for Feed Nova Scotia. There was a book drive on site in support of Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre. There were raffles for turkeys. There were delicious snacks. And let's not forget the special guest appearance by Santa Claus.

Mr. Speaker, Lisa and the team at Freeman's in Fairview are constantly going above and beyond for our community, and I ask that all members of this House, through you, to join me in recognizing Lisa for her fantastic work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

BOUDREAU, EMMA - DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

HON. RANDY DELOREY: On Monday, November 30, 2015, I had the honour of presenting Emma Boudreau of Brierly Brook with the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award certificate and pin.

Mr. Speaker, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award encourages young people to develop positive skills and habits while taking on new challenges. The award sees participants set personal challenges and accomplish those goals through their own effort, resulting in self-confidence, motivation, and skills development.

To receive this award, Emma logged hundreds of hours and completed a number of activities under four program areas: community service, skill development, physical recreation, and adventurous journey. Emma logged 70 hours of community service, volunteering as an assistant hockey coach and member of her school's student council. She

honed her skill on the piano by practising on a regular basis. Emma actually surpassed the number of hours required under physical recreation by 500 per cent, logging 392 hours in a year. The adventurous journey calls for a two-day, one-night activity, and Emma accomplished this by climbing Brown's Mountain in Antigonish County.

Mr. Speaker, Emma successfully completed all the requirements for the bronze award as an independent participant. She is a remarkable individual, and I was grateful for the opportunity to present her with her bronze certificate and pin.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

PREM. - LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Anyone who has studied the Westminster system and the first-past-the-post system would understand and recognize a trend of special interests impacting outcomes and decisions by government. I just want to say how proud I am as a member of this government to serve under a Leader who is really keeping the collective good of our province in mind and having the courage, backbone, and integrity to do what's right for our collective future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HFX. NEEDHAM MLA - COMMENT ABOUT BEDFORD MLA

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise an issue about something that happened earlier in this session. It was back on November 19th. During Question Period, I answered a question placed by the member for Sackville-Cobequid. After that question, several members on our side of the House clearly heard the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party refer to me as an actress.

Now, I am not an actress, and I don't play one on television. I'm not good enough to be an actress; I want to be clear. I just thought it was a dumb thing that someone said in the heat of the moment, as often happens here in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Bedford that it's unparliamentary to infer that another member said a dumb thing.

The honourable member for Bedford.

MS. REGAN: It was an unfortunate remark that was made in the heat of the moment. But I've been reflecting on this past session, and I've realized that in fact the member in question meant it - and this was the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party - as an insult. I want to be clear: I do not consider being called an actress an insult, and I want to give a shout-out to my sister-in-law Laura, who is an actress on Minority Report.

(Interruption) I would like to point out to the member for Chester-St. Margaret's that, in fact, there was an interruption by the Speaker, so I have more time.

This is not the first time that particular member has insulted an . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's statement has expired.

The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

FIRST SITTING: ASSISTANCE - THANK

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I just want to take a moment as I conclude my first sitting in the House to say a big thank you not only to my caucus colleagues but also to members of all the House for answering any questions and providing a bit of the history. As well, I want to take the opportunity to thank all of the staff, both in the caucus and in the Premier's Office. I also want to thank all of the staff involved with making sure that these proceedings take place. A big thank you to all of you, as I conclude my first sitting in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HFX. NEEDHAM MLA - COMMENT ABOUT BEDFORD MLA

HON. KELLY REGAN: As I was saying in an earlier member's statement. I wanted to be clear here that I do not consider being called an actress an insult, although it was clear that the honourable member for Halifax Needham did, in fact, consider it to be an insult, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to remind that honourable member that maybe she would like to stop and think before she insults yet another occupation, as she previously did with hairstylists - an occupation that I would point out is largely populated by women, and I urge her to pause and reflect in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE STAFF - THANK

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today to send out thanks and Seasons Greetings to the staff of my constituency office in Amherst, Deby White and Gloria Lefurgey. Deby and Gloria are always cheerful and helpful with constituents when they come into the office for assistance and, surprisingly, they are always cheerful and helpful with me when I am around.

It also seems that when I am away they do frequently send me messages saying that they wish I would be back in the office. I think they do that to stroke my ego, Mr. Speaker. I want to do that personally, myself, to thank and give the greetings of the season to my office staff, but I want to send those same wishes out to all the constituency assistants across the province.

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

FRIENDS OF CLAYTON PARK - RECOGNIZE

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I wanted to rise today to recognize a community group in Clayton Park West and in the Mainland North part of Halifax known as the Friends of Clayton Park. They are in about their fourth year of existence as a group and their President, Cory Vincent, has at their AGM agreed to stay on for a second year as president.

A lot of their executive are young university students and high school-age young people gaining great experience in the community. This year they held their first annual community skate for our first-ever Nova Scotia Heritage Day in February. That is going to become a new tradition - I know we'll do it again this year.

They also held an Earth Day Cleanup for the third time this year; however, April had so much snow down that it actually took place in May. Following that they helped to co-host the big summer barbeque that we do in Clayton Park West for the riding, and at the present time they are doing a Christmas home decorating contest with the emphasis as well on safety at Christmastime. As well, they have received some support from IBC - the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

WATT, GLENDA: CHURCH CHIMES - PERFORMANCE

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I just want to take a moment to recognize Glenda Watt of Sydney. Glenda Watt is a personal trainer, but when she can steal a few moments she makes her way to the bell tower at the Highland Arts Theatre in Sydney to perform on the former church chimes.

Glenda's videos have now reached over 1.5 million viewers on YouTube, and I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate Glenda on her new success, and thank her for playing beautiful music throughout the City of Sydney when she has time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

PREM. - TRIBUTE

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the time to acknowledge a great leader in Nova Scotia. This individual believes in this province, and he has worked tirelessly to lead this province through changes that will make Nova Scotia a better place and for the future of our kids.

This individual has created a team that is so strong that nothing could break this team. He has created a group of people who will support each other through thick and thin, and I could not be more proud to be working with this individual and this team.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you for leading this team. This individual is the Premier of Nova Scotia. Thank you for doing what you do.

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

QUEENS-SHELBURNE MLA: ADVICE - THANK

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as a member of government, it is great when citizens in the Province of Nova Scotia provide advice to the government on how to grow the economy and how to move this province forward.

Tonight I'd like to thank the member for Queens-Shelburne for some great advice he gave us. The advice was to spend \$750 million on a capping stack so that we can plug the blowouts we have off the coast of Nova Scotia - I can't personally remember a major blow we've had here, but I think a \$750 capping stack would be a great investment off the coast of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, it actually reminds me of Sarah Palin . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, a \$750 million (Interruptions) I must have people's attention, Mr. Speaker. I hear a lot of heckling from the member for Pictou East, from the members of the NDP. Perhaps I could get some time back to finish my statement, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, \$750 million piece of infrastructure we've never had to use in the province reminds me of Sarah Palin's bridge to nowhere.

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

**HORNE, RYAN: MONTREAL/BOSTON GAME
- SLEDGE HOCKEY PARTICIPATION**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, Christmas is a time when dreams can come true. Ryan Horne, the son of Kim and Jimmy Horne of Horne's Road, Albert Bridge, is a true believer in Christmas miracles.

Ryan was called this afternoon to play sledge in the third period of the Montreal-Boston alumni game held at Centre 200 tonight. It has always been Ryan's dream to play hockey, but he never could before sledge hockey came around because of his cerebral palsy.

Ryan is the ultimate Bruins fan and tonight his dream has come true.

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

LEGISLATIVE SERV.: STAFF - THANK

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as Government House Leader and coming to the conclusion of a very productive session, I want to take this opportunity to recognize you and your staff, as well as our Chief Clerk and his staff; the Pages who have diligently been here at sometimes abnormal hours; the House administration staff; the Legislative Counsel; Hansard; Legislative TV, with a big shout out for the Star Wars scroll last night; to our Committees staff here at the Legislature and to our staff at the Legislative Library, which I should point out this was our first session with David McDonald as our Chief Librarian; to our Commissionaires and members of the Halifax Regional Police who have provided security here; to our caucus office staff, our constituency assistants; to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Kenny Greenham, who is taking his retirement and we wish him well and, as well, we want to welcome David Fraser as our new Sergeant-at-Arms.

On behalf of our entire government, we want to wish everyone, both here in the Legislature and outside, and those who support us, very Happy Holidays and safe travels during the holiday season.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY: DEBATE/DECORUM - RAISE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and just say a couple of quick words to my colleagues here in the House, to wish them all the happiest of holidays and a very Happy New Year. I just wanted to leave one thought with everyone as they move to their New Year resolutions.

I have watched this House now for two years and I believe that we could all do a little better in raising the debate in this House to a higher level and the decorum in this House. I would ask you all to give some thought on New Year's Eve on how each one of us could do just a little bit better as legislators in this hallowed Chamber.

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

MEDIA: IMPORTANCE - THANK

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, there are lots of thanks going around today so I just wanted to rise today to thank the importance of the media for informing the electorate of the proceedings of this House. As JFK stated clearly once, "I not only could not stifle controversy among your readers - I welcome it." I think is a very important thing and that's what keeps our ears informed.

Another thing he said was: And so it is to of the printing press - to the recorder of man's and woman's deeds, the keeper of his conscience and women's conscience, the courier of the news that we look for strength and assistance, confident that with your help we will be what we were born to be, free and independent.

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

MLAs: FAM. ASSISTANCE - THANK

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to thank all of those people who help us in our daily lives and that is our families. Happy New Year, Merry Christmas to all of our families. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

LEIGHTON, CLYDE: RECOVERY - BEST WISHES

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Clyde Leighton, who many of us know here as a Commissionaire at the Legislature. I know he has been recovering; he's in hospital. I know he has undergone some operations in the last while. I just wanted to extend our best wishes to him.

It has not been an easy time for him, but we know that any time we've come into the parking lot here we've always seen his smiling face. I do remember him giving me a treat just to cheer me up many days, Mr. Speaker. Such a small gesture, but a true measure of the good man that he is. With this statement, may we all extend our thoughts to him and let him know that we're thinking about him.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring no more Statements by Members, the House will now recess until 1:03 a.m.

[12:56 a.m. The House recessed.]

[1:03 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - MENTAL HEALTH SERV.: DELIVERY - CRISIS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Last week, a paramedic named Adam Hussey escorted a young man in crisis to the emergency room at the Cape Breton Region Hospital after that young man flung himself in front of Mr. Hussey's car. When they got there, they found that every one of the mental health patient rooms was full. As Mr. Hussey says, "This is where the system is failing him and everyone in Cape Breton."

I'd like to ask the Premier, will he agree with Mr. Hussey and now admit that there is in fact a crisis in the delivery of mental health services in the province?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I'll ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to respond.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: We all know that there are times when we will have all clinicians occupied. I know in this particular case there are a whole number of unknowns. We certainly are taking a look and taking each case that is presented to the department and to the emergency department at Cape Breton Regional very seriously. This is an ongoing look at this particular case.

MR. BAILLIE: What is known is that this young man was mentally ill. He was in crisis. He attempted to take his own life. He was basically picked up, luckily by Mr. Hussey, who is a paramedic, who knows this is not a rare incident. Mr. Hussey is a regular visitor to the emergency room at Cape Breton Regional. He knows this is the case far too often.

In fact, he then escorted this young man to the mental health unit at the hospital, only to find that he had actually been discharged from that mental health unit just hours

before. As Mr. Hussey says, there was nowhere to put him. "I hear all these people saying they're doing things - they want change - but nothing is changing."

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier now agree to call a public inquiry into the state of our mental health system so that people like that young man can get the help they need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members across the province who are working to support families and adolescents with mental health challenges. I want to thank the clinicians who have been providing support to this government in ensuring that we have the proper supports for families across Nova Scotia. We know there's more work to do, that's why the Minister of Health and Wellness continues to work with experts dealing with adolescent mental health, but really mental health issues across the entire population, and he will continue to do so to listen to those experts to make sure that we put in place the proper supports to help families.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer continues to be no. Despite all the evidence that people like this young man are not getting help, that there is a crisis in the delivery of mental health, that too many Nova Scotians who are mentally ill or the families that are struggling to help them are not getting the help they need, there is still no solution that makes sure they are cared for.

In light of all that, the Minister of Health and Wellness recently stated publicly that the government is considering closing some of the mental health units of the province. If we are not going to have a public inquiry before this session is over, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier to at least assure Nova Scotians that there will be no closures of the province's mental health units.

THE PREMIER: I believe what the Minister of Health and Wellness said, and we've said it many times in this House, that we would be speaking with health care providers, clinicians and mental health support people across the province to ensure that the services that we're providing communities with are the services that those communities require. We've said in some cases that the complement may change but that we, as a province, and clinicians and health care providers will continue to provide those supports to the Nova Scotia families that require them.

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

PREM. - DOCTORS: FIGHTS EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. After the CEO of Doctors Nova Scotia came to Law Amendments Committee this week, a source close to the Premier leaked information about negotiations that Doctors Nova Scotia have since called inaccurate and misleading.

After picking fights with home care workers, with nurses and all health care workers, with film workers, with teachers and all public sector workers, why has the Premier now started to pick fights with Nova Scotia's doctors?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The only thing inaccurate is what Doctors Nova Scotia are telling doctors across this province. We're going to continue to work with doctors to ensure that they are remunerated in the proper fashion but we wanted to make sure that the proper facts were out there and the 55 per cent pay raise is unacceptable, no matter what profession you are in.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier needs to be reminded that many of our province's doctors are aging and many of them will be retiring. That means that our province is going to need to be able to recruit and to retain doctors over the next number of years. In order to ensure patient care, our province needs to be an attractive place for doctors to practice.

Mr. Speaker, given the difficulty the government has had thus far in recruiting and retaining doctors, I want to ask the Premier how he thinks picking fights with doctors will further that cause.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I also want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness and all health care providers across this province who have been working with the minister to develop a health care delivery model that so many health care providers want, including doctors, who are part of looking for innovation, looking for an opportunity.

I can tell you there not a single doctor in this province who has asked us for a 55 per cent pay raise. It has been Doctors Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, who wouldn't communicate that to their members. We communicated with that to make sure all the facts were on the table. We're looking forward to finding a resolution to this. We're looking forward to working with doctors to ensure that Nova Scotians get the health care in communities where they deserve it.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Doctors Nova Scotia also said something else that was really quite troubling and that was about the fact that it was unclear what this government's vision for health care was and that there didn't appear to be any role for doctors in where this government was taking health care. A health care system without the involvement of doctors isn't much of a health care system.

I want to ask the Premier, how can it be that we're two years into the mandate of this government, two years into the largest reorganization of the health system in our province's history, and doctors are saying they have yet to be consulted and included in that process?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think what the honourable member is suggesting, I think what she said it was Doctors Nova Scotia who were suggesting that. Doctors have been included along all through this province. Doctors Nova Scotia do not, quite frankly, represent the doctors who were talking to this government and representing communities across this province. They want to be part of the solution. They want to be part of creating innovation. They want to be part in driving change and let me tell you, we will work with them and continue to drive change that ensures Nova Scotian families get the health care in their community.

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

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS: LEGISLATION - DRAFTING DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the government has made several attempts now to bring legislation to this House, governing the activities of public sector workers. Last Fall it was Bill No. 1 with the health unions, which was later found to be unconstitutional by the government's own hired arbitrator. That bill was drafted with the help of outside counsel. I would like to ask the Premier, who outside the government assisted in the drafting of the current bill before the House today?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We're very pleased to have been able to bring forward legislation that respects the workers across this province that provides them with a fair compensation package, considering the economic challenges this province is facing. We believe it is fair to workers as well as fair to Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that's great, but I asked who wrote it and I still don't have an answer to that question. I am interested in what's going on with the doctors of the province, as other members on this side of the House are. There seems to be two stories, one told by Doctors Nova Scotia and one told by the government about what's going on at their negotiating table. The doctors' representatives say the negotiations are going well; the Premier says they weren't going well. I'd like to ask the Premier if he could share with the House, who the government has hired as their lead negotiator in their negotiations with doctors?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to assure all members of this House that we have gone to the bargaining table looking for resolution, looking for a deal. It became very clear to us that what was being talked about at the bargaining table representing Doctors Nova Scotia was not being communicated to doctors, as we were hearing from doctors across the province about why they were part of this legislation. We very clearly had to lay out to them why they were part of this legislation because Doctors Nova Scotia was not communicating with them what they were asking from the Government of Nova Scotia.

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

PREM.: DEAF ADVOCACY ASSOC. - FUNDING ELIMINATION

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Deaf Advocacy Association has been forced to close its office and reduce support for Nova Scotians who are deaf or hearing impaired, after the funding was eliminated by the Premier in his Spring budget. I think given the events of the last two days, we can all agree that there is a need to have more support for Nova Scotians who are deaf or hearing impaired and who experience discrimination.

My question to the Premier is, why did his government eliminate the funding it provided to the Deaf Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Community Services to respond.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate all of the work that is done across the province by non-profits. We know that difficult decisions had to be made. In this particular case we also knew that funding had been reduced, I believe eliminated, by the United Way to this particular organization. We had worked with them for many years. The outcomes and the advocacy part of it at this point in time did not align with the mandate of Community Services. We have worked with them. We communicated that to them and we're going forward with working with other organizations that provide similar services.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, obviously the minister and the government didn't appreciate these services enough because the \$34,000 the Premier and the Minister of Community Services have saved provides virtually no benefit for the provincial government with respect to their deficit, but it has devastated and has had a devastating impact on those who rely on this organization for support. This organization has had to close its doors, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Premier if he and his government would restore the \$34,000 that the Deaf Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia requires to provide the services that they provide to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The Minister of Community Services has said that they're partnering with another organization providing that service. But to the question that was asked of me, I will look into this, have a look and see whether that decision that we made and who's covering that and making sure - and I will communicate that back to the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

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

PREM. - GREENHOUSE GAS: REDUCTION - NATURAL GAS USAGE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: The Paris Climate Change Conference is now calling on over 190 countries around the world to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Nova Scotians have done a lot already, but they may well be asked to do more to do their part as part of Canada's effort in that area.

There is mounting evidence that the amount of renewable energy that we can put on the grid here is reaching its natural maximum. But natural gas continues to provide a new way for Nova Scotians to generate electricity that would further reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, so I'd like to ask the Premier if he supports the idea of using more natural gas to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an affordable and clean way here in Nova Scotia.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all Nova Scotians who through successive governments have worked with governments and community organizations to reach our target of not only 10 per cent below the 1990 levels of GHG, but we'll actually achieve 20 per cent by 2020. That's a positive contribution, Mr. Speaker.

I've said to the Prime Minister and other Premiers that we have power rates that reflect that, as well as the motive fuel tax. We want flexibility, and any chance of what's happening in terms of the national government looking at what we do to deal with climate change - I've also said to them we have a tremendous opportunity as a country.

We have huge hydroelectric opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Manitoba. We should be moving forward building a hydroelectricity system that allows the transmission of hydroelectricity across this country, not only so that Canadians can be provided with a stable secure energy source but also so we have an opportunity to export it into a market that is starved for renewable energy.

MR. BAILLIE: That is, of course, all very well and good, but Nova Scotians, who have already done so much, may well be called upon by our new national government to do more.

Natural gas is a way of generating electricity that is cleaner than the way we do now and, in many cases, cheaper. So we have an obligation here to develop our natural gas resources offshore and onshore in order to do our bit for the environment and to help with the generation of electricity.

Mr. Speaker, it's been well over a year. We're still waiting for the government's definition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing so we can find out whether we have an opportunity onshore beneath our feet or not. So I'd like to ask the Premier if he will now

tell us when Nova Scotians will see a definition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing so we can get on with that new industry one way or another.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to thank all Nova Scotians for the tremendous work they've been doing in terms of reducing our carbon footprint.

I'm extremely excited about the activity that's happening in the Bay of Fundy with harnessing the energy of the Bay of Fundy, an opportunity for our region when it comes to hydroelectricity. We're looking at it across the nation. We're going to continue to work with the national government to ensure that we capitalize on these renewable energy sources that we have. Of course, we would look at all possibilities to provide any kind of cleaner, greener energy sources to the people of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM.: MARIJUANA - NSLC OUTLETS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this may be the last Question Period of this session, so I want to make this question a good one for the Premier. I am going to do that now.

Mr. Speaker, the new Liberal Government in Ottawa has made it clear that they intend to legalize marijuana across our country. Last week, the Liberal Premier of Ontario expressed her great interest in selling marijuana through the liquor stores of the Province of Ontario.

I'd like to take this moment to ask the Premier of Nova Scotia whether he also intends to sell marijuana through the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation retail outlets.

THE PREMIER: It sounded like a great suggestion for Ontario, so we, as a province, will look at what is happening, what proposal the national government brings out. We'll look at how that product will be made available in this country when it becomes legal in this province, when it becomes legal at the time. When it does, we'll do our part to ensure that we keep Nova Scotia children safe.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to accuse the Premier of blowing smoke on that answer, but in the spirit of the times, I'll avoid doing that.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government's mandate letters to the Minister of Justice require her to consult with her provincial counterparts about how best to legalize the sale of marijuana and how it would be retailed in that case. I will ask the Premier, will he assure

Nova Scotians now that they will be thoroughly consulted before his government considers how they'll allow retailing of marijuana across the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments. I do want to assure the member that I didn't inhale, just in case he is asking.

Let me tell you, this is one of those questions I said was one of the strangest questions I've received in a run for public office - this whole question when *Sun News* was asking people whether they were smoking marijuana or not, and I said no one would believe a 50-year-old man had never smoked marijuana. Thank God they knew my mother, so they knew it wouldn't be acceptable in my house.

I also want to tell him that the Minister of Justice has spoken to her national counterpart. She has offered to sit as part of a committee if they are looking at this, so the minister and the department are looking at this to find the best way to make sure that if this becomes a legal product in Canada, we make sure that we make it available in a safe way in this province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: MARGUERITE CTR. - FUNDING PARITY

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the Marguerite Centre is the only facility for women recovering from addiction and abuse in Nova Scotia. The Marguerite Centre receives 50 per cent operational funding from the minister's department, while the three men's facilities in the province receive 74 per cent, 90 per cent, and 93 per cent operational funding. This funding disparity amounts to a total of \$90,000.

The Marguerite Centre is currently at serious risk of closing if the issue of funding parity is not addressed by the minister. Can the minister explain why the Marguerite Centre receives such a considerable amount less in funding than similar facilities for men?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Who do you want?

MR. WILSON: The Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this again could be part of some of that disconnect in terms of funding, as the Department of Health and Wellness has been involved, and also Community Services. They've had some challenges for a number of years. I believe there is some reorganization that is going on.

We've reached out to the Marguerite Centre, and we're providing them with funding that will enable them to carry on their work for the remainder of this fiscal year, but more importantly, taking a look at equity across the recovery house sector and also looking at sustainability for the Marguerite Centre. There's no question the work they do is stellar and needed in the province.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Again to the Minister of Health and Wellness, we know the minister is providing \$40,000 to the centre to last them until March. He said they will be receiving this without providing explanation on the funding parity issue. Executive Director Lisa Mullin says she believes the Department of Health and Wellness is making her organization feel like they are poor managers of money, but the opposite is true. Mullin simply is looking for the minister to address the lack of funding parity, which has threatened the recovery of its residents and the attraction and retention of the staff that is so important to that facility.

Does the minister believe it's fair that he funds the Marguerite Centre far less than other recovery homes across the province?

MR. GLAVINE: It wasn't until the alarm bells, in terms of the challenges they had at Marguerite Centre, that the funding inequities that exist came to my attention. I've been out to the Marguerite Centre to meet staff, to meet clients there, to have a look at what is indeed taking place. They do have one very challenging arrangement with the federal correctional services. I believe a little bit of reorganization - and we as a department will work with them in the coming months to look at a strong and sustainable future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

EECD: HS EF TOURS - DEPT. POSITION

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you this morning will be to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I know in recent days the minister has made comments around the EF Tours that high schools in the province are considering taking. I think that they're still on. There seems to be a bit of confusion at my local school today, or yesterday now, as to the input of the province and specifically the minister.

I just wanted her, if she would, to clarify the position of her and her department on these tours, whether there will be decisions made or offered.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member for the question. As I said earlier this week, there were concerns that were raised across many provinces, but in particular, Alberta had taken a position with regard to international travel and in fact had said they would ban international travel, in light of the safety concerns that existed in some of the destinations for that travel.

Here in the province, we have contacted our school boards and asked them to go back to these parents and the school advisory councils and the school principals to have a second look at where those students would be travelling. In light of the unrest and the safety concerns that exist across the province, any decisions about the future of international travel are certainly within the hands of the parents and the schools and are not within my purview. But it certainly is, I think, my responsibility to raise the awareness and ask them to have those conversations.

MR. PORTER: I appreciate the clarification by the minister. I'll be attending a meeting sometime later today at Avon View High School, where I have two daughters who plan to be on a trip this coming March. I was very politely told today that perhaps I should check with my friend the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to ask why it is she's shutting this trip down. There's a lot of miscommunication within the parent group and these children, so I do appreciate the clarity around that.

I guess just to finish, minister, does the school board have the ability to actually cancel the trip? There's a lot of grey area with EF Tours. They are sort of part of the school, and they're not. I'm just curious as to whether the board has the authority to cancel these trips.

MS. CASEY: It's nice to know there's a friend over there. I do want to say to the member who will be going to the meeting that I think the nature of the trip is important. In fact, there are students who are doing international travel. That is something that's done outside of the school, but the students are in the schools. The fundraising that's done, whether it's a band trip or whatever, is certainly a great contribution from parents to raise the funds to take those trips.

I think it's important to distinguish whether this is a school-supported/funded trip or whether it involves students in the school. I think there's a difference because some of them, as I said, are organized and fundraised for outside of the school. I think that clarity would be important for the member to get at the meeting today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

TIR: CAPITAL BUDGET DETAILS - TIME FRAME

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. A high-level update for the capital budget was included in the overall budget update the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board provided earlier this week - at least they tell me it was earlier this week, Mr. Speaker. It seems like a lot longer ago. The government usually provides a detailed update on the capital budget in early December, around this time, anyway.

I'm just wondering if the minister can update the House on when we can expect to see the details of the capital budget?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. With respect to our capital plan, many of the large-scale projects that we have in place that are a number of years out, that are obviously amortized with significant investment from taxpayers already, so that is part of the 5-year capital plan. The local staff and the staff here in Halifax, Bruce Fitzner and the chief engineer, are working now on the final details for the local roads, so the maintenance paving and the annual allotments that we have. So the finishing touches, we're just working on a few specifics, so it will be early in the new year and we'll have that full and ready to go and released to Nova Scotians.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, there is a part of the capital budget that talks about schools and what's going to happen with schools. I'll ask maybe - and I'm not sure if that falls under the purview of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development with capital budget for school additions, alterations and new schools, or it might be under the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, but maybe either one of them could update the House as to when we can see what the plan is for what's happening around those types of buildings and structures.

MR. MACLELLAN: From our perspective, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal assumes those projects when the details and the design are pulled together, so that becomes part of the government's large-scale capital plan and the overall capital plan. It's not specific to our 5-year road plan, but it will be part of the overall collective capital plan. Now, with some of the changes inside government, they will be the function of TIR as well, so all those capital projects as they relate to infrastructure will be under our department.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: PICTOU CO. MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - UPDATE

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. When the session started, we heard from the Minister of Health and Wellness that we would soon hear an announcement about mental health in Pictou County and, I think at one point, he said we'd hear an announcement very soon before the House rises and it was maybe going to be the next week.

We have been a little busy here in the House and I didn't know if I missed that announcement. Maybe the Minister of Health and Wellness could update us if he has made an announcement about the mental health services in Pictou County, or if he plans to make one, because it's something that people are still very concerned about, obviously.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Yes, mental health services are always of concern to Nova Scotians. Knowing that, in fact, there are adequate services - in fact he himself, or at least one of his colleagues, talked about the fact that Nova Scotia is very well off in terms of the number of psychiatrists on a per-capita basis, and that is a good news story. In relation to what is happening at the Aberdeen, this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. I will be meeting with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, so presumably that would be an update meeting on things like staffing and stuff like that - would the people of Pictou County expect to hear from the minister shortly thereafter as to what they can expect in changes or improvements to services for mental health in Pictou County?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, we know that the whole services for Pictou County - and indeed as we move to a provincial model of service we know that not every community or every regional hospital can provide the full array of services - the review has been done for that area and we should have a determination very shortly on the array of services that will be provided in that area.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: BUDGET REDUCTION - VACANCIES

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, last month I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness about the 1 per cent budget reduction his health authority was trying to find in each department. Surprisingly, the minister didn't answer that question and today we've learned that Nova Scotia Health Authority CEO Janet Knox is trying to get her budget back on target in part by not filling vacancies.

I'd like to ask the minister, will he provide a detailed list of those vacancies?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, it is timely, in fact, the meeting today with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to review a number of decisions that have been made and others that are pending. What I can say is that the Nova Scotia Health Authority has found a tremendous number of efficiencies in their first nine months of operation. Procurement in fact has probably exceeded - the savings from procurement has exceeded expectations.

I will ask that question about positions not filled, but as the member opposite and former Health and Wellness Minister would know, under his watch there were periods of time as well when there were vacant positions as we looked for the human resources that could best fill those needs.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Oh I appreciate that the minister is going to ask the question but the question I asked him, will he provide us a detailed list - still no answer, Mr. Speaker. I think Nova Scotians deserve to know what the new health authority is doing around vacancies. Not filling vacancies is just kicking the problem down the road. CEO Janet Knox has called on all branches to find the 1 per cent savings.

Can the minister advise us if all branches - clinical care, cardiac care, dialysis, mental health, cancer care - have they all been asked to find the 1 per cent savings?

MR. GLAVINE: What I am pleased to say and can confirm for the House and all Nova Scotians is that the 1 per cent savings in fact are targeted towards the whole administrative block right across the province. Front line positions are being filled and we know that area has not been impacted by the 1 per cent ask.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**NAT. RES. - CAN.-U.S. SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT:
NEGOTIATIONS - TIMELINE**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Natural Resources. The softwood lumber trade agreement between Canada and the United States expired on October 12th. The 2006 agreement was reached to regulate Canadian softwood exports to the United States, while ending five years of court battles.

My question to the minister is, what timeline have you been provided with by the federal government regarding negotiations with the United States?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I can advise the honourable member that I have been in touch with my federal colleague who reached out shortly after being named to talk about this file. This file is very important not only to Nova Scotia but to the Maritimes as well.

The federal government is currently starting the process of negotiations with the federal government. It is anticipated that this is going to be challenging negotiations but we all know the importance of that industry to our province and to the Maritimes and we'll certainly continue to advocate that that exclusion that currently exists in that softwood lumber agreement for the Maritimes is maintained in any new agreements.

MR. DUNN: I thank the minister for that answer. The softwood lumber agreement returned \$4 billion in duties collected by the U.S. on Canadian producers and gave the Atlantic Provinces an exemption from quotas imposed on larger producers such as British Columbia. Since the agreement was signed, Nova Scotia's exports reached \$85 million last year. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

If the exemption was left out in a new softwood lumber agreement, it would be devastating to the Nova Scotia lumber industry, which is already struggling. My question to the minister, will the minister seek a guarantee from the federal government that the Atlantic Provinces exemption will be protected?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I do want to confirm with the member that that is the position of our government, that is the position we've taken with the federal government.

Just to clarify, we are now in a process, a holding pattern that basically has opened up the North American market in a free trade situation so Nova Scotia is actually competing right now with other jurisdictions in Canada because of this very fact that the agreement has expired, so we're actually doing quite well in comparison with our other jurisdictions in this free trade agreement.

Of course if there are any tariffs put in place, we will advocate that Nova Scotia does have an exclusion from that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

NAT. RES.: MELMERBY BEACH - CONCESSIONS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is also for the Acting Minister of Natural Resources. The licence plate says "Canada's Ocean Playground" and we do have a number of beautiful beaches and provincial parks, one of which is in Pictou East, Melmerby Beach. It actually graced the cover of the *Doers and Dreamers Guide* but visitors to Melmerby Beach cannot purchase so much as a bottle of water and I think that's a bit of a shame.

I'd just like to ask the minister what his thoughts are on concessions at Melmerby Beach.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, there are certain parks, beach parks included, that we do allow that sort of commercial activity to take place. However, it is a policy within the department and government that for many of our beaches, that the pristine human element, the free beauty of those places actually be preserved so there are places where we do not want to engage in that sort of commercial activity to preserve the natural beauty of those areas.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, there have long since been concessions at the beach. You could go there and have a lunch for many, many years, but you haven't been able to for the last few years so people of the area want to know if that's coming back or not? I think I heard the minister say, no chance, but I just want to make sure I didn't misunderstand what he was saying.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, I didn't say no chance, I just clarified it is the position of our government that in certain naturally beautiful areas that we minimize the human impact on those areas. One of the reasons why we are leading the country in protected spaces is to actually preserve that natural beauty, those natural ecosystems for the enjoyment of people.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

FINANCE & TREASURY BD.: FILM IND. - IMPORTANCE

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. This month we heard testimony from the Department of Finance and Treasury Board at the Public Accounts Committee, surrounding the film industry and the Film and Television Tax Credit that was eliminated. The member for Cumberland North asked the Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to explain what the GDP was and then went on to ask what percentage of the GDP the film industry represented. It appeared to observers the member was implying because they are a small percentage of the GDP they are unimportant. My question is, does the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board feel that because the industry is small that they are unimportant?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I think my colleague, the member for Bedford, earlier this evening clearly indicated (Interruptions) Sorry? She's not an actress, exactly and very much takes the role of acting in the film industry very important. I think the work of the Department of Business, Nova Scotia Business Inc., with the new film fund demonstrates that so, again, this government certainly appreciates the work of the film and television sector, the creative sector and the work they do, so it is an important part of our economy.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, at the Public Accounts Committee the Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was asked if the decision to cut the Film and Television Tax Credit was a good decision. He replied that it was good for Nova Scotia, but may not have been good for the industry. Does the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board agree that while the elimination of the Film and Tax Credit was not good for the industry it was good for Nova Scotia?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess for the benefit of the member, who wasn't in the Legislature when the decision around the Film Tax Credit which came down with our 2015-16 budget took place, I'd like to remind the member that at that time we didn't eliminate the Film Tax Credit; we made some modifications in the budget at that time. Subsequent to those modifications, the film industry indicated that they didn't feel that those modifications were the best use of the funds available so the Department of Business worked with the industry and came up with a new fund, which they have worked out, is in place now, and is working for the industry and the province.

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

NORTHSIDE SOCCER FIELD - INFRASTRUCTURE PROG.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, back in August of this year, a group of people on the Northside, headed by Angela Hull and Sandy Cantwell-Kerr, applied to the Kraft Project Play contest and were awarded the top prize of \$250,000 for upgrades to a local soccer field. We've worked with the municipality and we're looking to ACOA for some funding. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Health and Wellness and the statement came back:

We do not have the infrastructure program to accommodate a request of this size. We cannot expand on programs or fund one-off type programs. We are presently doing our infrastructure programs and when that is complete, the group will be welcome to apply for the program at that time.

I wonder if the minister could update us on when this infrastructure program review will be completed and if he'll allow me to bring this back to the people of the Northside, so when this is up to date they can reapply for some funding?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what the member is referring to is some changes within the department and getting our grant system, really for all government departments, in the right place. We've had organizations getting grants from as many as four different departments. Nova Scotians certainly expect that we have much more due diligence around the grant structure. That now is getting near the end.

In the new budget year, grants will of course be part of the 2016-17 budget and we expect to hear from organizations like the one referenced today.

MR. ORRELL: I guess my question to the minister would be, what size of infrastructure program exists now, and what departments can we apply to to see if we can get the money to help fund those projects?

MR. GLAVINE: We know that the federal government, probably through its infrastructure, possibly also ACOA, is now reviewing how they will look at capital projects for recreation. We know they're very, very important. We know they're a significant part of community development. Will there be a program that will be cost-shared is something we will have to see what happens. What I can guarantee all members of the House and Nova Scotians is that there will be recreation grants for communities in the 2016-17 budget year.

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

**ENVIRON. - WILDERNESS AREAS/NATURE RESERVES:
APPROVALS - NUMBER**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Minister of Environment.

The Parks and Protected Areas plan released in August 2013 commits to establishing and expanding 75 wilderness areas and 129 nature reserves by 2015. A department briefing note from August of this year said at that point that only 43 wilderness areas and nature reserves from the plan had been approved by Executive Council - and I'll table that.

My question to the minister is, specifically, how many wilderness areas and nature reserves have been approved by this government?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, I'm not "Acting"; I'm sworn in as the Minister of the Environment. What is it, the "Leader of the Official Opposition"? I am the official Minister of Environment.

What I think is important for the member opposite - she cited the number, I believe 40 or 43 that was in that August briefing note. She's citing the number of sites. What's an important fact is the percentage target of at least 12 per cent of protected area by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to be on track to meet that commitment.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I would suggest that the minister study his information because the NDP reached 12 per cent and was going towards 13 per cent, so it has already been reached.

That same briefing note said in August that the percentage of protected areas in Nova Scotia was 9.9 per cent - and I will table that. This number is well short of the provincial commitment to ensure, by law, that 12 per cent of the land in the province is protected by the end of 2015. My question for the minister is, considering 2015 is almost over, what is the specific percentage of protected areas in the province?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's suggestion at the beginning of her question's preamble that I get my facts straight, but I'd like to clarify for the member opposite - in her own statement she indicated a difference; she said that she had protected 12 per cent, but at the same time she cited the information in that briefing note that indicated that in August there was only about 9 per cent. I don't know how the NDP managed to protect 12 per cent when in August 2015 there was only 9 per cent. I really don't understand what the member opposite is talking about.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: MENTAL HEALTH UNIT - MEETING

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

The Aberdeen Hospital in Pictou County has been without a mental health unit for several months now. Several families are anxiously awaiting a decision. The minister mentioned earlier that there will be a meeting sometime, perhaps later today, this afternoon.

The question to the minister, has the minister invited any staff members from the Aberdeen Hospital to this meeting?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I know what has taken place in terms of reviewing the mental health unit at the Aberdeen is that staff have been involved with that process. A report is now available to start to take a look at and review the options that will be put forward. I know that will be one of the topics in today's meeting.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, several families in Pictou County that have members suffering with mental issues now feel that the mental health unit will not reopen. My question to the minister is, will the minister inform the residents of Pictou County the real reasons why the unit may not reopen?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, at this stage the report was finished - I believe December 16th was the final draft of the report. A number of options are being put forth as to how mental health services will be delivered in Pictou County.

I know that all those who have come with mental health issues and those in crisis and trauma amount to 15 in 18 weeks who required short-term help at the unit, and all of those got treatment and are back in the community.

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

TIR - FIVE-YEAR HWY. IMPROVEMENT PLAN

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the real, official Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. There are around 5,000 Nova Scotians who work in road building, according to the department. A \$2 million paving contract generates around 60 direct jobs. I can table that. The five-year highway improvement plan gives companies better opportunities to prepare for the next year's highway improvement project.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, can we expect to see this year's edition of a five-year paving plan while the House is in session?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Just for the member's information, we've been rolling out tenders to the road builders since October. We're the first government in the history of this province to have tenders out in October, and that's why they love us. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired. Just before we move on to Government Business, the honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes on an introduction.

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my colleagues' attention to the far end of the east gallery. I'd like to introduce the front staff and friends of the Hilton Hotel, which for me has become known as my second home. The staff is always friendly, and they always have a warm cookie and a big smile when I arrive. I want to introduce Brendon Kian-Jones, Dominic Joseph, Elizabeth Chapman, and Stephen Chew. Please stand up. (Applause)

I just want to add that Dominic Joseph is interested in pursuing a career in international politics, so good luck with that.

MR. SPEAKER: We'll now move on to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for 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. 148.

Bill No. 148 - Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act.

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

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 148, the Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act, be now read for a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, I've listened for the last number of days with interest to the comments my colleagues on both sides of the House have made through the legislative process in both second reading and the Committee of the Whole. We've spent many hours in this Chamber

discussing and debating the merits of this legislation to this point. I want to thank them, the members, colleagues on both sides of the House for their contributions and their comments to the debate thus far. I'd like to let them know that I look forward to hearing any additional comments that may be brought forward as part of third reading.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll allow those colleagues to make those comments.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I am pleased again to rise in opposition to Bill No. 148. Mr. Speaker, it's just amazing to us that the government continues to bring legislation to the House without any real evidence that it's actually even constitutional in nature. I think it's a reasonable expectation that when we get this far into a session, when we have legislation of this magnitude before us, that we know it will pass any constitutional test.

I know the government has quoted websites and done their best to give us their assurances that this time they really mean it, that this time it will be constitutional, but the fact of the matter is they imbedded in their own bill the doubts that they obviously have about the constitutional nature of what they are attempting to do. In several places in the bill they actually forbid the tribunals and the arbitrators and the boards that are set up by this Legislature in our province, quasi-judicial in nature, most of them if not all of them they forbid them from even examining whether the bill is constitutional when they are called upon to make rulings.

That is an odd way to create law, and I think it's a reasonable question to ask, why is that necessary in this one bill's case? It's not a normal practice in this Legislature, or any Legislature, that a bill would embed in itself that kind of a ban on having any of our public bodies examine whether it's constitutional or not. If that were normal, it would be in every bill. But it's not in every bill; in fact, it's not in any other bill, but it is in this bill in two places. On one hand we have future arbitrators, we have boards and tribunals that are set up by various Acts of this Legislature that are called upon to make rulings in this area from time to time, and they've all been banned from considering the constitutionality of this Bill No. 148 in the future.

The question is why? Mr. Speaker, what is the government afraid of? Are they afraid that they might rule that the bill itself does not meet the constitutional test that all Canadians expect? Why else would you write that into the bill? In fact, this bill sets up a board all on its own, the Public Service Sustainability Board, specifically designed to make rulings under the Act; specifically designed to rule on any questions that might arise in the future arising from this Act.

There is one area where that board is forbidden, by the bill itself, from acting and that is on the question of whether the bill itself is constitutional. Mr. Speaker, to create a board to make rulings under this bill, but then to forbid it from considering the very nature

of the bill itself and whether it is constitutional raises real alarm bells for a lot of people who care about these things. I actually believe that all Canadians do care about these things - everyone in this House should care about whether the things that we do here are within the bounds of the Constitution of Canada or not.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution and the Charter of Rights give to all Canadians certain rights and freedoms. Those rights and freedoms are there to limit the power of government to act in ways that are consistent with preserving them for every citizen of this province and of the country.

Mr. Speaker, when a government acts outside of those legal boundaries it is, in fact, doing an illegal thing. When that happens, those illegal things are eventually struck down by the courts, and when that happens, it ends up costing taxpayers more - and that is the road the government is embarking down.

Mr. Speaker, we have been down this road before with this government; in fact, we've been down this road more than once. The biggest example was Bill No. 1, which was only a year ago, where the government proposed to assign the public sector health workers directly to a number of health care unions. We supported the government's efforts to reorganize the administration of health care unions, and in so doing we were assured by the government that what it was doing was legal and constitutional. When the bill passed, the government appointed an arbitrator to then assign health care workers to a number of unions. That arbitrator determined that some of the things he was being asked to do by the government were unconstitutional and he could not do them.

A reasonable government operating within the bounds of the law would at that point learn a lesson and come back to this House and act in a constitutional manner with future bills. That is not what this government did.

First they attempted to fire that arbitrator because they didn't like what he had to say. He continued to make rulings, so they fired him a second time, and then a third time. That was bad enough, but on their next opportunity to bring a bill to the Legislature in this area - which is the bill that we have before us, Bill No. 148 - rather than write a bill that is sound and on solid legal ground constitutionally, they brought a bill to this House that includes these provisions forbidding arbitrators, boards, and tribunals - including the board created by this bill itself - from considering whether it is constitutional.

That makes this whole enterprise rest on pretty shaky grounds, and that is a big problem. Inevitably, someone will challenge the constitutional nature of this bill, and that will cost the taxpayers of Nova Scotia millions and millions of dollars in legal fees, in consulting fees, and in expense as the government attempts to defend it. If we reach a point where it is found to be unconstitutional, then the government has to go all the way back to the start and work out an agreement with their public sector providers - their partners, as

they call it - that will be fair, hopefully, to all sides, but may well cost the government more.

I say that because of course we actually support the notion of a government that lives within its means, that balances the budget, that controls its expenses, that reaches agreements that are affordable and fair to the taxpayer and to the workers themselves. We support those things. We've always believed in them, and we continue to believe in them. Nova Scotians, I am sure, want those things too. But when the day comes - if the day comes - when the government brings a balanced budget to this House, Nova Scotians are going to want to know that it is real, that it is true, that it is valid, and that it is not a fake balanced budget or one that is based on shaky constitutional grounds.

There have been many examples in this province's history where governments bring budgets to this House that they claim are balanced, that later on, often after an election, prove not to be balanced. We had just such an example before the last election, when the NDP Government brought a budget here that they said was balanced, and it turned out to be hundreds of millions of dollars of deficit.

We don't want to see that happen again, and the problem with this bill is that that may be the road that we go down as the costs pile up, the fees pile up, and the legal fees pile up, and it turns out that the savings that the government hopes to get, they don't get, because it's not done within the bounds of the Constitution of Canada and it is reversed. A budget that accounts for savings that end up getting reversed is not a balanced budget, and we do not want to see that.

It would have been much better if the government had actually done a good job of negotiating fair contracts that are fair to all sides with the thousands of people who provide health care services, who work in our schools, who are teachers, who work for the Public Service of Nova Scotia, who have come forward in this House and outside this House to say that they, too, are taxpayers who understand that it is a time of restraint.

They may have other issues like the working conditions in our classrooms, the learning conditions in our classrooms, as teachers have said; or the quality of the buildings that are our hospitals, Mr. Speaker - a variety of issues that the government could deal with while they lock in an affordable wage pattern for the future and work that out. That is the better way. I actually believe Nova Scotians are fair-minded people, and they prefer that way.

But when the government failed to negotiate in a way that's fair to all sides, they do what they have done before, which is resort to bringing bills to this House, which are shaky in their constitutionality. They had to reverse Bill No. 1 in the next session of the Legislature, when they brought in Bill No. 69, which was the amended Health Authorities Act, to undo what they did. Ironically, what the health unions have been asking for - bargaining associations, which the government rejected - is exactly where the government

ended up at the end of the day, having accomplished nothing of their own objectives except to cost taxpayers a lot of money.

Now we have a bill of a much greater magnitude financially but is on the same trajectory. The government has set certain financial objectives. They may end up accomplishing none of them and in fact costing taxpayers a lot more. On this side of the House, we cannot stand for that.

We'll see what happens when arbitrators and tribunals and boards start to make rulings under this new bill. They're forbidden from even considering the constitutionality, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? The government cannot legislate that same restriction to the courts, and that is inevitably where this will end up. Whatever rulings get made, millions and millions of dollars will be spent trying to find out.

A concern was raised recently about whether the government can even account for the savings it hopes to achieve under this bill when it is based on such shaky constitutional grounds. That's actually a good question because the Auditor General and those who look at the books of the province and those who review the budgets that the government brings forward will have to consider whether the savings that this bill will lead to are actually sufficient enough or secure enough or realistically achievable enough when there are constitutional questions outstanding to allow for the government to account for them. If that is the case, then they will have achieved nothing other than to have abandoned the process of trying to negotiate fairly in order to push a lot of public sector workers around, and we'll see.

In a way, Mr. Speaker, that brings me to the doctors of the province, who are the latest to feel not only disrespected but really pushed around by the government. They have been at the negotiating table since May - seven months ago now. They and their representatives have, over the course of the history of this province, worked out negotiated settlements, often within the context of balanced budgets, avoiding even arbitration to get what both sides needed.

As we know, the doctors of Nova Scotia, compared to other doctors around the country, are not overpaid. They are arguing that they're actually under the national average. I'm not here to decide how much doctors should be paid, but I will say that they've always been able to work out an affordable and fair compensation package, whether it's on fees or on their medical insurance or on professional development. They've always been able to work that out in a way that is respectful to taxpayers, in a way that allows doctors to practise in Nova Scotia, to be recruited to Nova Scotia, to graduate from the Dalhousie Medical School and stay in Nova Scotia. It is a risky road to go down when a government puts that at risk.

Mr. Speaker, what is so interesting is that the government is not really putting that at risk over money because that is a negotiation that continues to go on at the bargaining

table. They are putting at risk to achieve a public relations objective, obviously, because no Nova Scotian who is watching the scene really believes there was some accidental leak of what the doctors and the province's negotiator are talking about.

The government chose to deliberately put into the public domain something that went on at the negotiating table in an attempt to embarrass doctors and portray them as greedy. The government, with the Premier leading the way, is saying one thing and Doctors Nova Scotia is saying something else. Why don't we call that for what it is: a government feeling the heat from this bill, having given three or four different reasons for the bill - the reason changes every other day - landed on greedy doctors as the most recent excuse for why they are doing what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt the doctors came to the table with some ask last May - not yesterday but last May - and that is now what the government wants to launch into the public domain, in an attempt to score public relations points off the backs of doctors. Clearly they realize they are on shaky ground with this bill, if they've resorted to trying to embarrass the doctors of Nova Scotia in order to achieve their means.

I hope that between the government itself and the doctors, we'll actually get a detailed outline of what is being negotiated at the table so that Nova Scotians can judge for themselves whether the Premier and the government has treated doctors fairly in their public relations battle yesterday and today or not.

In Question Period today I asked the Premier, who is the government's lead negotiator at the table with doctors? He declined to answer that question, Mr. Speaker, and it's funny because it's a pretty straightforward question. It's a very straightforward question - who is representing the Department of Health and Wellness in their negotiations with doctors?

I don't know why the Premier didn't want to answer that question. He could have. If he didn't want to answer it, he could have referred it to the Minister of Health and Wellness who surely knows, since it's a big dollar item, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the government does tell us eventually because it will be very interesting to know who that is. I hope it's not the same person who helped the government draft the bill that is before us. Imagine the situation where on the one hand the government is negotiating with doctors and on the other hand is asking that same person to write a bill that will basically undermine those negotiations at exactly the same time. That would not be fair dealing.

That's a question that I think the government needs to answer so that again Nova Scotians can judge for themselves whether there is a reasonable effort being made to find the savings that taxpayers need to find, while ensuring that we have the doctors' services around the province, or whether this is all just a public relations stunt to embarrass a group of Nova Scotians who provide medical services, in an attempt for the government to bolster support for a bill that is on shaky grounds constitutionally.

Mr. Speaker, these are questions that have just arisen in the last few days as this bill works its way through the Legislature. As we consider the bill and its constitutionality, of course this does not happen in isolation of what goes on around the country. We have pointed out that similar legislation in other provinces, like British Columbia with the teachers there, like Saskatchewan with the public sector workers there, that bills much like this one are being challenged on constitutional grounds and costing the taxpayers of those provinces millions of dollars.

We can't afford to throw that kind of money away. Why not bring bills here that are clearly within the bounds of the constitution and save taxpayers the money that will go into defending them? That would be a reasonable way to go, but that has not happened.

Here we are at this late hour, in third reading now, looking at a bill that the government says will save money, that we say will actually cost more money and be years being sorted out. The government has gone out of its way to basically burn its relationship with many of the partners, as they call them, that provide important medical services or teaching services in the province. I really think, as we look at all that has happened here over the last week, that the government has basically, through Bill No. 148, made an admission of failure.

The bill basically says, "we can't negotiate a good deal for taxpayers; we can't, we give up, we can't do it" - an utter admission of failure, considering that every one of the people they are negotiating with has said that they too want to be part of the solution of getting our costs under control, and that the issues they have are largely non-monetary. Why not take them at their word and lock in that wage pattern and talk about the other things that are also important, like the classroom experience, like the state of our hospitals, like the malpractice insurance that specialists like gynecologists are struggling to pay, particularly in rural areas, because of their skyrocketing costs? Why not talk about solutions?

When you bring a bill to the House that sidesteps all of that, that admits failure, that admits the government can't negotiate on behalf of taxpayers to get their way, and instead has to push people around and bring in a bill like this, on top of the hundreds of nicks and cuts to service organizations across the province, really, what Nova Scotians see is that there is no vision for how we can actually grow Nova Scotia and make it a better place. All they see are cuts. All they see are freezes. All they see are bills that go beyond the bounds of the Constitution, or allegedly do, and that is it.

So they may be focused on their fiscal envelope, but that can't be the whole story. That can't be all there is to running a province. There is a whole other side that has been completely ignored in this session, completely ignored in this bill, and completely ignored in the budget update that came out last week. That budget update showed that despite all the cuts and attempts to legislate a fiscal envelope for the people who work for the province, the deficit of Nova Scotia actually got bigger.

The government managed to run the province from a \$98 million budget deficit a year ago to a \$240 million deficit today. Clearly, whatever they're doing, it is not working; it is not working even in the financial sense, as the deficit got worse. It's approaching a quarter-billion dollars, every cent of which is going to get added to the debt of the province, and it's going to leave a much greater bill for future generations of Nova Scotians to pay.

Now, we don't want that, Mr. Speaker. The government says they don't want it either, and yet they continue to take action that does nothing but drive up our debts and deficits further. We cannot support that, and we don't support that. We are voting against this bill because it will just make things worse.

Beyond that, it also shows that outside of cutting things here and there, particularly services to rural Nova Scotia, outside of being unable to negotiate a bill that is fair to taxpayers and bringing in a bill to impose one, the government is completely devoid of any action, any idea that might actually work on the hope and the growth side, which is putting in place the rules that create jobs, putting in place some hope and opportunity for young people whether they work in the film industry, whether they live in rural Nova Scotia and want to develop the natural resources that we have around us, or whether, when they graduate from our community colleges and universities, they want to see that there is an opportunity for them to stay and raise a family and work with some prosperity here in Nova Scotia.

Wouldn't it be better to have spent all of this time, day and night that we've been here this week and for the whole session, working on those things? But that is not what's happening. It's like that great old saying: You can't cut yourself to greatness. Well, you can't be about bills like this alone and have nothing else to offer to the people of Nova Scotia - that is another reason to be opposed to this bill.

I am truly very concerned - although with the majority on the Liberal side, we know the bill will eventually pass, likely in the next few hours - that that won't be the end of the story. That won't be the end because we're now going to go down a path, thanks to the government, of legal challenges and millions of dollars in fees and, at the end of the day, end up right back where we started, which is with a government now with its tail between its legs having to go back to the very public sector workers that it is imposing this bill on today and negotiate something workable, and constitutional, with all the costs that that will imply, plus all the legal fees and consulting fees that the taxpayers of Nova Scotia will be asked to pay.

Any budget that the government brings forward between now and then is going to have a big asterisk beside it because it will be based on pretty shaky constitutional ground that may all get reversed, Mr. Speaker. We've seen too much of that in Nova Scotia. The taxpayer here deserves to know, when budgets come to this House, when they are balanced that they are truly balanced. They deserve to know that, and they can't know that as long as shaky bills like this continue to be brought forward.

So with that mild critique, I will take my place. I look forward to the rest of the debate in third reading.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place for third reading on Bill No. 148, a bill which is falsely named, I would suggest, the Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act. This bill has very little to do with sustaining public services, I'm sorry to say - and I will speak to why I believe that actually is the case.

First let me say, Mr. Speaker, how profoundly concerned I am, as the representative for Halifax Needham, about the direction that this government has taken with respect to labour relations in our province over the past two years. Without a doubt, labour relations have been shattered in our province in the public sector by this government. I don't think it's any exaggeration to say that a relationship that hinges on the fundamental importance of respect and trust no longer exists from either side. That's very apparent, I think, to anybody who's observing what has occurred in the past two years. It's not only this bill, but it is the accumulation of all of the pieces of anti-labour legislation that this government has brought forward, cumulating here with Bill No. 148, which probably is one of the most diabolical and perhaps nasty pieces of any labour legislation I've had the misfortune to have to speak to.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if anybody thinks for one moment that this particular piece of legislation will not have a negative impact on public services in our province then I have a lovely Volkswagen diesel, clean diesel, out in the parking lot that I would like to sell. I understand the clean emissions technology is of a very high quality, second to none.

This bill will have significant impact on the public sector and public services in our province and I fear not in a good way. If we had a bill that was really about sustaining public services, I would submit that one of the first things, the central feature of such a bill, would be to ensure that there are reasonable investments in the largest component of what a good delivery model would be for public services and that's the people themselves who deliver public services, the human resources.

Mr. Speaker, right at the outset I want to go on record that the New Democratic Party does not believe in unilateral freezing of people's wages, unless that is something that people themselves negotiate through a fair and respectful collective bargaining process, which incidentally, need to include third party arbitration that is independent of the will of the employer.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of living hasn't been frozen, as far as I know; food costs continue to rise. This government increased 1,400 fees, many of which we pay annually or every other year. Tuition has been uncapped by this government and they've eliminated

the debt reduction program for young people. This government has all but killed jobs in the film industry in our province and people aren't working. They've cut the operating budgets of our nursing homes. They've slashed \$4 million from mental health programs under the mental health strategy. Where is it going to end?

You know workers go to the bargaining table and they recognize that the process is one of give and take. Workers who have no right to strike under the particular piece of legislation that applies to them, like civil service workers, for example, have arbitration to fall back on.

In other parts of the public sector where workers have a right to strike, arbitration is also a tool that the parties can agree to use to avert a strike, but they have to know that an arbitrator will have the ability to ensure that at the end of the day all of the parties are treated fairly. This bill alters the relationship and the balance between workers and employers. It alters it in a way that makes it pointless to go through the process. What it does is, it holds a threat over the heads of the various working groups to which this legislation applies, a threat that a settlement will be imposed.

Mr. Speaker, we have had enough threats from this government. This government started its mandate threatening home care workers; they moved on to nurses and other health care workers; then they went to teachers; and now they've gone to civil servants, highway workers, doctors.

Prior to the election of this government the Premier indicated that he respects collective bargaining and he respected the collective bargaining rights. But, Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and it has become all too obvious that those were hollow words.

The civil service union has reached a tentative agreement with its members and was recommending acceptance before this legislation was tabled. It was the union's plan to go and speak to its members, especially after the teachers had rejected a fairly similar offer, which to me seems like a pretty reasonable decision to have taken. But this government attempted to interfere in that process and wrote a letter to the head of the union demanding that a vote be held in the time frame of the government's choosing.

Mr. Speaker, who's advising this government? I'm no lawyer, but common sense would dictate that you don't dictate insensitive labour relations negotiations, and you certainly don't do it in the face of a 61 per cent rejection by teachers of a very similar offer having been made just shortly before the civil service union decided they'd better do some consultation with their own membership. This legislation really is in the face of that union and those workers in a way that I don't ever recall a government treating its own public sector workers.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from the highway workers at Law Amendments Committee. They are a very dedicated group of hardworking men and women. I have, probably, a soft spot for highway workers because my dad was a member of that union. These men and some women work under very difficult conditions, at all hours of the day and night. They can be away from their families, over Christmas for example, if there is a winter storm. I've had that experience in my family when my dad had to be out in really terrible weather conditions.

They don't earn big money; they make very modest incomes. They have benefits, which is fantastic - health benefits, pensions. They had to fight for that, their union had to fight for that. On the occasions when they've gone to arbitration, they've never received more than cost of living; they've never received more from an arbitrator than the cost of living. This bill takes that away from them. It takes that away from those workers, and it takes that away from their families, Mr. Speaker.

Teachers - every person in this House can tell you the story of their favourite teacher who made an impact on them in their lives. We all know what teachers do and the profound impact they have. I feel bad for many of the teachers in our province. I've watched over 15, 20 years as we, as a society, have piled on more and more and more requirements. I almost fainted when I heard the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development on Information Morning talk about how teachers no longer had to attain 500 measurable objectives, it has been cut down to 200. I thought to myself, how in the world could you even begin to teach to 200 outcomes? While 200 is a lot better than 500, I'm not sure it makes a great deal of difference, if it's simply unachievable.

So we pile on and we pile on more and more requirements in the curriculum and then if kids don't excel at math or literacy, we look at the teachers and blame them. We really need to address this, and I don't think the way to address it is Bill No. 148. Teachers deserve more respect than that and deserve more respect than some mysterious senior official in government, some deep throat, whispering in the ear of the president of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union that if your members don't accept this there will be legislation.

Doctors deserve more than a government that seeks to pick fights with their bargaining agent, Doctors Nova Scotia, implying they're greedy or irrational. This does a great disservice to a profession that places patients and the interests of patients at the centre of what they do every day. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you would feel about receiving treatment in the health care system from people who feel disrespected and undervalued or not valued, but I can tell you how I would feel.

People who feel disrespected and undervalued can check out and people who feel disrespected and undervalued, who have options, can move out. That has happened in Nova Scotia and not just for doctors, nurses, health care workers, social workers, technicians, technologists, diagnostic services, blood collections, ultrasounds, CAT scans, PET scans, ward clerks, orderlies, dieticians, kitchen staff, laundry staff, cafeteria staff, mental health

workers, home care workers, and people who work in long-term care. This is a bill that will affect all of those people and it will erode their standard of living. And if that happens it doesn't just hurt them and it doesn't just hurt them and their families, I would say to you it hurts all of us.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board talks about the need to protect the fiscal plan. I would submit to you that the fiscal plan is an agenda that is constrained with political timelines and a complete failure of government policy on the revenue side. The Party of Business is unable to attract business; the Party of Business has been unable to attract investment to the province; the Party of Business has been unable to grow the economy; the Party of Business has been unable to provide good-paying jobs to Nova Scotians and that's the failure that has undermined the government's fiscal plan.

The government and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board hope nobody will notice that, nobody will notice that they've failed. They want the attention to be on someone else, someone else who they can blame for their own failure.

The head of Nova Scotia Business Inc. came in front of the Public Accounts Committee and when she was asked about the job targets and the investment targets, she said there weren't any. Imagine that. No job targets, no investment targets, none.

When members of that government were on this side of the House, they were very big on job targets. You would think that was the only thing that really mattered, so it's shocking to find out that Nova Scotia Business Inc., under this government, has no job targets.

So what does this government have, because the Party of Business is failing at creating business opportunities and growing the economy? What they have is cutting the public service, cutting the public sector, the very thing that has brought stability in many local communities and economies, now they're going to undermine and cut with their program of austerity.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government's fiscal plan is a Trojan horse. It's an austerity plan to cut public sector jobs, wages and benefits, and that's about it. Now it's an odd belief, if you think about it - if more of us were worse off, then somehow collectively we're all going to be better off. By my calculation, all we will be is just more people worse off with Bill No. 148. Collectively we'll actually be poorer, less prosperous. Eroding living standards drags our province down. It does not build us up and it does not allow us to move ahead. It has been tried before and it has failed.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board says that Bill No. 148 is about protecting public services but we have absolutely no evidence from this government that they value public services or have any intention of protecting them; quite the contrary, actually. I worry about all of the neocons in the government ranks, who on more than one

occasion talked about how their priority is tax cuts - tax cuts for businesses, tax cuts for corporations. They talk a lot about how there is too much tax.

The reason we pay a lot of tax isn't because child care workers or child protection workers or school secretaries or highway workers are so highly paid. It's because those who are the very best off among us often don't pay their fair share, frequently availing themselves of offshore tax havens and other tax-avoiding schemes - all perfectly legal, because our Parliaments and our Legislatures see nothing wrong with this. The Premier's own Deputy Minister of Planning and Priorities is a corporation to avoid paying his fair share, and the Premier thinks that's just great. He wishes more people availed themselves of tax-avoidance schemes. Imagine, Mr. Speaker. Imagine.

We have the great privilege of living in a very rich country, and although perhaps compared to other provinces, we may be small by size, geography, population, and even our economy - the GDP - we are not an underdeveloped province or country, without clean water or electricity. We're rich in natural resources - our fishery, blueberries, forestry, our oceans, shipbuilding. Our provincial debt-to-GDP ratio is actually quite good, and it has dropped quite significantly from where it was a number of years ago. It's roughly, I think, around 34 per cent or 35 per cent right now.

I don't know if people know what the GDP-to-debt ratio of Greece is, for example, but it's about 165 per cent to the GDP. (Interruptions) I hear the Government House Leader saying, well, the minister for the public sector would know this. That little piece of trivia comes from a very excellent book written by a guy whose name is Michael Lewis. He is a financial columnist with one of the big American newspapers. He also wrote the most fabulous book on baseball you're ever going to read, if you're interested in baseball. He wrote this very interesting book after visiting five or six countries - Iceland, Ireland, the U.S. - I think he went to Greece and possibly Italy, maybe. He looked at the financial crisis in each one of those countries. Anyway, it's pretty interesting.

If you look at the American economy and their debt to GDP, I think it's in the 65-per-cent range. Think about that - Nova Scotia's debt to GDP is 35 per cent. In a way it's not fair to compare ourselves to the American situation. They're a big country; they have a much larger population and economy. I suppose in terms of economies of scale, they could handle a better debt-to-GDP ratio. Nevertheless, the kind of hysteria that is perpetuated sometimes about the financial situation of the province needs to be put into an objective context, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the objective context.

I'm not saying that deficits are good; they're not. I'm actually somebody who believes it's better to be able to pay for your groceries without putting them on your credit card. But, sometimes if you're in a situation where you're not going to be able to feed your kids unless you put them on your credit card, then maybe you have to do that until you can generate more revenue so you can stop doing that. As I said, Mr. Speaker, we're very lucky.

We live in a very rich country and in a province that has the capacity to offer a very good standard of living to the people who live here.

The Ivany commission did not recommend that government slash and cut the public sector - their focus and their emphasis was on growing the private sector; their focus and their emphasis was on doing better in terms of growing the private sector.

We're 51 people in this province of almost 1 million people. We have a great privilege and a great responsibility. We're 51 people who are deciding the immediate futures of 75,000 of our fellow citizens and their families with this bill. It's a responsibility that I take very seriously, and I'm sure I'm not alone in that.

Mr. Speaker, 17 per cent of our province's workforce will directly feel the impact of this legislation. One of the staff in the NDP caucus office was at a car dealership the other day and she overheard some of the staff at the dealership discussing this very issue of the collective bargaining with the public sector - teachers, civil service workers, and others. The people at that dealership were talking about getting ready for some tough times ahead. They know who their customer base is; they know that it's people who have good-paying, secure, middle-class incomes who spend those incomes in the local business community. They buy cars, they take vacations; they do renovations on their homes.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board tells us that for every 1 per cent increase in salary for the public sector, it represents \$50 million. So this will be taking \$50 million this year out of the pockets of public sector workers and out of the economy. It will be taking an additional \$50 million in the following year - \$100 million.

You know, the federal Liberal Party just went into government rejecting this austerity agenda. They went into government with the expert analysis and assessment of people like David Dodge, the former president of the Bank of Canada and the former Deputy Minister of Finance under Paul Martin when he was the Finance Minister. David Dodge said in an interview during the federal election, that while the economy is so weak and growth in the economy is so weak, this is not the time for governments to be retreating and adopting austerity. Governments need to be stimulating the economy; they need to be creating jobs.

This government apparently pays no attention to what's happening on the federal scene. Surely they would have heard this; surely they would have thought about whether or not the fiscal plan they have that isn't working on the revenue side, might not need to be reconsidered.

Mr. Speaker, I went to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's financial update the other day. I found it very interesting, but I also found it very curious. The minister has downgraded the predictions for growth in our economy this year, based on the modelling that the economists in the department do. There was no mention made that the

Conference Board of Canada has indicated that Nova Scotia's economy is predicted to grow next year and the following year as well, by 2.5 per cent, I believe, leading economic growth actually of all of the provinces, in part due to the shipbuilding contract.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the fiscal picture will look like when we get to the Spring budget. Maybe by the time we get to the Spring budget, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board will be looking at the Conference Board of Canada's analysis of Nova Scotia's economy. But it will be too late because this bill is going to pass, and the wages of people in the public sector will be frozen.

The other thing I want to raise, Mr. Speaker, and this is a very serious concern, is just how sustainable are the results of a wage freeze? Wage freezes have been done in every province of this country over the past 20 years. They have proven not to be sustainable. Workers who fall behind eventually want to catch up. They insist on catching up. You cannot suspend forever the collective rights of workers. Some future government may be the ones who have to pay. This is a bad plan if the government is just pushing off the responsibilities that they need to be dealing with today on to some future government.

One other very troubling aspect surrounding this legislation, and, in fact, other pieces of anti-labour legislation, has been the persistent attack on unions. I know that unions are not popular. They win no popularity contests. And why would they? We've had 25 years or more of relentless attack by right-wing think tanks and corporate media who are actively engaged in systematically eviscerating their own unionized workforces. So I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised when the Canadian Taxpayers Federation attacks public sector unions - the same Canadian Taxpayers Federation who won't tell you who funds them. (Interruption)

It's not government, the member for Cumberland North says - newsflash. It's not government, so you don't have to be accountable, and you don't have to be transparent. You can get your funding from rich corporate interests, American interests, foreign interests and influence public policy. That's fine, I guess, because it's not public money. My, my, what an interesting Liberal Party we have here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, the number one job of this government right now needs to be working hard to get people back to work and in work, especially young people and health care providers and film workers. This government should spend more time working to help workers than attacking workers. In many cases the only thing standing between a decent standard of living for people in our province is the union that they belong to.

As I indicated at the outset, this is a terrible piece of legislation - a terrible piece of anti-labour legislation. The previous speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition, talked about whether or not this bill would survive a constitutional challenge, a Charter challenge. I have no idea if this bill would survive a constitutional challenge or not, a Charter challenge, but I have to say that, whatever view the courts might take of this bill, it should

not be the only test. That's a legal test. It's an important test, but you know, I think there's probably an even more important test, and that is a moral test - a test on what's right, what's good, what's in the public interest. This bill is not right, it is not good, and it is not in the public interest.

Our province does have financial challenges and financial difficulties, but Bill No. 148 is in no way the solution to those problems. For that reason, I and my colleagues in the NDP caucus are not in support of this bill and will not be voting to support this bill. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand for a few moments to talk about Bill No. 148. This is a bill we've heard a lot about over the last number of days, number of hours, as we've debated it through a whole bunch of the sequences here in the House. As most folks would know, third is third and final reading of a bill before it becomes law, or at least becomes ready for law whenever it's enacted by government.

The reason I stand quickly tonight is, firstly, because my wife's a schoolteacher, and if I didn't stand and speak to this bill, I probably would not be able to go back home. So of course I would speak to this bill in her name, as well as speaking on behalf of the 75,000 employees who are caught under this wage pattern.

There have been a lot of things said along the way, and we agree on a couple of points with government. That really revolves around the issue of finding spending constraint, finding a way to balance our budget to ensure that we don't make the situation for future generations worse. If I thought this bill really did that, then maybe I would be thinking more positively about it but I don't believe this will. It might solve a couple of immediate problems, but it does not solve the problem into the future.

We have, as the Official Opposition, introduced a number of bills over the last couple of years. The one that I want to reference in this particular case is the Future Generation Act, I think is what it is called, or something similar to that. The idea was to take any piece of legislation or anything the government does, put it on a lens for 20 years out and see what the effects of today will be on the government of the future.

So if we go out 20 years from this decision, it goes to the issue that the Leader of the NDP was just talking about - at some point wages will increase for these individuals. Not only will they probably increase by a fair amount, whatever that amount may be - I've seen wage patterns in this province for the last 12 years of 2.9 per cent, 2.1 per cent, 2 per cent and so on, I've seen 3 per cent. So there has been a little bit of change, but they've always fit just a little above what inflation might be.

So if we're saying today that 20 years, or even over the course of the five years that this bill truly locks in the very sparse increases, which are less than what inflation really is, at the end of this contract as the new contract will be negotiated, they won't be just asking for a 3 per cent increase, they probably would be asking for a much higher one. So that future government - whether Liberal, Progressive Conservative, or NDP - will have to wrestle with the decision that's made here. They'll have to wrestle with the fact that since it wasn't managed there, it's going to have to be managed here by either paying out extra, which will affect the coffers and the budget of Nova Scotia, it will cost us more in the end.

The issue that revolves around - and I've asked this question in the Law Amendments Committee a couple of times to some of the presenters - the issue of retention and hiring. So put yourselves in the job market today. Many of these individuals are highly mobile. These skills are extremely transferable, whether you are a health care worker, whether you are a teacher, or whether you are an engineer, it goes on from there - these jobs are very transferable. If you are offered more money to go somewhere else in the country and you are mobile, you probably will take it because you can no longer afford the high taxes that Nova Scotia offers, the high property taxes that it offers, the high lifestyle costs that we do have here in the province, the high energy costs we have in the province.

People will be making a decision whether they want to stay with this kind of wage pattern or, even worse, we'll have difficulty filling the positions we already have.

The member for Sackville-Cobequid asked a question during Question Period when he was talking about the unfilled positions within the district health authority. Well those positions in a lot of cases sometimes are held and other times you really just can't find the person to fill it because in some cases they're offering more money in another province. This wage pattern doesn't allow for us, I think, to be competitive with other markets, so when we talk about the problem with mental health and not having enough psychologists and (Interruption)

HON. LEO GLAVINE: The second highest in Canada per capita.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: It doesn't matter, Mr. Minister, we still don't have enough because people aren't getting the services they require. They won't have enough psychologists; we don't have enough doctors.

Yes, I sat in that minister's seat for a number of years and the same issue - we do have a high proportion of doctors in this province, but we don't have them in the right places. If we're trying to recruit to Yarmouth, or Sydney, or anywhere in between, we're going to have to be offering competitive wages so that it's attractive to come here.

We can sell the area as much as we want; we know this is the best province in Canada. We know we have some beautiful places to live and great communities and great people, but at the end of the day a lot of these individuals still have to make decisions on

how much money they're going to be making and whether they'll be able to support a lifestyle that is appropriate for them. So how is this going to be able to retain and recruit others to the positions that we know are open and waiting for people in the district health authority?

On the teaching side, I think the Teachers Union has tried really hard to say listen, it's not about the wages, which I can believe; they have talked a lot about that. They're concerned about teaching conditions. They're worried about the availability of services for their students. I have talked about this before about my wife's work, working in the learning centre at Par-en-Bas High School, talking about the work that she does with autistic children and other children with special needs. They are lucky compared to other schools in the area where they do have a number of services available to that population, but a lot of other places don't.

Other places don't have the trained interventionists that are required to help these students, to help them at their level to be able to get them through the school system to be able to participate in today's economy. All of these individuals have the right to receive a fair education.

What I think schoolteachers were really going for - the teachers themselves - is they just want to be able to teach children, to be able to have the services available to them, and they felt that discussion was really not in the debate over wages. It can't be just about wages and that's the idea of negotiation.

I think the shame of it all is that all of those things were left off the table in this particular case. There is a give and take. I've never belonged to a union so - well, I did, I belonged to one for about a week, the CBC one and that was when they went and fired 12,000 employees back in the 1990s, so I got a whole week in. I did a whole week at CBC, great training that was.

The point is that in a negotiation, people put everything on the table so that they know what their needs and wants and requirements are. From that basis point you negotiate things off the table and you come up with a fair wage plan but also a discussion around working conditions. In the particular case of teachers, their working conditions really revolve around teaching our children and providing them with the best opportunity possible in a very good education system, but an education system that could be that much better.

Teachers overwhelmingly voted against this contract because they felt that these things were not discussed at the table. Well, I'd like to win an election at 60-odd per cent because that would be an overwhelming thing. Governments win governments at 30 per cent, this was double that, so it was an overwhelming decision, contrary to what we were hearing. I would have said a week before the vote that actually the teachers were going to accept it and something changed in that last week and it did revolve around feeling left out on those other items.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness wants us to stand and talk about his experience as a schoolteacher and I respect him totally for that hard work that he has done. I don't know whether it prepared him to be a Health Minister, but it sure as heck got him ready for a job as a politician. But I think teaching conditions have changed since the minister was a teacher. There are far more issues that need to be dealt with, and I think teachers at that time felt that it wasn't dealt with in a correct manner.

What I hope is that there can be further negotiation. I know the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has said that with the education plan, they will continue to work with the Teachers Union to come up with a path forward. I think this sort of flies in the face of it, where the Teachers Union is going to be pretty hard-pressed to actually work with government in this particular case, because of what has happened.

Madam Speaker - welcome to the discussion tonight - I think trying to get public sector wages in line with our economy is the right thing to do, but without a growing economy, the situation gets worse. That has been one of our criticisms here. Rather than talking about all the cuts, trying to limit spending and all these things within government, we still don't see a true economic plan by this government. Don't forget, if we have a job, if jobs are created in our communities and those individuals are fully, gainfully employed and paying taxes, those taxes go to pay for the services we require. So I hope that we find ways to fill those positions.

The best example I have of government falling down just a little bit revolves around the fishing industry, and more specifically, the boat building industry. I know of a number of boat shops today that are crying for employees. One of them, which I have been allowed to share, is Dixon's Marine in Woods Harbour. Gary Dixon, the owner, and his daughter Janine, who runs it, could probably employ 25 more people - 25 more people in our area, 25 more people employed, 25 more people paying taxes. I know this can be repeated at a number of different boat shops in my area. That's just one part of that industry.

There's great opportunity, yet we have a Department of Business - it used to be called Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, and I guess NSBI is sort of still there - and they have been no help to this individual. They've been no help to the other boat shops, because they are a fishing industry and, well, you know we try to do innovation and more technology and those kinds of things.

Boat shops need hard workers. They need people who are good with their hands. They need people who don't mind working a hard day's work. Where are they? They're really hard to find. This government should be working hard to find positions, to find people to fill those positions, yet what these businesses get is, "we're no help with it, we don't know what to do," and they never get called back. I implore the Minister of Business to get his officers from NSBI or whoever to go and work with boat shops to get the people they require.

It's not only boat shops. There's a number of fish plants that are looking for people to work, people who are working in our economy, paying taxes, helping government to pay for the services that are required, that we're cutting back on in a bill like this one.

I just want to go to nursing for a second. If we go back to the Savage years - so let's go back 20-odd years - when things were cut at that time, things were held back, people were laid off and fired. The reason I say nurses is because nurses voted with their feet at that time too. They went and found jobs all over the place - they went to the United States, they went to other provinces, they went everywhere. (Interruption) They didn't go away, they stayed here? Hmm.

Consecutive governments from that time on - I'll give the MacLellan Government credit because they tried to fix the mistake that happened back in the Savage years. Then successively after that, the Hamm Government, the MacDonald Government, even the NDP. There was a nursing strategy because we lost so many because of those original wage freezes and rollbacks that it took years to get our full complement of nurses back to where it needed to be. I think something like this might create that same problem where we will be looking for nurses, we'll be looking for health care workers, and we'll be looking for teachers because they will maybe not vote a government out of office, but they'll vote with their feet by leaving the province - and that, Madam Speaker, I think is worse.

Again, we, the Progressive Conservative caucus, feel that we're still not sure of the constitutionality of this bill because it does take away a very important right, the right of association, of course, and everything that goes along with it, which is the right to free bargaining. Whether this ends up in court or not will be a true test.

I hope that the unions do take this on. They don't do it because they know it's a long process, so successive governments have gotten away with things like this. This government's got away with it over the last couple of years because unions are busy doing their own thing trying to take care of their members and they don't have time to end up going to court, nor do they have the dollars and cents to do this. It's an expensive process to go forward to the Supreme Court of Canada and truly bring a constitutional question to them whether this is constitutional or not. It could take seven years or longer. Do unions have seven years to wait to see if a wage pattern is right or wrong, or taking a right away is right or wrong or constitutional or not?

Most unions don't do it, but other unions have. I think Ontario has had a couple of examples of it where they have been found unconstitutional. That, Madam Speaker, would be far more expensive to the government than the money they're saving here today.

It's all about choices, and I think the government has made a bad choice on this one, which is why, of course, I'll be voting against Bill No. 148. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight, Madam Speaker.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: While it does give me pleasure to stand on my feet here today, I'm still very saddened that I have to get up and speak about a bill that I feel will really weaken our province. It will weaken the workforce in our province; it weakens the morale of the people in our province; and it does not contribute to a healthier, happier, safer, or more economically well-off Nova Scotia.

I heard the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party talking about shaky ground. It reminded me of a song: Standing on Shaky Ground, Ever since you put me down. I'll tell you, that is how I feel about this bill. It puts us on shaky ground - it puts us on shaky constitutional grounds; it puts the government on shaky political grounds; and it also puts this province on shaky ground when we think about the vulnerable people of the province and the workers who really deserve our respect, our admiration, and our praise for the work that they do day after day for the people.

The other thing that I'd like to mention is that, sitting in Law Amendments Committee for day after day, listening to the people coming in and talking about their concerns, one of the things that really stood out for me was hearing the president of the Teachers Union talk about conditions in the classroom. She said the working conditions in the classroom are also the learning environment for the students. We have to remember that when the teachers are talking about the conditions, and that is partly why they feel this bill does not address the true problems that need to be addressed, and when the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development keeps trying to say oh, it's about the children, about the children, well yes, it is about the children. The children need a very healthy learning environment and that means the conditions in the classroom.

My mother was a teacher all her life. My father was a teacher all his life. My sister is a teacher, all her life. When my mom and dad first started out, of course, they started out with blackboards and chalk, which were very unhealthy by the way, very unhealthy for teachers. In fact, when we first moved to Nova Scotia and my mother was a new, young teacher in her early 30s, she was sent out to work in these huts. They were in the back of the Truro Junior High School and they were basically just put there with barely any heating conditions, terrible conditions, and she was meant to teach kids who had problems with their discipline; a lot of them were kids who were much older and had been failed year after year.

Here she was a young, 31 or 32-year-old, teaching 18 or 19-year-olds, mainly men, who had discipline problems. They were sadly given a nickname by the rest of the kids and teachers in the school. They were called the nuts from the huts; that's what they called them. She said it was really sad because many of them had been written off the very first day they had started school back in Primary. Some of them were First Nations children, some of them were from the Black community and some had learning disabilities.

She said when some teachers first started school, they would look at the list of names and they would say oh, Sylliboy, I can see where I'm going to have my problems this year, or Jones or Borden or whatever. She said that it was very obvious to her from day one that many kids just weren't given an opportunity and she set out to try to change things in her own small way, day after day, with the children that she interacted with.

I have to say that her work has really paid off because many of those students are now adults with fine jobs who are doing very well. Some of them are band councillors in Millbrook, some of them are well known in the community and have gone off and travelled the world or across Canada. They come home and they say, Mrs. Zann, we really want to thank you for believing in us and taking us under your wing when others would not take the time to do so.

She said when kids would come in with spaghetti all over their homework and they hadn't done their homework, instead of being punished, as many of them would have been by other teaches, she would say, now listen Johnny, tell me, why didn't you get to do your homework? Why is there spaghetti all over your homework? Johnny would say well, my mother was drinking last night and we were scared. She had this guy over to the house and violence erupted and I had to go hide in the bedroom with my little brothers and sisters and so I didn't get to do my homework and the spaghetti got spilled. My mother would say no problem, let's get together and we'll work on this together and she would take the time to work with them.

A couple of band councillors from Millbrook told me recently that if my mother hadn't been there, they don't know if they would have made it through junior high school because there was so much racism and in their earlier St. Mary's Catholic School. They said the racism from the nuns, too, was so intense that they felt in Grade 7, when they first came to Grade 7 that they really didn't know if they'd make it through school and many of them, of course, did drop out sadly.

They said when my mother came in, this little Australian woman with the accent, blonde hair and she wore more miniskirts to school, she was one of the first teachers to ever wear miniskirts to school, and they said she held up these two history books and they said they'd never forget it. She held up these two history books and she said, well now class, I'm supposed to teach you the history of Nova Scotia from these books, but I'm going to tell you where these books belong and bang, she threw them in the garbage can. I refuse to teach you from these books because they are full of racism and they put down our Black community and our First Nations community and I refuse to teach this disrespect and this racist behaviour and these racist attitudes.

She said, I'm going to teach you from the archives and from people in the community who have written their own books about what really went down here in Nova Scotia and what the true history of the province is, with the respect that all people are due, including our Acadians as well. These councillors said, Lenore, please pass on to your

mother how much we appreciated that, because all of a sudden we felt we had an ally. We had somebody who cared, somebody who spoke our language. Someone who we could go to. They said she did. Every day, she worked with them, and she talked with them. They felt that they had a friend and they were well looked after.

That's what teachers can do, Madam Speaker. A good teacher can make a huge difference in a child's life. The point of the story I'm telling is that teachers need to feel valued. They need to have good morale. That's not just teachers; that's people in all working conditions, in all different stripes of life. But I am the Critic for Education and Early Childhood Development, and I'm also the Critic for Aboriginal Affairs, and these sort of things I do pay attention to, and I have my whole life.

When I hear teachers coming in and talking about feeling unsafe, feeling unheard, feeling that they are being manipulated, that they are being pushed around, and that they are not being respected - they say that the morale at their workplace is so low because they feel that their own government doesn't even believe in them enough to want to talk to them at a bargaining table, and instead would try and ram something down their throats that they don't agree with. Well, that's not what they teach children, Madam Speaker; it's the opposite.

In fact, some of the letters that I've received from people say exactly that. They say that they teach their kids differently. They teach their kids that they have to have respect and work with other children and listen and communicate, and then come to some kind of a collaboration and come to an agreement, and that yes, you may not agree with everything that everybody has to say, and you may not even agree with their ideology, but you know what? You have to work together in this world. If you don't, it's to your own detriment.

I think that this government will come to rue the day that they are doing this legislation. In fact, I believe they'll come to rue the day that they've done every single piece of anti-union legislation that they put in place.

Obviously, there is a huge difference here in ideology. I think it's very sad, because I'm also seeing some of the backbenchers, I believe, being whipped into going along with this. I'll bet you anything there's a lot of them back there who do not believe this. I hope that behind closed doors they have been trying to change the minds and hearts of their colleagues and the Cabinet Ministers and their Premier and their House Leader.

But here on our side, we understand that working people are just people. It's the same as an actor, having worked in all kinds of different cities across North America and Europe. You work with movie stars, and people go, oh, what's Paul Newman like or what's Keanu Reeves like or what's Matt Dillon like or what's so-and-so like? You know what? They're people. They're people with the same kinds of problems as you have, and they just want to be treated like people, for the most part.

It's the same with unions. Unions are working people. They're people in everybody's communities. I remember at one point, during one of these terrible, terrible bills, talking to somebody in government and saying, don't you realize, with all this bashing and breaking of unions that you're doing, that you have people in your own constituency who are paying attention to this, who are the very people you're hurting? He said something like, but they don't make up much of the percentage of the population, so it doesn't really matter. I don't think that's the right attitude, Madam Speaker.

I think we need to be aware that, yes, we have businesspeople in our communities, and yes, we have workers in our communities. Guess what? They're people. They're the same kinds of people, just with different jobs. I'll tell you, in this day and age, with the lack of job security, it has gotten worse and worse as time has gone on. There's not much difference between what we're doing here today, and some of us could be out there on the work lines at some point in the future looking for a job, waiting for a job. And if it's a job where you are affected by this kind of legislation then you are also going to be hurting as well, and we are weakening our workforce instead of strengthening it.

We believe that this Liberal majority has actually taken away the rights now of 75,000 Nova Scotians, 15 per cent of the workforce, and that Bill No. 148 is going to hurt the people who have dedicated their lives in service of Nova Scotians, and they deserve better.

Doctors, nurses, paramedics, health care workers all care for our sick, our dying, and now they're having their rights taken away from them; teachers who have dedicated their lives to educating our children are having their rights taken away from them; highway workers who could be out tonight clearing the roads for us, preparing for the worst conditions, well guess what, they're having their rights taken away from them; social workers who go out every night, every day, they look after people in their homes, people who are in a crisis, people who are suicidal, well guess what, they're having their rights taken away from them. So 15 per cent of the labour force have now had their rights taken away from them by this government.

The really, really sad part is that these people were promised that their rights, their hard-earned collective rights would be protected and that this government believed in union members and believed in protecting them and believed in collective bargaining.

The Premier himself promised this to people, and it's clear from his actions ever since being elected, this obviously was not a promise he intended to keep, because otherwise why would he immediately get into government and start passing anti-union bills. For instance, in an open letter to Nova Scotian union members dated May 31, 2013, it says that Stephen McNeil - it has his signature right there - Leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus, published an open letter to Nova Scotia union members saying that the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus believes in workers' rights: The Nova Scotia Liberal caucus would like to clarify misinformation being circulated by email to NSGEU members from

union leaders. This email indicates the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus is against the right to strike and this is absolutely false. The Nova Scotia Liberal caucus believes in the collective bargaining process, the right to strike, protecting workers' rights, both unionized and non-unionized. Then it says, I ask that you please share this information with your family, friends, and colleagues. It is signed, Stephen McNeil, Leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, I expect the honourable member realizes that it is not permitted to even read the names of members of the House in a document. If you are reading from that document, if you'd like to table that.

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

MS. ZANN: Madam Speaker, yes, I did plan to table that. I always forget when I'm reading something that someone else has written that you are still not allowed to say the name.

I'll tell you, the Canadian Council of Canadians, Canada's leading citizens' organization since 1985, with over 100,000 supporters and 60 grassroots chapters across the country, they have written to us and said that they promote progressive policies in fair trade, clean water, energy security, public health care, democracy and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians. The council has exactly five local chapters and approximately 1,000 supporters here in Nova Scotia. The Council of Canadians wants us all to know here in the House that they stand in solidarity with the labour movement in condemning Bill No. 148, which the Council of Canadians says would force agreements on public sector workers. Collective bargaining is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and they say this bill violates the spirit of the Charter and the Supreme Court of Canada's more recent ruling upholding this right.

If the member for Yarmouth would like to ask the question of what these workers are actually losing and how this is affecting their rights, I believe he should have a chat with Angela Giles, who's the Atlantic regional organizer of the Council of Canadians, and maybe she could educate him on that.

They would like to know how the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board could support both the long-term sustainability of Nova Scotia's public services, including respecting the collective bargaining process, while at the same time forcing non-negotiable agreements with little to no wage increases. They also say that they question the timing of this. They say the timing of this bill seems rather convenient coming on the heels of a fiscal update that indicates that our small deficit doubled in three months, in order to continue with the austerity agenda to which this government is so committed. They say that in a time when the economy is stalled, giving 75,000 public servants across the province less than

the cost of living increases will actually shrink our economy, since those families will be tightening belts and they will not be spending.

The Council of Canadians asked the Law Amendments Committee, when I was sitting there, to respect the will of the people and to represent the views that have been expressed before us, which included over 40 people speaking against the bill and only two in support of it. They would respectfully submit that we would consider their feelings about this and their belief that this was going to be very detrimental to both the economy and to our working people.

Since the moment that the Premier called the unions together earlier this year, it seems like he personally has been trying to blame provincial woes on the workers of this province. So teachers, the Public Service, they were presented a deal with a gun to their heads, and they have said this on numerous occasions. Teachers, feeling pressured and feeling strong-armed, rejected the deal - I don't blame them; I would have rejected the deal too - not on the basis of wanting more money but on the basis of feeling that they weren't part of the process, and that the tentative agreement did not address front-line conditions in the classroom which, we've already said here, they feel is also the learning environment for students.

The Premier also then went the final step and enshrined these strong-arm tactics into legislation, which is basically saying, take this deal, forget about the improved working conditions that you're asking for, or else. If you don't take it now, we're going to make it even worse. No wonder people are saying the Grinch just stole Christmas - that's throughout all of Facebook, it's throughout Twitter. People are feeling that this government, for the third year in a row, for the third Christmas in a row, are treating the Nova Scotian people as if they do not deserve the respect that they are negotiating with them in good faith. This is not good-faith bargaining, is what many of them are saying.

The other thing is that teachers, social workers, and union presidents are continuing to write to us, to phone us in our offices and say they can't believe this government is doing this. They say they were basically fooled into believing this government really cared about them by letters that were published in the newspapers, like the one I already read.

The film industry, as we know, feels the same way. They were promised, absolutely promised, that their Film Industry Tax Credit was going to be protected and preserved, and this government came in and did the opposite. How can they sit there and say this is okay? It's not okay. It's bad enough that they did it, but it's even worse that they promised not to do it, promised to protect it.

I was looking at the other promises in the election platform and they promised that the musicians would get a music tax credit, what happened to that? That went out the window too. Right before the election they were saying oh musicians, we're going to add you in with the film people, we're going to give you a tax credit, too, come on board.

Well, Madam Speaker, this is not as advertised at all. As I said, they took it away from all of them and they didn't give it to the people who they said they were going to give it to. Well we're not allowed to use certain words in this House but I know what I would call that where I come from.

Madam Speaker, the other thing that came to my knowledge just recently, probably in an effort to do a little damage control, let's say, every teacher and principal and every educator across the province received a statement by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. It says:

Government is committed to working on the issues that impact teachers and students in the classroom. Teachers have asked to go back to the table and we have agreed.

The legislation introduced today, Dec.14, is consistent with the wage increases in the tentative agreement negotiated with NSTU in November. It does not stop us from returning to the table. Negotiators are currently exploring dates in January to resume collective bargaining." I don't know how they can do that when they're bargaining this away. "We will address non-monetary items the union brings to the table on behalf of its membership. Protecting our fiscal plan will help prepare Nova Scotia for long-term progress in the classroom and beyond.

The wage framework introduced today by my colleague Finance and Treasury Board Minister . . . allows for annual increments or step increases to continue for eligible teachers. These annual increments or step increases of four to five per cent per year apply to almost 40 per cent of our teachers.

Teachers have told me they want to continue to be part of discussions focused on improving the teaching and learning environment in our classrooms and I look forward to those discussions.

So this is what has just gone out to the teachers. Guess what, they're not happy either about that because they don't believe it. It's like Chicken Little or The Boy Who Cried Wolf. How can you believe a government that has consistently promised one thing and done the opposite? It's okay, trust us, we'll take care of it in the details.

Meanwhile, in the small print, Madam Speaker, in the very small print, it's proving that they are not as advertised. In fact, in Ontario they have a Bill No. 115 that was on the table and the teachers are in court now because five unions are challenging the constitutionality of this bill and the bill is called the Putting Students First Act. They always love to give them these fancy titles that are basically the opposite of what really the bill is

all about. That's how they get away with it. It's funny, isn't it, they love to talk about the NDP, meanwhile we were in government for four years, in comparison to the 250 years of Liberal and Progressive Conservative Governments, so I'd really love to know where they learned all this stuff.

Five unions are actually challenging the constitutionality of Bill No. 115, the Putting Students First Act and the controversial legislation; it imposed contracts on education unions and banned them from striking when collective bargaining stalled in 2012. The hearing is in the Ontario Superior Court in Toronto's Osgoode Hall and it was scheduled to last all week. That started on December 14th so it's going to be very interesting to see what happens there.

It says collective bargaining is firmly entrenched as a fully-fledged Charter right and lawyers have written that in their submission about that. They argue that the Charter prevents powerful entities, such as employers and government, from running roughshod over the interests of employees. Hmm, doesn't that sound familiar?

The government argues that the Charter protection of collective bargaining does not stop it from imposing wage restraint, however. The lawyers for the province say that the case is about what constitutionality is permissible and what options are available to government when it faces - oh, wait for it - a looming fiscal challenge. That sounds very familiar, doesn't it?

When you go back into history, which I have a tendency to do because my mother of course was a history teacher, and she taught me about the importance of knowing your history: if you know your history, then you might understand where you are, and then you might have an idea where you're going.

The history of this province in the 1990s, of course: Nova Scotia teachers went through a lot in the 1990s. They faced the most difficult and challenging decade that they'd ever experienced since the hard times of the 1930s. Well, first of all it was Donald Cameron's Tory government, and they introduced Bill No. 160, which was a two-year wage freeze on public sector salaries. For teachers, who were in the third year of a three-year agreement, this was a breach of the collective agreement that was in place.

The Cameron Government also unilaterally reduced its committed contributions to retired teachers' health care premiums by 35 per cent in order to garnishee pension cheques to recover premium benefits. It brought in a new Schools Act in 1991, replacing the School Boards Act and the School Boards Membership Act, which effectively brought the boards under tighter financial control. Finally, it capped funding at 2 per cent, indicating that it would be tied to an undefined core curriculum.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union responded with massive protests. Three rallies on May 29, 1991, at the Legislature in Halifax - and my mother was at those rallies. They

bused them in from all over. My mother was one of them who marched on the Legislature, and there were also protests at Sydney and Yarmouth. It brought out almost half the province's 11,000 teachers in response to these harsh, unacceptable measures.

Strike action was deemed inadvisable as a tactic to force the repeal of Bill No. 160. Thus the union began an active campaign around the provincial municipal elections, urging members to elect pro-education councillors and progressive school board members.

At the teachers council in 1991, a resolution was passed that the Nova Scotia Teachers Union withdraw from Department of Education task forces or committees until its dispute with the government be satisfactorily resolved. Later the union launched a lawsuit against the provincial government for its breaking of the collective bargaining and the agreement by the imposition of Bill No. 160. That'll be interesting, to see if that happens here now.

The NDP do not believe in unilaterally freezing members' wages, and they fought against all of these bills. The union achieved a long-awaited victory when, in May 1993, it signed an agreement with the province and this agreement addressed the unfunded liability of the teachers' pension plan.

But here's another interesting part of the history. Madam Speaker, the NSTU released two major studies in 1991 and 1992: *Study of Public Opinion: Regarding Education Issues in Nova Scotia* and *Key Issues in Education Survey*, which targeted Nova Scotia Teachers Union members and excerpts of each were published in *The Teacher* with the aim of stimulating discussion and dialogue.

They published a piece called *A Fresh Start...Take Part!* This was a campaign that was started in 1993 urging teachers to get involved in the electoral process on many levels when another provincial election was called in 1993 and to support those candidates committed to quality public education for Nova Scotia's children and their teachers.

On the eve of the provincial election, council voted to return to committees and task forces "notwithstanding the intransigence of the current government with respect to the collective bargaining process." It wished to ensure that the voice of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union would still be heard on such committees.

A new Liberal Government came to power with promises to protect education and to support educators and teachers. The Savage period, as it was nicknamed, the Savage Years, it might be named Variations on a Single Theme, and that theme would be called cutbacks. Three months into their mandate the new government passed Bill C-41 and it was called the Unpaid Leave Act. This was a four-day unpaid layoff or claw back. With this forced leave legislation the government broke its collective agreement with Nova Scotia Teachers. This was shortly followed by another anti-union bill, Bill No. 82, which slashed 10 per cent from the Education budget over a four-year period - and let's remember

this is the Liberal Government of the Savage Years - this translated into an \$80 million cut, and it was a devastating blow to the system.

In June 1994, a collective agreement was narrowly approved by the NSTU members and they called this making the best of a bad situation. An early retirement package was implemented for the period of August 1, 1994, for July 31, 1998 and figures released by the Teachers' Pension Board indicated that almost 800 teachers had taken this option. Now in November 1994, the NSTU withdrew from the Education Funding Review Workgroup. This group annually recommends levels of schoolboard funding to the Minister of Education and the Cabinet, but participation had proved impossible for the union since its representative was placed in a position where some group initiatives could not be supported.

The group confidentiality requirement prevented consultation with the provincial executive so by 1995, the NSTUs Centennial Year, teachers were discouraged by the government's actions toward the education system as a whole and then the government released a white paper, Education Horizons, proposing amalgamation of the province's 22 schoolboards into five or seven regional boards, along with increased local influence through the creation of school councils. All Francophone schools would also be part of one board.

The NSTU responded with a piece called *Still Seeking a Vision, A Partnership, A Process*, suggesting that the government evaluate its school-based management, pilot project schools before restructuring the system. They could write that again today, I think, because that's what teachers and public sector workers are still looking for - seeking a vision, a partnership, a process, Again, what about the consultation - where is the consultation here with teachers?

The government next introduced Bill No. 39, a new Education Act which presented the union with major difficulties, even worse than before. These included the potential for eradicating the collective bargaining process, creating inequities in disadvantaged areas, subjecting teachers and principals to ministerial disciplinary action if a vaguely-worded list of standards and duties was not observed. Furthermore, it contained a blanket clause enabling the minister to do whatever he or she deemed appropriate to apply the legislation. This brought Nova Scotia teachers to the brink of a province-wide strike. After representations to government from the unions, this strike warning was withdrawn and the Act then became legislation in January 1996.

Now Madam Speaker, one of the things about this history - they say history has a habit of repeating itself. Well I'd say history has just repeated itself and we find ourselves in yet another era of austerity, of disrespect for the teachers and other Nova Scotia Government employees. I would say that people are starting to recognize that there is a pattern here with these Liberal Governments. They talk on one side of their mouths before being elected and as soon as they get in, guess what? They do the opposite.

Many teachers could not attend the Law Amendments Committee because they were working, Madam Speaker. Many of them have asked that they would like their voices to be heard anyway. So they did send in messages to us in the Law Amendments Committee and through their other friends who did come in and speak. Some of the themes I'm hearing are again they are saying they would like their voices to be heard loud and clear. They feel that passing this bill will not only be undemocratic and unconstitutional but will actually set the province back into the Dark Ages, the Savage years - there it is again, in how public employees are viewed.

The teachers and former members of union executives, many of them say that the teachers they represented in Halifax were bashed over every item this Liberal Government could think of, from teachers' certification to the action plan items and even the weather - snow days. Teachers say they are fed up with all this and are ready to revolt. If this is passed, there will be no turning back to the harm that this will do to the profession and the morale, or lack of, that each professional takes into the classroom and the fallout from this, which would be either possibly a work stoppage - perhaps it could be work to rule, which is what the teachers in Ontario have been doing - or other campaigns could be the last resort that you leave the union and its membership and this will demonstrate to the public just how much 9,000 workers give day in and day out.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. If the honourable member is reading from documents that are from someone else, I would ask that you please say who that document is from and have that document available to be tabled.

MS. ZANN: Actually I'm paraphrasing here, but I can table the document as well.

The other thing they are saying is that 9,000 workers are giving day in and day out, and they feel that it's beyond their job description because it is, Madam Speaker. Many of the teachers, as we know, coach our sports teams, do the musicals, they teach band and we've been hearing from them over and over again about how they feel that they are doing all this work that they volunteer, they do not get paid for that, and that constantly they are being bashed and bashed until they feel they have no energy left. They say that perhaps if they stop doing all these things maybe people would start to realize just how much teachers are relied upon for things outside the classroom as well.

They say that MLAs are going to have their phones ringing from constituents because they feel they don't understand why their MLAs are putting them through this. As taxpayers, they also want to be able to obtain a service from professionals who feel valued in their jobs. Many of them say this legislation really spits in the face of that, Madam Speaker. Their collective bargaining rights are being taken away from workers. That it would have given them peace of mind to know that a fair and neutral third party arbitrator would address and decide on contract items that are possibly at an impasse. It's a process that really mirrors the judicial system that has worked for many years in society, but you

want to change this to something opposite - why? Because this government has a majority and can ride roughshod over the rights of our Nova Scotian people? Shame.

These people are saying, teachers are saying that they've never seen a more two-faced group and they say one thing one day and do the opposite the next, just as I've said. The proof is in how many of the MLAs can say with a straight face that they appreciate and respect the public sector and yet put this bill in place.

Madam Speaker, again these are harsh words coming from many of our constituents about how they feel betrayed, that's the theme.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member has cited the words as coming from another constituent, so if you would like to name that constituent and table that document?

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

MS. ZANN: No, Madam Speaker, I'm saying my other constituents have been calling me and telling me that they can't believe that this government is doing that, not this particular person. That's not my constituent. These are from many different teachers from across the province. I'm basically putting it in a nutshell what the sentiment is with some quotes from some people. I can easily table those.

I'm also hearing from civil service people as well from other jobs. They feel that to achieve their dreams and goals is becoming unachievable in this province. They're saying that they are in thinking about leaving.

In fact, there are now many Facebook sites with people listing their names who are leaving. Many young people in Nova Scotia are saying, why would we want to stay in a province where we are so undervalued and so unappreciated and also yes, underpaid?

Many people are saying that they want to build a better Nova Scotia. Some of them are career counsellors. Some of them actually work for our government departments, Department of Community Services, and they help people who are on income assistance, which, of course, has been frozen for the second year in a row. Their job, for some of them, is to help develop skills to become gainfully employed. Well some of these people chose these career paths for various reasons. For some of them, it was because they wanted to make a difference in people's lives. Some of them wanted to help build a better Nova Scotia by meeting people where they are and providing them with employment and also to help them achieve their dreams and goals.

That's why I moved back home to Nova Scotia. I wanted to help a younger generation of people, in particular artists, feel that they could put down roots here and could be successful and could make a living. But these days, Madam Speaker, I'm not really

telling anybody to stay here at all. I'm saying if they have to go, I understand that. I don't want them to go, but if they feel they have to go somewhere else where they're actually going to make a good living - our film people for instance can't make a living here anymore. It's very sad. I wanted to come back to Nova Scotia myself because, as I said, I wanted to help other young people learn how to put down roots and make a very good living here.

We were on track to improving the film industry and improving the artistic industry here; it's called the creative economy - building it. But now with all of these recent changes that this particular government has made, we have set the clock back 20 or 30 years. I'm speaking from great experience - 35 years in the industry myself, having lived right across North America. I lived in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax over the years at various times, New York, LA, Chicago, San Francisco, England, and Sweden. I've worked all around the world, and what's happening here is not good. It's not good for business.

It is a business, and I'll tell you, it took us years to be able to explain to banks why we also needed to get loans in order to put money into our businesses. Our businesses are ourselves because we're self-employed. People who are artists don't get Employment Insurance. They are self-employed. They don't get steady paycheques.

I would say that many of them would love to have a steady paycheque like we get. Madam Speaker, \$89,000 for a regular MLA paycheque - that would be considered gold to most people, including artists that I know. A lot of the artists that I know are lucky if they make \$24,000 a year. We should be helping to improve the situation because in cities where they understand that industry, believe me, you can make a good living. Then those people put money into the economy. They set up other little businesses on the side, and the economy can thrive, but not in this environment.

The other thing I'd like to talk about is the fact that this government has been talking about the fact that we're in such rough economic shape. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board had put out a fiscal forecast which demonstrates this government's austerity agenda really isn't working. Economists will not be surprised by this outcome as austerity agendas usually do more harm than good, as I've said.

It's important to remember that this government is not asking everybody to tighten their belts, Madam Speaker. As soon as they came in power they gave an opportunity for all their new members to get a pension after only two years. So they changed the rules which had been that you had to be in for five years and you had to win a second election in order to be able to get a pension.

They changed that, Madam Speaker, and made it so that now all their new members will be entitled to a pension, and I use the word entitled for a reason because I'm hearing a lot of entitlement coming from the other side of the House. Entitlement is a funny thing,

when I was working on television shows, you'd see them come and go. You'd see these young actors come in, get a leading role . . .

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, pension changes made - if the member from the NDP, who wants to be the Leader, thinks that the new pension changes are better than the pension she has as an MLA, why doesn't she accept the new pension changes? That member has accrued her pension at 5 per cent a year, the new pension is 3.5 per cent. That member has a pension that is full after 15 years, not 20 years like the new pension. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has the floor. Order. We are ready to proceed.

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

MS. ZANN: I'm glad to see that people have woken up and that they are listening, that's great. I must be saying something right then.

This debate is not about anybody in particular's pension; however, it will use it as an example, Madam Speaker, about how this government is saying they are tightening their belts, but not for everybody.

Madam Speaker, the other thing is that the Premier's Deputy Minister, for instance, well he's not paying all his taxes. Is that quite right? Does that set a good example for the rest of Nova Scotians? I don't think so.

Also, this Liberal Government has given the RBC, one of Canada's most profitable institutions, over \$20 million - yes, \$20 million for a call centre. University executives are earning more than ever before and under this Liberal Government it just seems the rich get richer and Nova Scotians pay the price.

Madam Speaker, there's also information out there if the members would be interested in finding out about the fact that many people questioned the Auditor General's Report to compare Nova Scotia's fiscal situation with that of other jurisdictions and past reports have done that but not this time. So citing a lack of available data, the Auditor General fails to make any comparisons. He could have reported that Nova Scotia's fiscal situation compares favourably, for instance, with other Canadian provinces.

According to, again, the Royal Bank, our projected debt to GDP ratio for 2015-16 at 36.4 per cent is comparable to other Atlantic Provinces and to Manitoba's and is significantly lower than Ontario and Quebec with debt-to-GDP forecasts of 39.9 per cent and 49.5 per cent respectively. Only British Columbia and the oil-rich Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan have significantly lower debt-to-GDP ratios. Nova Scotia's projected

budget deficit, as a percentage of the GDP at only 0.3 per cent is the second-lowest, behind only British Columbia's.

Since the turn of the century, our debt-to-GDP ratio has actually fallen by over 20 per cent. Yet, even with these positive comparisons, skeptics do wonder sometimes whether the majority of Canadian Provinces' finances are actually sustainable. There have been a lot of serious studies on sustainable debt levels and these focus on identifying the point at which government debt levels start to adversely affect their ability to finance programs.

A recent study for instance, by the IMF, concludes that debt-to-GDP ratios of less than 90 per cent to 100 per cent, really pose little concern and that serious problems only arise when debt rises above 150 per cent of GDP. This doesn't mean, of course, that the Nova Scotia Government should actually completely ignore its debt - no. The debt does need to be managed and it actually makes sense to gradually lower our debt-to-GDP ratio, but this needs to be done in a responsible manner. Rushing through austerity measures and budgets with these worker attacks when our economy faces excess capacity will really have a negative effect on economic growth. We feel that this will hamper the ability to manage the debt.

So just as importantly, austerity imposes real costs on Nova Scotians' prosperity in terms of higher unemployment, lower public sector wages, increased poverty, and diminished quality of essential public services. We can afford to invest in our society and manage our debt responsibly - isn't that the job of a government?

I know that our friends on the other side don't particularly like to hear it when we say that the federal Liberals recent electoral success demonstrates that the public is willing to accept a platform that includes modest deficits directed toward necessary public investments and they're doing so, which is the opposite to what this government is doing. I don't understand why they don't learn from their cousins in Ontario because we feel that this would actually help the industries here and also help our working people.

The Conference Board of Canada has said that the Nova Scotia outlook is rosy - and I have different articles I can table. The Nova Scotia economy is to add 8,000 jobs in the next two years says their report and, of course, mainly this is due to the shipbuilding contract which our government did put in place and also offshore oil.

Madam Speaker, I know that the government doesn't like to give us any kudos at all, which is very sad because, as I said, I oftentimes give them kudos when I feel they've done something good, but I can't support this bill because I find it is a very distasteful bill. I'm sure that people who don't understand what it's all about will soon understand when they start to hear even more from their constituents.

Madam Speaker, the last thing I would like to talk about is getting back to my theme really about standing on shaky ground. I think that this government is on shaky ground. When we were in government, as a backbencher, at this particular mark in our term I turned to my colleagues, and to the Premier at the time, and I said you know, I have my ear to the ground and I have a good sense of what's going on with the people of Nova Scotia, and I can tell you if we continue down this path we'll be handing over a nice tidy balanced budget to the next Liberal Government. I'm the only backbencher left standing. I was not listened to. I felt like a canary in the coal mine and I'm still here and the rest of all those other people, including those BlackBerry boys who were in One Government Place, who were advising the Premier, guess what? They're gone.

Madam Speaker, I believe the Premier needs to understand that when he attacks workers and their unions, he's actually attacking the Nova Scotian people. Teachers that shape our children's minds and futures; home care workers, the oldest workforce we have, made up of mainly women who look after our parents and grandparents; the paramedics who deliver clot-busting drugs on the way to the hospital for Nova Scotians having heart attacks; nurses who work double shifts in hospitals, to watch over our loved ones - and we will be there, too, and then perhaps we will know.

These people, the Nova Scotian people, the working people who keep the wheels turning day after day, night after night in this province deserve better and they deserve the right to bring their valid concerns about working conditions to the table and to engage in a fair collective bargaining process with government, any government.

Nova Scotia needs proper leadership, Nova Scotia needs a Premier who is willing to respect collective bargaining rights, instead of just trying to impose his or her will on these teachers, health care workers, and public servants. Madam Speaker, I look forward to the day that we have one. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I would remind the honourable member to please table all of the documents that you have been quoting from. Also, I'd like to ask the members for their indulgence here. We heard a couple of comments here, one just recently was "the gun to the head of" and with the violence we've seen worldwide, I find all of these references objectionable. Although it is not unparliamentary, I would ask all members to use discretion in their speech.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Madam Speaker, I'm glad that I have the support of the people in Chester-St. Margaret's who put me here today so that I can talk about Bill No. 148, which is the attack bill on the public sector, the attack bill on our nurses, on our teachers, on our clerks, our highway drivers, et cetera - 75,000 people. I know there have been long, overnight hours that we've put in this last week, and I believe it has been a good experience for the people in this House.

It is a good experience because the fact is many of those workers I am talking about today are the very workers who work long hours, work three or sometimes four shifts in a row because the chaos the health care system is in and there's nobody there to replace them; highway workers who go out after midnight, risk their lives in snowstorms and in ice - the least that we can do is to be in this House, and I hope people respect that.

If you're feeling tired, everyone deserves to feel tired because it has been this Liberal Government that has disrespected those public servants and has put themselves in this position due to the fact that they are trying to ram a bill through over the holiday season and also, they don't have to, should not have to, because it's about choices. Each and every government that is given the honour to have a mandate to run this province has choices.

When we were in government it was a very difficult time in the world economy. We did not choose to go after the people of our province like this government has been doing. We governed with respect, and that is not happening. There are choices.

I know that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board knows those choices. One in particular I brought up on several occasions is the fact that the debt they talk about with the budget is one that has been created politically - pure politics. (Interruption) You can laugh, it's pure politics - look at some of the notes. The fact is, Madam Speaker, there was a \$600 million cost to the retirement fund in this province that we found when we were in government. It was because at some point there was a lack of planning that we were going to have many people retiring at the same time, and it was going to put stress on that retirement plan. That stress ended up being a cost of \$600 million.

We were given the task to look at what we should do about that. The Auditor General wanted it to be paid off, and we thought, well, do we go that route and pay it off immediately, in a one-year budget period, which would create a great deal of stress to the people of Nova Scotia? As the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and Cabinet Minister knows, you have only so much of a pie to go around when it means cutting up those dollars. We have many services, and we have huge needs in this province because of our demographics.

I hear the former Minister of Finance and Treasury Board say it's sensible. So it's sensible to pay off a debt in one year and turn around and do this to the public sector, the public service, and cause grief and chaos? That's not my definition of "sensible." My definition of sensible is what the average Nova Scotian does when they are purchasing a home: they go and get a mortgage and amortize it over a period of 10, 15, 20, or 30 years and look at how much they can afford to pay. If they go out and buy that home because they have the money to do it but not enough money to feed their family, where does that make it sensible or reasonable? That is what the member is missing.

What is reasonable is that the plan is to tell Nova Scotians our cupboards are bare because of the fact that we have this debt, and we created this debt because we could have

amortized that \$600 million over 10 years. We did not have to go after the people of Nova Scotia. We did not have to play the game that the cupboard is bare.

Let's remember, Mr. Speaker, that we're in a political world. What does that mean? From the day you are voted back in, you are looking at how do I get back in in four to five years? That is what this government is operating on, and that is why this government chose to pay off that \$600 million in one fine swing in one year, so they could cry that the cupboards are bare.

It was reasonable and makes sense. How many people amortize their mortgage? I would bet it's a very high percentage. Do you know why? Because financial advisers advise you to do that. I don't think you'll find a financial adviser who doesn't advise you to do that, and do you know why? Because then if you have a little bit of extra income, you invest that, so you make more money on your investment than what you are paying out on your mortgage and the interest. It's not giving money away. You invest it.

This province could have invested in its people, and has chosen not to invest in the people because of the political plan. That's exactly what it is. Each and every one of them who are chirping over there, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when we are going into the year of the election, suddenly they'll find that their cupboards are not bare. Suddenly they'll be passing out money, and that's going to be on the record from me in this House. Let's see how much is going to be passed out that election year, and let's see what the government will be telling people. They'll be saying, because you took some pain, we've got some gain, and we've got money for you now. Elect us back in. That is exactly what the plan is.

There was an opportunity. We had chosen to pay that \$600 million over a 10-year period. That makes financial sense. You talk to financial planners, it makes sense. It absolutely makes sense instead of going after the people of Nova Scotia you're supposed to represent and tell them a story about the fact that there's no money when there really is money. You artificially create this debt - artificially create a debt - so it can be an advantage to your political lives. That's what it's about. That's exactly what it's about. People will watch it, and they'll see it, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Have a conversation with the Auditor General.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Have a conversation with the Auditor General. Have a conversation with a financial planner, and have a conversation with the people of Nova Scotia who are suffering because you decided to artificially . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I find that the government members have a hard time accepting the reality of what they have done, and this is what it is.

Now what we're experiencing in this province is that people's lives are being affected, and they don't seem to understand that because they all feel so entitled. "Arrogance" and "entitlement" are the words. That's what it is.

There doesn't seem to be one bit of empathy for people who come over to Law Amendments Committee and tell them how these choices are affecting their lives, when they know that it simply boils down to that \$600 million. That's what it boils down to. That could have been amortized over 10 years. But maybe some of those who sit over there are sitting on enough cash that they don't have to mortgage their homes, so they don't understand the people of Nova Scotia who are working each and every day, who do not have the resources to do that; they have to go to a bank. They don't want to, but they have to go to a bank.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the work that we did as a government put Nova Scotia in an A rating for borrowing money, AAA - first time in the province's history. So therefore, the borrowing amount for the province was the lowest it ever had been. (Interruption) And it still is, as my colleague said. So that's another part of the story, to say that we have no money, and we have one of the best borrowing rates in Canada because of the hard work that was put in by the previous government. If you don't want to give credit to that, that A rating is there. You're . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member once again not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Your government has the ability to borrow at a AAA rating.

Mr. Speaker, let's put all those things together and look at the fact that the Liberal Government is creating an artificial budget situation here for their own benefit, because they had a choice. They've had many choices. They have a choice to tell the truth. They've had a choice to make sure that when they say something to a person, they mean it. That hasn't happened. It would be interesting to hear all their reasons or excuses behind that.

As my colleagues have said in this House, we're all in the political world, and we all know how many in the public disdain people who are politicians. I find it quite appalling that we have to be painted with the same Liberal brush because of the fact that the Liberals have no problem whatsoever placing ads in newspapers telling unions that they believe in collective bargaining, they support them. They have no trouble organizing a press conference with people from the film industry during an election to let Nova Scotians know

that in the film industry we're going to turn around and we're going to actually invest more if we get elected.

If my son would have done things like that, I think he would have been punished because there's a word that I'm not allowed to use in the House, but there's a word that means. We try to bring children up and what is one of the things that we try to teach them? Not to do that. So then we have a government who is supposed to display leadership - and they find it excusable to do that? There are many, many examples of that. One of the most recent examples is the fact that we have teachers who stood their ground because they felt they were being strong-armed and threatened around their agreement, but they stood their ground. And then what happened?

They are told by the Deputy Premier, publicly, okay the holiday season is coming up, things are calm, calm down. We understand what you're talking about. We'll come back to the table in the new year. All a political plan, because we came to this House the first of the week and everybody, except a few on that government side, knew that we were going to be here longer because they wanted to ram Bill No. 148 through.

Now what would you call that? There are words for that and I'm not allowed to use them in the House. It's funny, I'm not allowed to use them, but the Liberal Government is allowed to do it. Where does that make sense? Some of those words are unparliamentary in this House, they're deemed unparliamentary - I guess verbalizing them is unparliamentary, but for some reason it's excusable for a government to do it - and it has been so obvious.

Like I said, I find it appalling because those of us who want to promote and encourage people to become involved in politics, or those of us who want to tell people that we're working hard for you, it's a little bit frustrating to be painted as a politician in Nova Scotia. It's no wonder people are disgusted because they are told one thing and it's the complete opposite. It may be a little bit different if the fact was that as a Leader or a Party that you think that there's something that you might be able to do and then once you get voted in you know obviously you can't and then you try to explain that away, but this has been a pattern before the election. The difference is that the Premier knew when he said things that he wasn't able to do it, or did not want to do it. You don't turn on a dime against unions, so that has been a personal plan for some time, it's obvious.

I do not understand where the disdain comes from for the unions, where does it come from? We just had the Ivany report that this Premier says he embraces and that's another perception game because all Nova Scotians are excited about the fact there is an Ivany report and it talks about one Nova Scotia. Of course, the Liberals' slogan was . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Liberals First.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Liberals First? I thought it was supposed to be people first, but obviously we've seen its Liberals First. It's all a PR game and it's really sad because the fact is we're talking about peoples' lives and hard-working people who are offering us service each and every day, 75,000, nurses and the services they offer and the nurses who have to work long hours, RNs, LPNs, social workers.

We just passed a piece of legislation that's putting more frustration and more cases on the social workers and for whatever reason, the Liberal Government thinks that all they need to do is stand up in this House and congratulate them for the good work that's done and that's good, that's all they need to do, and we're supposed to believe them. It's inexcusable for the treatment that has been given to our public sector who we all rely on as MLAs. Everyone in here, Mr. Speaker, relies on the public services that we receive. Our families do, our friends do. So why would we treat the public service with so much disrespect? I do not understand it.

We do know one thing and the one thing we do know is that this is all for politics. We don't have to go into any more details than that because I've explained why we are here today: it's all about politics and getting voted back in.

I know that members from the government side keep saying well we didn't take anybody's rights away. Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what rights mean: rights are legal, social or ethical - that's a new word for the Liberal Government, ethical - principles of freedom or entitlement. That is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people.

Isn't there something called the long-term service agreement that was negotiated all along? In here it says that okay, it's a rule, something that has already been agreed upon. Well I guess if you don't have it anymore, it must have been taken away; therefore, I would suggest that you are taking somebody's rights away, so I would suggest to the government to stop telling people they haven't taken their rights away when they have.

It also says rights are of an essential importance and it is about ethics, something they don't understand. The fact is that when you put this together with the Ivany report that suggested that we must work together (Interruption) It's not funny. You can laugh because you think you are a bunch of entitled, arrogant people.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I will ask the honourable member to retract that statement.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor..

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Which part? Well I will retract that, Mr. Speaker. (Interruption) Listen, I'm hearing from the other side that that's a class act. Is it a class act to publicly tell people in the public that you are going to do this and give them an

impression that this is the way it's going to go and then take that away from them? Is it a class act to tell unions that we . . .

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

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Is it a class act, Mr. Speaker, to put an ad in a newspaper - I'll leave it here - that tells people we support who you are, we support you as a union, we support collective bargaining. And the first bit when this government gets in what do they do? Home care workers and nurses. Is that a class act? Is that what the Liberals define as a class act? Is it a class act? Tell me, is it a class act? I will table this, please. Is it a class act to refuse a person with a disability the chance to come into Law Amendments Committee to offer an opinion, to refuse a person with a disability? We have an international document, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Is it a class act, Mr. Speaker, what happened here in this House the other day? Is it a class act? That will be something that this government will have to carry with them for the rest of their mandate. When we had the member for Cumberland North in this House the other day giving an apology, it was cherry-picked from the information that the gentleman has passed along. Is that a class act?

So we have a media release, and in that media release, it talks about this. It talks about what that gentleman experienced the other day, in our own Province House, where we are supposed to set high professional standards. And we do not even permit a person with a disability to speak. Is that a class act? It was not just one; it was five Liberal MLAs a part of that - not just one. One is bad enough, but it was five. Is that a class act? There's no excuse for that, no excuse.

Some of the people who represent the government are ministers of human rights. I never heard the Premier once apologize to Mr. Tupper at all, not once. Is that a class act? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's a class act.

But there will be some type of class act, because I believe the gentleman has gone to Human Rights, so a class action. This gentleman has every right to do that, and I wish him all the success, because I have never been so embarrassed in my life as a representative of this House to know that that occurred.

That's not just a one-off, Mr. Speaker. Do you know where that comes from? It comes from the type of leadership that is happening under this government, and it's coming from a real attitude of, we have a majority government so we're all-powerful. We can do anything. That's why we're talking about Bill No. 148 today. It's because of the fact that this Liberal Government believes that because they have a majority, then they can attack democracy, not even follow democracy. (Interruption)

They had a real fit the other day when we were ringing the bells, following democracy. Following the rules under democracy. Boy, don't do that because we're not supposed to follow democracy anymore. That's exactly what happened. There were some frustrated faces over there on the other side last night. It's because the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives were following democracy. My goodness! Can't do that in Province House because this Liberal Government has set a new standard, and it's called "let's get rid of democracy" - let's not give people an opportunity to speak their views. We saw that in Law Amendments Committee. (Interruptions)

I will do that. The last three paragraphs of Mr. Tupper's statement.

The other part, Mr. Speaker, that made it even worse, was that this government decided to table this bill before Mr. Tupper had an opportunity to come in to Law Amendments Committee. How disgraceful is that? Is that what they call pretending? Because he didn't have an opportunity to come in, and because there was pressure on their government, suddenly, because it was out in the Twitter world, and out in the media - because that's the only way they would react. They didn't react on the fact that they really, truly believed a mistake was made and felt bad about it. It was the political pressure, where the reaction came from.

And then, to make it even worse, because of the fact that they brought this legislation in so late over the holidays, and everybody wants to get home for the holidays, well, we decided we'll bring him in, but we'll table the legislation anyway - which is not the course of democracy. Once again, "we have a majority; we don't have to follow democracy; we're entitled."

Mr. Tupper said - should I read - let me see. It's quite long, but I did table it, so I believe I can read it. Okay. No, not the last three. I think I'll read everything I have here. This is the press release from the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.

"Labour Federation appalled at Liberal's treatment of deaf man."

"Nova Scotia Federation of Labour President Danny Cavanagh says that union leaders and members from across the province join all Nova Scotians in being dismayed, disgusted and appalled by the well-reported actions of Nova Scotia Liberal MLAs who voted to exclude a deaf Nova Scotian from presenting to the Legislature's Law Amendments Committee yesterday.

'We saw the Liberal MLA appointees to the Law Amendments Committee vote twice to not allow Robert Tupper,' - bad enough they voted once, but voted twice - 'a deaf man who is directly affected by Bill 148, any ability to address the Law Amendments Committee through a sign language interpreter,' says Cavanagh. 'The incredible

disrespect' - so it's not just us in Opposition that feel this way - 'shown to Mr. Tupper by the Liberal MLA's on that Committee was shocking to everyone in the room, and it is unbelievable that politicians could act in such a discriminatory manner in this day and age.'

"Robert Tupper, a member of . . ."

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's that it's not proper debate procedure to be quoting at length from documents. So you can paraphrase and you can refer to it, but you can't read it all.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I easily can do that. So what I'll do is I'll take out some of what Mr. Tupper is saying. But this is from the federation, and the federation says that the NDP member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River raised the issue because he was denied twice.

Then it talks about how, after continued lobbying, that was the only way they were able to put the pressure on.

This media release explains what took place. "Our union takes discrimination, human rights issues, and issues of overall fairness incredibly seriously." Well, it's too bad the Liberal Government didn't. That really tells something to the people of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Tupper responds to the media release. He explains how his first attempt to appear before the committee was very frustrating for him. Immediately, when he had asked to be added to the list, and he requested sign language interpretation, he was told there was no ability to accommodate his requirement - which I actually cannot believe, in this day and age, that when Law Amendments Committee sits, we do not have that service available and that we do not promote the fact to those in the disabled community, that when they contact us, we'll make arrangements.

But you know the problem here, Mr. Speaker? We have a government that rams bills through, so if we try to make arrangements when the Law Amendments Committee sits, it might mean that we would have to sit a day or two later, to make those arrangements. That's problematic when you're trying to ram a bill down people's throats on a deadline, because you want to get it over with during the holidays, thinking that nobody would be around to protest. That's what that's all about - political motivation is what they call it.

As Mr. Tupper says, after 2 p.m. on Wednesday, he was reached and he was notified by the member for Cumberland North to reconsider. So on very short notice, because in fact, I was asked around 10:30 or later - I know that some members are tweeting out

differently, to make it out as if it's the NDP's fault about Mr. Tupper's time frame and all that; that's the new little media twist we're trying to get - they made one big mistake. That mistake is that they said we were notified around 8:00. Well, my shift didn't start until 10:30. How does that work? (Interruptions) Nobody else was asked that. It came to me, and asked me if I knew of this gentleman that my colleague here had brought up.

See, Mr. Speaker? The twists and turns and perception continue. They can't even admit they were wrong. They have to turn around, after all that happened this week, and still blame us. They know over there who they are. But the next time they try to do one of those twists and turns, put a little bit more thought into it and check when the person is around that you're accusing was talked to at that time.

To continue, Mr. Tupper says, "The treatment of me by these Liberal MLA's is clearly discriminatory. I was discriminated against as a deaf person, as a Nova Scotian citizen and taxpayer, and as someone who required very reasonable accommodation in order to address the Committee." Mr. Tupper finds it outrageous and very troubling.

"The message that this sends is that the Liberals have no respect for the deaf or the disability community in general." Boy, that's a legacy I wouldn't want, as a government, but you have it now. You have the award, and that award will continue, because you can't take time back. It's obviously something that Nova Scotians will all know.

So that's the problem: the disrespect and thinking, because we have a majority government, we can disrespect the disabled, we can disrespect our workers. Where does that come from? That comes from leadership and that comes from the pack following the main wolf. As we said before, there is a book called *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, and unfortunately, that's the story that is being written by this Nova Scotia Liberal Party as government. They say one thing one day, and some days we don't even get 24 hours in before it changes and then it's the complete opposite. And then they have the nerve to tell teachers and send out a letter to teachers to say, oh, well, when January comes, don't worry, we're all ready to talk. You should be happy.

Well, I'll tell you, if somebody put a knife in my back, I don't think I'd turn around and shake their hand.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's, I would encourage you to tone it down just a little bit in your references to the government and how they are conducting business.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I know we get very passionate, but I was always taught to tell the truth, so thank you, Mr. Speaker. No wonder I get passionate - I'm a Nova Scotian, and it's hard to see what's happening here. It is very difficult to see how people

are being treated, how there is disrespect - and I'm not making it up. These are not stories that I'm making up. Every one of the parts that I talked about today is recorded - it's recorded or it's in a newspaper. The funny thing is, we're not even the ones who put it in the paper. It was the government itself. That is the reality of it.

It does bother me, because like I said, we're talking about an individual who was disrespected who has a disability, and the government feels that a quick, swift apology is all that it takes. But then they turn around and they have some of their members sending out emails and stuff, trying to point the finger at another Party because we were supposed to know that this gentleman - we should have been able to get him in earlier. Usually, as we know, at the Law Amendments Committee people usually come on their own accord and it's not organized by a political Party. So is that a class act?

I know it's the holiday season and we're all supposed to be festive and so forth, but I don't feel festive with the fact that this is what's happening in our province. (Interruptions) I didn't even hear him. I don't need to hear those kinds of comments.

The thing is (Interruptions) The member talking is the one who has created half of this, too, by ramming through budgets and stuff like that and ramming through these pieces of legislation.

The thing is, I have the right to stand here. I have that hour right. I know the fact is they're trying to take away the rights of Nova Scotians, and they're even trying to take the rights away from us who have been voted here to speak on behalf of Nova Scotians. When is it going to stop?

This was a government that promoted itself as being collaborative and transparent, and it's further from reality. As I said, it's all about the perception.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, over the holiday seasons we usually take some time to reflect. Well, I hope that this government and the members and the Leaders reflect and empathize with the people of Nova Scotia and the decisions they are making - based on the opportunity to get re-elected, not based on a bare cupboard, because that bare cupboard did not have to be bare. That was created for political purposes, and that's what's really shameful. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this morning and speak to Bill No. 148, which we will not be supporting, for a variety of reasons, which I'll be happy to go through this morning.

On Monday morning I was at a school in my constituency, and before I was getting ready to leave there and head up to Halifax, a couple of the teachers asked me, do you think

there will be any legislation? I said, oh, I can't imagine - like, why would there be? Why would we need to have that? Oh, I don't know, they said. We don't know what to expect. I said, well, I can't imagine. I'm on my way to the city now, and the session will probably end this evening.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't an hour later that I was on the phone and said, guess what? I called my House Leader, and I said, what do you know about this? He said, well, I know I didn't bring enough clothes for the week. Nobody expected this, and why should they? If we remember what has happened over the past few weeks here, the government told the unions to take it or else we're going to legislate, and what we legislate will be worse. Then the unions went out and recommended a package to their members, and then there was some discomfort amongst their members, and they said, well, we had to because the government is going to legislate something if we don't take this. We have to take this.

Of course, the Premier then said, oh no, me? No, we weren't going to legislate, no, we had no intentions of doing that. Well, lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, here we are now. The teachers vote against the deal that is offered to them for their reasons - they had a number of reasons.

Then the next thing you know there's an ultimatum to the NSGEU: you vote now or else. They chose the "or else," and then the Premier said, oh, we'll deal with it in the new year, we're going to deal with it, we're going to sit down and we're going to talk about this and see if we can reach a deal.

Monday afternoon, down comes the bill, whammo, and it's going through this week before the holidays. But it's not going to be proclaimed, Mr. Speaker. If you can figure that one out, please explain it to me. It sure seems like it's not going to be proclaimed, it's just another - let's say it's another tool, a variety of words to describe the manner of the tool, but that's what it is.

Why does something like that happen? It happens when you can't negotiate. When you can't negotiate, you don't want to negotiate, you don't have the ability to negotiate - probably both in this case. When you can't negotiate, you legislate, and you do it with all-night sessions.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't been up at 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. three nights in a row probably since I was as young as you. It's been a long time. Yet here we are.

Why are people upset? I can tell you that the people are not happy, and why should they be when the government is treating them so unfairly? This is a society of rules, and I think what's happened here, what's offensive here, is that so many rules have been broken and manipulated that people have said, this is not fair; this is not right. That's why they're not happy.

We're hearing from people out on the street talking to teachers. Do you think teachers want to be out on the street in front of Province House at this time of year? We are hearing from people who are calling who are not people who are confrontational. They're not people who call their MLAs and bring issues forward. They just live their lives and do their stuff, but they're calling because they're so upset and so surprised by the way this government is treating them that they want to know how we can stand up. What can we do? That's why I'm standing here today: to represent those people who don't normally stand up. They go along, but they've been pushed to the point now where they need to stand up. It's because so many rules have been broken.

In this Chamber here, we all come here new at some point, and the rules are unknown to most of us when we first come. We try to learn the rules. From that side, they try to learn how to get what they want. From this side, we try to use the rules to make our points. But we're all trying to work within the rules.

Last night, it was very entertaining to hear some of the back and forth. The Government House Leader was so upset that the Opposition was using tactics of bell-ringing to send their message - very offended by the bell-ringing. I think there was a promise made at one point that it won't happen again, so we'll see. There will probably a rule change. The irony of it is, why were the bells ringing? The bells were ringing because we were sitting in this Chamber in the middle of the night. The Opposition was using a tool available to it to send a message to people of what was happening here, probably to extend proceedings to the daylight hours, when people could see, could turn on Leg TV, could come down here.

Three nights in a row, Mr. Speaker, 12:01 a.m., but it's an abuse of the rules to ring the bells? The ringing of the bells is an abuse, but the 12:01 a.m. is fine. That's the way that this government sees the world. It just goes all the way through the things they do.

The things they do is say, we weren't going to legislate. Your union reps are lying to you; we weren't going to do that. But they were. Then we have - comes all the way through the things that they do right up to what will hopefully be - I can't make this promise, but I sure hope, Mr. Speaker, that that was the absolute low point of disrespect for human beings, what we saw last night at the Law Amendments Committee, on two fronts.

First, we had a gentleman - well documented - who wanted to appear before the committee, was in the Red Room with plenty of time to speak. The vice-chair of the Law Amendments Committee had it on his mind, no way was that going to happen. I don't know why, but that's something that he had on his mind. He felt that was his right, that was his rule. He was going to make that rule that that person was not going to speak. As the committee business went along we tried to raise a motion there to let him speak. The chairman used his rule, his right to recognize one of his members to put a motion to return the bill to the House - probably thought that would shut it all right down, but we're a little

familiar with some of the rules over on this side as well, so we amended that motion, a simple amendment to that motion that the bill would go back to the House after the gentleman, who had been sitting in the chair for 15 minutes already, maybe 20, would go back after he had been heard.

I know the Premier and the Communications staff want to try to rewrite history on this and say he showed up late and he wasn't there, but I was there and I watched it and I made an amendment to that motion that he be allowed to speak. What harm would it have done? Ten minutes of time. That motion got a little bit of debate.

Here came the thing that nobody wants to talk about, haven't heard much about this, but it won't slide away into the night because when that motion was voted upon the four Opposition members voted in favour of letting the gentleman appear; the four government side members were silent. The chairman, the member for Cumberland North, took it upon himself to vote no and emphatically shake his head signalling his other members should join him, which they did not out of common sense because who could vote down a motion to let that man speak? Instead with a 4 to 1 vote the member for Cumberland North declared the motion defeated. Everyone in that room - what an embarrassing situation for the members of the public to witness that, embarrassing for me to be a member of that type of a committee.

There was some debate, I obviously appealed the vice-chairman's ruling on that at which point he ultimately went down - he said later to the press that the vote wasn't complete because he hadn't heard the government members. And the reason he didn't hear them is because they didn't say anything. But in his mind, in his new form of democracy, his new rules, an abstention is an incomplete vote, and he felt he needed to complete the vote. So what did he do? He did a second vote and he went down that line of Liberal Government MLAs and asked them: What did you vote? To which they said they voted against it.

And why did they do that? Well, a member of the Liberal staff had gone down as well and whispered in each of their ears what they should vote. Why? Let the man speak for the sake of 10 minutes. Why? Because that is the level of esteem that this government holds Nova Scotians in - that's how they feel about Nova Scotians who have come all the way down to Province House to appear before the Law Amendments Committee; that's how they feel about Nova Scotians who work in the Public Service; that's how they feel about Nova Scotians who work in the film industry, on and on. That is their view of Nova Scotians, people who are subsidiary to them. I don't know how many members they have over there, 30 or 30-some odd, and those people think that everyone in Nova Scotia is subsidiary to them? Their actions declare it so.

I had an email from a doctor friend today and he said, how dare this government go to the media with something that's supposed to be in closed-door negotiations. That would be the same as me as a doctor going to the media disclosing their medical conditions. I said

I've got news for you, they're certainly not above that either, Mr. Speaker, because the way they act is they need to vilify people to lift themselves up. They will vilify people to lift themselves up and that is what we see right from the highest levels of this government, from the inner circle, to vilify somebody and say don't mind what I did because this person over here has an illness so trust me, I don't know, is that the message in that?

The Premier today said that Doctors Nova Scotia doesn't represent doctors. These are types of things that they think they have jurisdiction over. Now in speaking to people today, people said why would teachers and doctors - what are they doing? I said, well it's simple, it's politics, to them it's politics. There are only a handful of doctors in the province, relatively speaking, to the number of people. So guess what, the doctor vote, expendable, because if it riles up the populace, if they can paint the doctors as greedy, overpaid people, it will rile up the public and that suits them fine and anything that suits them fine, anything that is divisive, disrespectful, derogatory, if it elevates them, well that's just fine. It's not fine to me, it's not fine to the members on this side of the House. But it's politics and it's politics at its worst.

Now the sad reality is that people with that mindset have the power to change the rules. They can use their majority to do whatever they want, and guess what? They are, and there will be a big price to pay for that because many of the things they are trying to work on, that they are trying to address, they don't know how. And what do they do when they don't know how? They try to break somebody else down, break something else up - distract, divide.

(Interruption) I will tell you, listen up because if you want to listen and pay attention, you might actually learn something because every idea doesn't reside within you 30 people.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to remind the honourable member for Pictou East not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. HOUSTON: Now there's one rule in negotiating and that rule is, it's always better to negotiate with smart people because smart people can realize how you get a deal done. When you are not negotiating with somebody who is smart on the other side of the table, it's difficult to negotiate. I think that's what we're seeing here with legislation instead of negotiation.

Why is this piece of legislation going through right now? There's no answer for that, Mr. Speaker; there's no real answer for that question. It's going through at a time before the NSGEU has voted on theirs. They might have voted and accepted it, we don't know, we'll never know now. Many friends of mine who I went to school with who work

in the government are NSGEU members, say, you know, we understand, we might have taken that, I would have voted for it.

I don't know if it would have passed or not, Mr. Speaker, but here's the beauty - we'll never know. And do you know what? We don't need to know because they have a majority government and it won't matter.

Now let's talk about the teachers and what happened. I think what happened with the teacher situation is you can only kick people in the shin so many times, Mr. Speaker, before they punch you in the mouth and I think that's exactly what happened here.

Why are we here in this situation? Because we couldn't negotiate a deal. Now the province has a major revenue problem and that was made clear with the update. So I can tell you if you go and talk to business people when they have a revenue problem, they try to put their heads together as to how they might be able to address that. They try to tackle the real issue of the revenue problem and if you've ever laid awake at night wondering how are you going to make payroll on Thursday to pay your 20 staff, that's when you have a reality check of a revenue problem and what you do to keep your business going, to turn your business around. If you've never laid awake at night and had that feeling, then faced with the decision of a revenue problem, what do you do? I guess you decide - am I going to leave for Paris on Friday or am I going to leave for Paris on Saturday, that's what you do when you're in politics.

The revenue problem - we've asked questions about the revenue problem here, it's numbers from the federal government, it's the forecast. I don't know, don't ask these questions. Where are the ideas to address the revenue problem, where are they? Don't know. We did create a Department of Business though, maybe that will work. Okay, we'll give that a go. The Deputy Minister of Business appeared before the Public Accounts Committee. I asked some questions, it turns out the Deputy Minister of Business is the deputy minister of a department that is not business facing.

What does that mean? I don't know, but I got a hint last night in Question Period when the Minister of Business said his department is responsible for policy because that's what we need to solve our revenue problem is more policy. Wait until the Premier finds out, he just put a bill in to reduce red tape. He's got the Minister of Business over here making policy, an entire department devoted to making policy. The ship is flooding over with water and we're making more policy to talk about where we're going to reach for the bailers.

Start to address some of the issues. Don't look at the situation and say, we have got to cut expenses, come up with something new and grow the revenue. No idea. We don't know what to do so therefore you legislators come and sit all night 12:01 to 11:59 before Christmas so we can take away from the fact, and hopefully the media doesn't report, we

don't have a single idea. I hope the Minister of Business stands in his place and gives me one idea that he has.

(Interruptions) The Minister of Business is worried about my colleague and aren't we having a wonderful laugh here this morning, folks, isn't this great. Seventy-five thousand people because you guys, this government, don't have one single idea except let's vilify certain people. Let's go after the teachers and if that doesn't work and we're in trouble, let's go after the doctors. Who else? Maybe the judges, maybe we can go after - Opposition is every day that's no fun; we can go after them every day. We can sit in this Chamber and we can laugh and pat ourselves on the back and say, ha, ha, ha another question I didn't have to answer, wasn't that great. It's fun for you guys. It's not fun for those Nova Scotians who are struggling.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Pictou East not to refer to members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, what's happening with the film industry? What are we doing with the film industry? I wonder if anyone at the Cabinet Table has sat around and surmised, gee, with the way the dollar is, we really could have made some bucks in the film industry this year. We could have had a lot of productions. Do you know what we should do? We should set up a fund that's completely useless and then say nobody applied for it, why don't we do that? That's our idea, why don't we do that - and nobody applied. I can't believe nobody applied, nobody wants to film here anymore. Well, we can tell them to please apply and tell them, maybe, please apply.

Mr. Speaker, the issues facing this province are real. There are very real issues facing this province. The lack of solutions, the lack of innovation, the lack of understanding from this government is equally real. Two years in, I stood in this place and I looked at the budget and I said, pretty high revenue projections. I said I go around and speak to Nova Scotians and I don't know a lot of Nova Scotians who are feeling incredibly optimistic about their financial future. I don't know a lot of Nova Scotians who are saying I'm going to make so much more money next year, I'm going to pay more taxes over. I don't know those people.

People are worried. This government put down a budget that had tremendous increases in revenue because they suspected that either people were going to make more and pay more in taxes or they were going to squeeze it out of them anyway. It didn't matter, that's what the forecast said. No sense of reality, no common sense injected into it. Defend the numbers, budget update comes this week, where are we - a \$240 million deficit projection.

The deficits that this government will run, wait until the transfer payments start reducing, wait. This government, I am worried, will run deficits that will make the NDP deficit - sorry folks - look like peanuts, look like pocket change. And why? Because they are sitting in their offices saying, well, this is what the projections say. It's not our fault, it's the federal government's fault. Let's go and villainize some more Nova Scotians and maybe feel a bit better about ourselves. Why don't we do that; wouldn't that be just great. We'll just find somebody else to pick on and call greedy or lazy or something.

I am particularly worried and it's impossible for me to support a government that acts in this way, follows this type of process, says one thing, not going to legislation. And even in not saying they are going to legislate, couldn't even do that in a decent way. Instead, the way they said they weren't going to legislate was to try and villainize the people who had made recommendations to their membership to vote for it. They said, oh I don't know why they would think we were going to legislate, oh no, we wouldn't do that.

Then why? Because of a lack of ideas, a lack of innovation, a lack of innovation, a lack of understanding. That's where we are as a province, Mr. Speaker, that's where we are. But with the passage of this bill I guess things are going to get better in the classrooms and Public Service morale is going to go up and productivity is going to go up. Maybe this is the bill, it all may hinge right here. This is the bill that had to get passed in the middle of the night, before Christmas, because this is the one.

Well, maybe not, though, because we're not going to proclaim it unless we need to. I don't know, I get confused with the urgency, the hurry up, the stop-go. But the bell ringing, now that's offensive. Let's please do away with the bell ringing because that's what the issue is. Not the jerry-rigged votes in committees; not the turning away of Nova Scotians from committees; not the revenue problem - the bell-ringing, that's the issue. That's the issue, and if we can fix that bell-ringing then we're going to be good right here; this is going to be a wonderful place. Not the chief of staff going in four or five interviews and talking about a person's illness - the bell-ringing, that's the issue that's offensive. That's what's offensive.

I can't even fathom my colleague, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, being anything but completely forthright in counting the votes on a committee. I can't even fathom that - how does a person do that? Especially in front of a room full of people. You do that when you disrespect Nova Scotians; you do that when you disrespect process. That's okay. If you can fix the bell-ringing, that'll be the good thing. Let's focus on that.

Mr. Speaker, I try to be optimistic about this government. I really want to believe. I really want to believe that someday they're going to come up with something that's going to be innovative and say, you know what? That may help this province. The problem is we haven't seen it yet in two years. We might see it tomorrow. Tomorrow's a new day. I guess maybe even today is a new day by many standards. But maybe that's when we'll see it.

Maybe we can be hopeful. But in the meantime, we get to stand through the night and debate legislation like this.

I would be completely remiss if I took my seat without talking about the biggest piece of garbage in this bill. I don't know who dreamed up this idea, but whoever it is I hope it's not your best one. Here's what we're going to do - we're going to tell 75,000 Nova Scotians that there's no money for them, but if they can find savings in the way they do their job, they can keep it.

Let's break that down. First, that implies that this government can't find it, so they want somebody else to, which is par for the course: more boards, blame Stephen Harper, blame the NDP, blame somebody else, put somebody else in between, create a little insulation. Somebody else please find the savings; we don't know what to do. Maybe you do. If you find savings, you can have it. That's the first issue.

The second issue is I would love to be in the room when the fine folks in the various government departments got the memo that said, this government thinks you're purposely wasting money and they want you to come clean; this government thinks you're purposely inefficient and they want you to come clean. But they're going to give you amnesty because if you come clean on where you're wasting money, you can keep it. It's amnesty day. What an idea; what a message to Nova Scotians. Stand in your place all you want and say how much you want to thank the workers of this province and how much you respect them and the fine work they do, and leave this Chamber and say that they're a bunch of inefficient wasteful people, but I'm okay with that, they can keep it if they just come clean on it - some of it; they can keep some of it.

At Law Amendments Committee, a witness came forward and they had an idea for where some savings could come from. After the committee, I walked over and asked that witness, have you mentioned this to the government? Well yes, as a matter of fact I did. What did they say? Well they have a different way of calculating savings and in fact they said it won't be a saving, it will cost us money.

So guess what? The Finance and Treasury Board Minister goes around the province heralding this fairness of this deal because the workers can keep the savings, have set up a structure that the math will never work out on this, there will never be any savings. Tell me, Mr. Speaker, is that fair? Is that an issue or is the bell-ringing an issue?

This is a piece of legislation that is worth a little less than the paper it is written on and it's a piece of legislation that offers no hope for Nova Scotians. It is presented under the guise of saving the province, saving this government's fiscal plan. Now I have a couple of issues with that because you actually have to have a fiscal plan before you can save it. It's a nice buzzword, though: don't do anything that will hurt my fiscal plan - wink, wink. There's no fiscal plan for this government.

But this is the saviour, this is what will save the province, Bill No. 148, but what it really does is chip away at the foundations of this province. That's what this bill does and I won't support it. I won't support a bill like this that only offers doom and gloom to Nova Scotians, that only shines the light on this government's inability to manage the province. That's why we're here in the middle of the night, they don't want the lights shone on that but they will shine on this. It won't be supported by this caucus and it won't be supported by at least 75,000 Nova Scotians, many more in the grand scheme of things, and we'll see how it works out.

The only saving grace, Mr. Speaker, knowing what I know about this government, we haven't seen the last bill. There will be a few errors in this bill that they will need to bring it back and correct. That will happen and maybe when those errors are identified, maybe by that time they will say it doesn't work - maybe, they might.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just say that I hope there are a few new textbooks under the trees of this Cabinet at Christmastime and I hope one of them gives them some idea of what happens in the real world and gives them some real-world, workable ideas. Haven't seen them yet, maybe tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it was just expressed to me, how do you follow that? I don't know but I am going to give that a try.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'll try to make a little joke here. I don't know if the government will find it as amusing as perhaps I do, but I'm going to aim for it to be parliamentary. I'm not much into rap music, but I remember this song called "Regulate," and I'm also reminded recently of This Hour Has 22 Minutes - they've been doing these videos with Tom Mulcair and others about this other song. Anyway, I suppose it's not a very good joke, and I'm not much of a good joke teller, and it is 6:00 a.m.

In this case, this is all about legislating - saying this is the way it's going to be - versus regulating and the use of power. From what we've seen from this government, they like to use their power, and you can't blame any government for that, but it's the way it's being used.

I'll speak briefly about what happened at the Law Amendments Committee meeting. Mr. Speaker, do you think I would get away with that at Public Accounts? I am the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. It's the only committee of the Legislature that the Opposition gets to chair. Do I think I would get away with that at Public Accounts? Not a chance. I wonder now if I've been imbued with some newfound power, because apparently as a Chair, I don't have to bother listening to what the vote is. I can just say what it is myself, because that's the equivalent. I think that's something that still has to be addressed. I know the member has apologized, and that's important, but I don't think I

could get away with that. I know members opposite would be calling for my resignation if I did something like that, and I wouldn't blame them for that.

That is an example of a government showing who has the power, and for some people that's offensive. A lot of those people have been telling the government that it has been offensive. I think about the Limitation of Actions Act. I know people hate for me to keep bringing that up, but that was an example where I was on the other side of the table, seeing what it's like to try to express yourself on an issue and having people opposite ignore you, tell you that you were wrong, say that they're right, but we all know what happened there. In fact, one of the victims of Fenwick MacIntosh made a very poignant comment when he said, people on the government side, some of them felt like they were hard done by through that issue; he said, if anybody has been hard done by, it has been me. It's pretty hard to say anything about that.

The point being, government has to listen to people. It has to respect people. It can continue throughout its mandate, but sooner or later people start to notice, and in this case, this Bill No. 148, there are 75,000 people affected. We can sympathize with the government trying to control costs, but the reality is that there are collective bargaining rights in this country. Those are the laws we live within. I know the members opposite feel that this legislation will withstand a Charter challenge, but I don't trust that. I don't. We can all say what we'd like to do if we had unlimited power, but even the government, with its majority, doesn't have unlimited power. This bill could come up in the courts and it could be struck down.

What I'm hearing out there from people in many different unions, whether they're teachers, working in the government, doctors today, I heard from - they're all saying the same thing. After years of hearing about how the finances of this province are, they understand that we're not a rich province. I think it's like marketing. People hear it over and over again, and perhaps they start to understand it better, accept it or believe it.

I think - I certainly know in the case of the teachers who I spoke with - many of them were prepared to accept the terms of the agreement. I know there was a vote on that, and the vote said otherwise. But what I heard was that many of them voted against it because they didn't like the approach of the government because they felt the government just didn't care about their position, and this was going to happen one way or another.

I think the government feels that they're at a point where things have to be one way or the other. But Mr. Speaker, I don't even think, with a majority government, they have that unlimited power to say that, and the courts may prove that.

I'm not going to go on too long here, but I also think of another bill that has been brought forward in this sitting about a tax credit for farmers who donate to food banks. The government's defence is, well that's a cost. But that has a savings over time, every year, in the Department of Health and Wellness, the largest budget in government. It's an idea that

has come from somebody - well, in fact, it came from their own Minister of Health and Wellness at one time. But I know the bill was introduced before that. I introduced it myself in 2011. It has existed in other places. Mr. Speaker, the idea came to me from the Chair for the food bank in Port Hawkesbury.

That is an example of somebody trying to communicate to the government, but the government saying no. That might be a good idea. Maybe we'll bring it in ourselves later, but we're not going to bring it in now, even though it could help people now, because we have the power.

Mr. Speaker, people notice those things. I think if anybody has to be humble in this Legislature, it is Progressive Conservatives. We are often called Conservatives. We can see what happened in the last federal election: annihilation - 32 ridings to zero. If that doesn't give people confidence that they have the power, I don't know what does. But I can tell you from this side of the House and for the Party that I'm with here provincially, we are the Official Opposition, but seeing what happened in the last federal election and seeing that people see our Parties as the same, that gives me pause to think. It gives me pause to consider. You can't just run around saying whatever you want and doing whatever you want and expect the public to say yes, that works for me, too. If anything, Mr. Speaker, we saw the federal government in their defeat in Atlantic Canada of 32 seats to zero, that style of thinking didn't work.

This government has the power, but they may find out in the next election who really has the power.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I now stand to close debate on Bill No. 148, the Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act. Mr. Speaker, for the closing remarks, I'll take a few minutes.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the members, all my colleagues on both sides of the House for their comments, the information and the positions they've shared over the last number of days with regard to this bill. I'd like to thank the members of the public who participated in the Law Amendments process as well as those who have submitted written feedback, either directly to the government or through members of the Opposition. Many of those positions have been brought to the floor, either during debate of second reading or third reading or during the Committee of the Whole discussions on this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of information brought forward, a lot of different points and areas of discussion, clearly. We spent many, many hours both through second reading

and through Committee of the Whole and here today during our third reading, many, many hours. I'll attempt to respond. I've been taking notes as my colleagues have been speaking. There have been a lot of diverse points brought forward. I'm going to do my best to respond to a number of them.

Before getting into the technical aspects, I do want to start with the commentary by the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River - she spent a lot of time, both in earlier debates as well as today with third reading, talking about teachers and the education system and the history. I believe at one point she even made a comment to the effect of teachers that she remembers, both family members but also teachers who through her life have influenced her. I believe at one point she made a reference that I'm sure all Nova Scotians, or certainly everyone in the Legislature, would remember and have teachers who have influenced and been a really significant influence or an impact not just academically but in developing the people that we are.

I have to agree 100 per cent with the member on that point, Mr. Speaker. I in particular have spent a lot of time with formal education, receiving it. I've had teachers at many levels through my pursuit of higher education. There is certainly a number of educators who stand out. One in particular in high school really jumped out as the member went on in her speech. She was a languages teacher; her name was Eleanor Mutimer. People who attended Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional in Antigonish remember her fondly. She's retired and still living, but we remember our time in her class fondly, although I don't know if people respected her as much when were students as we did after we got out and were able to reflect upon what we learned.

One of the things, though, that I do remember in my high school classes with her was the importance of language but also the importance of proper citations and acknowledgement. So just for the benefit of the House, I'd like to table a document, A Short History of the NSTU. I encourage people to pay particular attention to Pages 26 through 29. I'm happy to compare them with Hansard on the member's remarks. Tomorrow you'll see that those remarks were not cited or acknowledged at all, but they were certainly, by my memory in comparison, word for word.

I'd just like to acknowledge the work that was done by the NSTU in the comments that were provided, which actually made up the majority of the comments brought by the member here.

Again, that teacher, Ms. Eleanor Mutimer, would be very disappointed with the results of that member for failing to acknowledge the source of that information that was brought to the floor of the Legislature. There's absolutely nothing wrong with using information brought forward by others. It's the failure to acknowledge what that source is and taking credit for those words and that work and the research that went into it. As an academic, I think a lot of educators would be very, very disappointed in that portion of action. I think it really is unfortunate that we spend so much time talking about the respect

for educators and yet failing to actually take the lessons and the message and what they try and instill in us, as citizens, through their education is respect for the work of others.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that isn't a lot about the bill and I don't mean those comments and that attention in a negative way towards the member. I mean this as a learning opportunity. It's a learning opportunity I've had the unfortunate pleasure, as a professor, to share the same learning opportunity with students who have had to receive unfortunate marks and grades on their work for the exact same type of performance.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to this legislation and the bill, the work that was being done (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: The work, that's with the bill and the comments made throughout the debate, there were a lot of comments but what didn't really come into play is much discussion about what is in the bill, so I'd like to highlight the key features of this piece of legislation for the record.

One of the primary features in this bill is a framework for what new money is available to public sector employers when negotiating collective agreements. This is a framework, as I mentioned in second reading, of 0, 0, 1, 1.5 and 0.5 per cent on the last day of the agreements, four-year agreements worked out that way so at the end of the fourth year, Mr. Speaker, a 0.5 per cent increase.

What that equates to, Mr. Speaker, over the life of the contract on the last year, that last day, is an extra \$150 million going towards wages in the public sector services and that is not a one-time cost, that's an investment being made from that day forward in delivering the services of the Public Service, the valued services that Nova Scotians want and need in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Again, within that the member for Pictou East expressed some concern with another piece of the legislation relating to the clauses that provide the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and indeed encourage employers and employees of the negotiating units' representative to work together to identify and negotiate savings within the system. When that occurs it provides the opportunity for the salary and the wage increases to be negotiated higher than that framework.

Again, I want to reiterate, that framework for the increases is new money. If we can find additional money within the system, within the delivery of those programs and services, we are able to share, Mr. Speaker, through the negotiating process, some of those savings to go back to the employees through the collective bargaining process.

What's not in the bill, Mr. Speaker, or what is this bill not? That's where a lot of the comments seem to come from, particularly from the Opposition. This bill does not legislate contracts in the Public Service. This bill, if you read through it, at no point does it say that a contract is being imposed on any bargaining. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: This bill does not legislate any contract. As I've said before, what the bill is, is legislating a framework and a directive to public sector employers that they have a limited amount of new money to be brought into the system.

As we have talked - and there are many discussions, both here in the Legislature and publicly, highlighting the many, many other areas of concern that some public sector employers have. One in particular, frequently brought up in the Legislature through our debates, has been teachers and their concerns around the non-monetary and the non-compensation aspects of the education system.

I would just like to take a moment to touch on that for just a minute. Through the previous government's mandate, based upon the financial cuts to the education program, we saw over 300 teachers removed from the education system across this province over their mandate. That reduction in teachers is directly related to the cuts in funding to the Education and Early Childhood Development Department and an ability to fund those positions.

Since we have been in government, this government has made significant changes. They've established class caps from Primary to Grade 4, which has equated to almost 300 new teachers - 195 based on Primary to Grade 2, and another 81 based on the class caps in Grade 3 and Grade 4. We also expanded and reinstated the math mentors program and the Reading Recovery Program - another 100 teachers into the education system across the province.

From 2013 to 2015, under this government, we have 381 new teachers in the classrooms today working to improve the classroom environment for our students and for our teachers. When I, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, or the Premier have stood up and said that we've heard from the teachers in the Province of Nova Scotia, that we understand their concerns over the classroom environment, that is just one example, that we have already taken that action.

We didn't go around with fancy media campaigns with teachers here. We put the money back into the education system and allowed our school boards to invest and put those teachers in the classroom to educate our students, our future.

Have we addressed all of the challenges in the education system? Have we fixed all of the problems? No, we haven't, but (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, are we committed to improving the education system and the workplace for our teachers? Yes, we are. (Applause)

With the tentative agreement that was reached with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, yes, it was rejected by the teachers' membership when it went out and was voted on by the membership. We respect that and the NSTU respects that. That is why we've indicated that they're working on dates to continue the bargaining process in January, after the holidays. We've heard from teachers, as the members opposite have and as they brought to the floor, that their concerns were not around the compensation framework. Indeed, the compensation framework in this legislation, which I mentioned earlier, is actually the same wage framework that was negotiated with four entities, and achieved four tentative agreements at the bargaining table. That is the same pattern. That's why that framework was in there.

In August, when I was only a few weeks into this position, I had a meeting with public sector labour leaders' representatives. I introduced them to the Public Service Sustainability Mandate that I indicated that I was going to be moving forward to bring that mandate to the public sector employers as the framework for negotiations. What that framework stipulated was that essentially in the negotiating process we cannot allow an agreement to be negotiated that would adversely affect, negatively impact our fiscal plan or the services offered to the people of Nova Scotia.

Why is that an important foundation for this framework, for this mandate? It's important because for far too long governments of all political stripes have stood in this Legislature or sat at the Cabinet or Treasury Board tables and they've made agreements and they've made decisions for spending that exceeded the revenue that the province generated. That has resulted in deficits in 20 of the last 30 years, that's the majority of my life, through the delivery of those programs and services that individuals were able to receive, but running deficits for those operations (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Running operational deficits result in structural deficit . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor. The honourable members for Chester-St. Margaret's and Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River will come to order.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, with the significant number of deficits that we've had in this province, our economy has underperformed across the country. We've been one of the worst performing economies for many, many years, which makes it very difficult from a revenue perspective to address the challenges we're facing. The thing that we have the most direct control over is our expenses, when we make the decisions, we are entrusted with the honour and the responsibility in this Legislature, and those of us in Cabinet and on Treasury Board, to make prudent decisions on behalf of all Nova Scotians, that is all Nova Scotians, all 945,000 of them. That includes all taxpayers and it includes all of our children and grandchildren, who do not have a democratic right to vote for the people who are making those decisions (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I assure you, when I took my oath and I was sworn into Cabinet and I took that oath to perform my duties as Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to the best of my ability, I took that oath very seriously and I took that oath to do the best of my ability on behalf of all Nova Scotians, whether they have the ability to vote for me or not.

For far too long governments have made the easy decision to say yes to add programs and services, to say yes to collective agreements, wage patterns and compensations that exceed and outstrip the economic growth within the province, that outstripped our ability to pay for too long. It is so easy to say yes. We can tell by the hours and the time that we've spent by the protests outside that this government is not making easy decisions. Rest assured that the decisions that we are making are not made lightly. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: The decisions we make including this piece of legislation are not made lightly, I assure you and all people of Nova Scotia that that is the case, but the challenges that we face are also great. We've seen that. The response of Nova Scotians to the One Nova Scotia report, *Now or Never*, while the government on this side of the Legislature says that now is the time to address our fiscal challenges and that is what we're doing.

This bill, as I indicated, does not take away people's bargaining rights. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, nowhere in this legislation does it dictate a collective agreement. It does not have a contract in place. It established a framework and identifies the total amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, I had a second meeting this Fall with labour leaders. In this meeting I focused the discussion not specifically on the mandate but rather I inquired and asked those labour representatives to take some time to answer a couple of questions and send me some feedback, which was basically around the notion of collective bargaining in the public sector and their thoughts on whether they think the system is working, if they have thoughts on how it can be improved.

I didn't get a lot of response, Mr. Speaker. Only a couple of the labour leaders or their associations responded, but one in particular made an explicit reference as to one of the challenges they find in the bargaining process. What they find difficult is that the employer has access to the government, in terms of what structure and framework and mandates are being brought forward by the government to the employer, but the bargaining units do not. They were asking for more transparency. This legislation is as transparent as you can get, with respect to what we're telling and directing and advising the employers of the public service that we have the capacity to add in new wages.

It's worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that I mentioned this framework, the wage rates in this framework, these were actually established at the bargaining table. Members of this House and you may recall that there was some media attention when public sector employers sat down with some of these respective bargaining groups and presented the wage offer. The initial position of those public sector employers was three zeros and two one's, Mr. Speaker. Clearly we've shown a capacity to negotiate in good faith, to move forward while still respecting the mandate to not negatively impact our fiscal plan because that is the fiscal health, not just for the province today, for those of us who are sitting in this Legislature, for those of us working in the public sector, but for all Nova Scotians, including our children and grandchildren.

You know, Mr. Speaker, at one point this evening the Acting Leader for the New Democratic Party expressed concern that the decisions affecting the 75,000 public sector employees were being made by 51 individuals in this Legislature. Well the member for Richmond brought forward to this House during second reading some information. I believe you can find it on Pages 146 to 149 of a book called *What I Learned About Politics*, by a member of the former government.

In that, in those three pages it outlines that the previous contract that was established was actually, it appears, made by three or four people in the Premier's Office, on behalf of 75,000 public service workers and indeed, on behalf of 950,000 people in the Province of Nova Scotia. The Opposition has made much ado, over the last number of days as we debated this bill, about democracy and democratic rights. (Interruptions) I don't know what the member for Halifax Needham has against the elected officials - 51 elected members of this Legislature - making decisions on legislation, yet it's A-okay for three or four unelected officials working on the seventh floor to make decisions. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: With dealing with the information of what's gone through this bill, the Leader of the Official Opposition raised concerns about the constitutionality. Indeed, I think that has been the concern most widely brought forward by the Official Opposition caucus members in the Legislature through the debate - questions about the constitutionality and, in particular, raising concerns about Clause 8(4). That clause, if anyone cares to refer to it, makes reference to limit the board from ruling or making opinions with respect to the constitutionality of this piece of legislation. The Leader of the Official Opposition has commented that it is his opinion that that clause indeed is evidence that this legislation is unconstitutional.

Let me explain, Mr. Speaker, for your benefit and the benefit of the members here, that is not (Interruptions) it is not an admission of concern about the constitutionality of this bill; indeed, what this clause does is it recognizes that the individuals who are best positioned to rule on the constitutionality are the officials within the courts. It is the courts, the third branch of our government, that are in the best position to rule on that.

Mr. Speaker, we do believe, and our information and advice is, that this legislation is, of course, constitutional; however, the Leader of the Opposition made a statement, I believe, that it's inevitable that someone will challenge the constitutionality of this legislation. But that is reason why we put that clause in there. We understand the sensitivity of this type of legislation.

As I mentioned earlier, we did not make this decision lightly. (Interruptions) It doesn't please us to bring this piece of legislation forward. However, recognizing that there are parties out there who would potentially have concern and may, as the Leader of the Official Opposition indicated, inevitably challenge this legislation, we thought it prudent that that challenge, if one was to be mounted, be mounted not through a board that may not have the necessary qualifications because their specific mandate is not for constitutionality but with respect to other questions about this legislation, thus we felt it was important to restrict the board from making those decisions and those rulings and to allow that then the course of action for testing the constitutionality, should it be challenged, be through the courts. That is the purpose; it is certainly in no way, shape, or form an admission or suggestion that we doubt at all the constitutionality of this piece of legislation. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, a lot of questions about why this piece of legislation is necessary. I've already highlighted the fiscal challenges. It's no secret; I won't go into the details again, but they are a reality that we face. It's a reality Nova Scotians have told us they are aware of, that they understand.

Indeed, all of this talk and debate around the financial aspects of this bill, I again want to stress, does not in any way, if you read through the entire bill, infringe or prevent or deny the opportunity to negotiate the many, many other concerns and issues that are relevant to be negotiated at the table around the workplace.

On the monetary side, Mr. Speaker, that is an important and urgent issue for Nova Scotians to deal with. We've expressed concern. Both I, when introducing this bill, and the Premier have publicly raised concern around the risks that we have if this government fails to make the difficult decisions.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's, in particular, that I've called order several times as she has interrupted the debate. If I have to call order again on her interruption, I'll have to ask her to excuse herself from this Chamber.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, that's a big reason for it - the urgency and the importance around maintaining our fiscal plan. Too often governments and the general public, when budget time rolls around, focus on that document and the decisions, but I want to remind people that the budget document, the focus and the attention, is on one year. Making decisions and focusing our attention on the fiscal year before us ignores the long-term implications of those decisions. That is why when I came into this role I felt the necessity to go beyond the short-term decision making, that we need to look forward on behalf of our children and grandchildren, that the fiscal decisions we make will not be saddled on them.

We want the services that Nova Scotians want and need - an education and health care for our most vulnerable, served in particular through the Department of Community Services, a department that has a budget around the \$900 million mark. That's the third-largest departmental budget.

Our debt servicing costs, our annual interest payments, Mr. Speaker, are just shy of that same \$900 million mark. That is not a discretionary expense. We are spending almost as much on debt because of past decisions, paying for services that were consumed previously by people in Nova Scotia, and we are paying almost as much on that debt as we pay in programs and services for our most vulnerable citizens through the Department of Community Services.

I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, that these decisions are not made lightly but the consequences are far too great. We do not make these difficult decisions, we do not bring this piece of legislation to the floor of this Legislature, because we don't value the programs and services offered to Nova Scotians. We don't make these decisions because we think the people of Nova Scotia deserve less programs and services. Indeed,

we are making these decisions because we believe the people of Nova Scotia deserve more. They deserve better, but they deserve what we can afford to pay.

Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is to align the decisions and the investments in the Province of Nova Scotia with our ability to pay.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board would entertain a question? I'll send it over to you.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I think we're drawing to the end, as you indicated. The member opposite actually was speaking just immediately prior to me and if he had a question that he would have liked to have had addressed, I think he was afforded ample opportunity to do that as this piece of legislation was moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we don't make the decisions lightly, we make them so that we can get our revenue and expenses in line so we can afford then to make the decisions to continue our investments, investments we've already started to make - as I already highlighted, over 300 new teaching positions across the Province of Nova Scotia because of us returning funding that had been cut under the previous government.

The Opposition does their job highlighting where we've moved money from one program to another and they frame it as cuts. Decisions, difficult decisions we make, but it's our job as the government to identify and highlight those investments that we've made and will continue to make delivering the programs and services that are so valuable and important to the people of Nova Scotia.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat and we can proceed with the vote.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 148. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded Nay.

A recorded vote is being called for.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[6:42 a.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Are the Whips satisfied?

We will now proceed with the recorded vote for third reading of Bill No. 148. As always, I would ask that all members please remain perfectly silent until the vote is complete, and when your name is called, please rise and state your vote with a simple yes or no.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[7:42 a.m.]

YEAS

Mr. Churchill
Ms. Bernard
Ms. Regan
Mr. Samson
Mr. McNeil

NAYS

Mr. MacLeod
Mr. Baillie
Mr. d'Entremont
Mr. David Wilson
Ms. MacDonald

(Interruptions from the gallery)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove those two gentlemen from the gallery, please. (Interruptions from the gallery)

I'd like to remind the media that it is against Parliamentary Rules to record people in the gallery, so I do not want to see that anywhere.

We will now continue with the recorded vote, or should we start again?

YEAS

Ms. Whalen
Mr. Glavine
Mr. Delorey
Ms. Casey
Mr. MacLellan
Mr. Horne
Mr. Gordon Wilson
Mr. Stroink
Ms. Diab
Mr. Ince
Mr. Kousoulis
Mr. Furey
Mr. Farrell
Ms. Arab
Mr. Maguire

NAYS

Mr. Belliveau
Ms. Mancini
Ms. Zann
Mr. Orrell
Mr. Houston
Mr. MacMaster
Mr. Porter
Mr. Harrison
Ms. Peterson-Rafuse

Ms. Miller
Mr. Jessome
Ms. Lohnes-Croft
Ms. Eyking
Mr. Irving
Mr. Gough
Ms. Treen
Mr. Wilton
Mr. Rankin
Mr. Mombourquette

THE CLERK: For, 30. Against, 14.

MR. SPEAKER: 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 our business for today and for this session.

I move that the House now recess until 9:00 a.m., until the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess until the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor.

[7:47 a.m. The House recessed.]

[9:03 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I've just been advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor will arrive at approximately 9:30, so the House will stand in recess until the arrival of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[9:03 a.m. The House recessed.]

[9:31 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is without.

MR. SPEAKER: Let His Honour be admitted.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable John J. Grant, preceded by his Private Secretary, and Mr. Ken Greenham, Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, entered the House of Assembly Chamber. The Lieutenant Governor then took his seat on the Throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then departed and re-entered the Chamber, followed by the Speaker, the Honourable Kevin Murphy; the Chief Clerk of the House, Neil Ferguson; and the Assistant Clerks, Annette Boucher and Nicole Arseneault.

The Speaker, with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk on his left, and the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Clerk on his right took up his position at the foot of the Speaker's Table.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour that the ladies and gentlemen be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has, in its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's Assent.

THE ASSISTANT CLERK:

Bill No. 110 - Marine Renewable-energy Act.

Bill No. 112 - Children and Family Services Act.

Bill No. 117 - Public Inquiries Act.

Bill No. 118 - Heritage Property Act.

Bill No. 122 - Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act.

Bill No. 123 - Paramedics Act.

Bill No. 124 - Social Workers Act.

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

Bill No. 126 - Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act.

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- Bill No. 127 - Labour Standards Code.**
- Bill No. 128 - Labour Standards Code.**
- Bill No. 129 - Securities Act.**
- Bill No. 130 - Community of Sackville Landfill Compensation Act.**
- Bill No. 131 - Maintenance and Custody Act.**
- Bill No. 133 - Motor Vehicle Act.**
- Bill No. 134 - Liquor Control Act.**
- Bill No. 135 - Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act.**
- Bill No. 136 - Motor Vehicle Act.**
- Bill No. 137 - Presbyterian Church Legislation, An Act Respecting the Repeal of.**
- Bill No. 138 - Chartered Professional Accountants Act.**
- Bill No. 139 - Municipal Elections Act.**
- Bill No. 140 - Public Accountants Act.**
- Bill No. 141 - Electricity Plan Implementation (2015) Act.**
- Bill No. 143 - Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act.**
- Bill No. 144 - Antiochian Maronite Catholic Church - Our Lady of Lebanon - Corporation Act.**
- Bill No. 148 - Public Services Sustainability (2015) Act.**

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR:

In Her Majesty's name, I Assent to these Bills.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

[The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour, The Speaker.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: I would ask that all members of the Assembly please rise and join me in the singing of our national anthem.

[The national anthem was sung by the members.]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first may I say that the member for Lunenburg should lead us in O Canada all the time.

Before I ask you to adjourn the House, I want to express my appreciation to the staff who are here, members of the legislative staff, the Clerk, the Assistant Clerks, all members of the House. This has been a session that in the last week has consumed a lot of energy of a lot of people, a lot of cut and thrust in the past week. My hope and my wish for the holidays is that stays on the floor of the House of Assembly and that when we leave here, we leave here with a great deal of gratitude for the fact that we're given the privilege to sit in this House in our respective roles to try to provide the legislation that we, as a government, believe is in the best interests of Nova Scotians and the Opposition to defend what they believe is in the best interests of the people of this province.

We can only do so with the help and support of so many people that work here in the House, work for us. Finally, for those who are at home, while each of you were doing your late nights they were home, in some cases looking after small children and in other cases getting a good night's sleep. Either way that means they will be ready for the holiday season.

Kenny, let me say thank you, the Sergeant-at-Arms let me say thank you for your service. (Standing Ovation) He thought he'd be retired long before today; we're sorry about that. We just wanted to make sure you pulled a few more all-nighters. (Laughter)

And David, let me welcome you to the House of Assembly. You've been a great public servant in serving our country in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and we're thrilled as a province that you've chosen Halifax, Nova Scotia, as your home and that you're going to continue to serve the people of Nova Scotia here at the House of Assembly, so welcome and we look forward to many, many more sessions of being here with you to do the people's work. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker and members of the House of Assembly, I move that this General Assembly be adjourned, to meet again at the call of the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now adjourn to meet again at the call of the Speaker.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We now stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 9:45 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 3091**

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 the Dartmouth office of National Tire Distributors sponsored six families in need for the upcoming Christmas Season; and

Whereas they raised money throughout the year to be able to do this good deed; and

Whereas their generosity and Christmas spirit has made the difference in six households at this busy time of year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the Dartmouth office of National Tire Distributors for their generosity and compassion.

RESOLUTION NO. 3092

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

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

Whereas when Reg Jewkes, from Colchester North, began his teaching career in Truro in the early 1970s, he heard that there was a shortage of game officials for basketball, so he volunteered to help out; and

Whereas his volunteer effort led to a passion that he has pursued and enjoyed all his life by becoming a high school, university, and professional basketball referee for five decades, working with young officials as an evaluator; and

Whereas in November 2015 Jewkes was presented with the Frank Baldwin Award for lifelong service to the game of basketball in the Province of Nova Scotia by the head of the provincial officials association;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Reg Jewkes for receiving this very prestigious and well-deserved award.

RESOLUTION NO. 3093

By: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Acting Leader of the NDP)

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

Whereas Bart Leppan has worked for the RCMP for 23 years as an Auxiliary Constable and RCMP Officer; and

Whereas Bart Leppan has helped to create the Hybrid Hub youth intervention model, which is designed to help youth at risk of offending or re-offending; and

Whereas Bart Leppan was awarded the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Halifax INSPIRE Service Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Bart Leppan for being awarded the INSPIRE Service Award and thank him for his commitment and dedication to youth and community in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 3094

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Carly Campbell is a Grade 6 student at Central Elementary School in Yarmouth; and

Whereas Carly is a dedicated volunteer both for her community and globally; and

Whereas Carly's volunteer efforts include helping to organize a bake sale to raise funds for a fellow student requiring major surgery, collecting clothing for the Diabetes Association, raising funds to buy goats for families in Africa, and also to adopt a village in Africa;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize Carly Campbell for her commitment to helping others and for being an inspiration to many, especially today's youth.

RESOLUTION NO. 3095

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Josh Allen and Yarmouth Mazda organize an annual winter coat drive for kids; and

Whereas this year an estimated 80 jackets and snowsuits, 50 pairs of boots and sneakers, and 80 hats and gloves were collected to help to keep over 200 children in the community warmer this winter; and

Whereas Josh Allen has also worked tirelessly for the past several years to organize an annual fundraiser for CF research, raising several thousands of dollars;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize Yarmouth's Josh Allen for his dedication to helping others and thank him for his hard work and selflessness.

RESOLUTION NO. 3096

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Grade 4 to 6 student of Yarmouth's Meadowfields School, under the direction of teachers' aide Donna Boudreau have launched a social aid group; and

Whereas their goal is to collect toys and other donations for children in the Yarmouth area; and

Whereas the students are working in co-operation with the Salvation Army;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate this group on their initiative and thank them for working to make Christmas a happier time for many.

RESOLUTION NO. 3097

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Municipal Affairs)

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

Whereas Mel and Norma Newell of Raynardton Road, Yarmouth County, have created another marvelous Christmas lights display; and

Whereas they began working on these annual lighting displays 17 years ago; and

Whereas the display now consists of 22,000 bulbs;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mel and Norma Newell on their creativity and continuous efforts to brighten Christmas for the many who view their display, and wish them and their family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

RESOLUTION NO. 3098

By: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Acting Leader of the NDP)

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

Whereas Agricola Street Brasserie is a restaurant and bar located in North End Halifax; and

Whereas Agricola Street Brasserie strives to cook with fresh food sources from local farmers and suppliers; and

Whereas the people of Halifax voted Agricola Street brasserie Best Atmosphere in *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Agricola Street Brasserie on receiving *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards for Best Atmosphere and express its appreciation for Agricola Street Brasserie's contributions to North End Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 3099

By: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Acting Leader of the NDP)

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

Whereas The Coastal is a café style restaurant located on Robie Street in the North End of Halifax; and

Whereas The Coastal is well loved by Haligonians and there is often a line up out the door; and

Whereas the people of Halifax voted The Coastal Best Breakfast in *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate The Coastal on receiving *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards for Best Breakfast and express its appreciation for The Coastal for its contributions to North End Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 3100

By: Hon. Maureen MacDonald (Acting Leader of the NDP)

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

Whereas Gypsophilia is a seven-piece jazz band from Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Alex Frith is a talented guitar player in the band Gypsophilia; and

Whereas the people of Halifax voted Gypsophilia Best Jazz Artist/Band in *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Alec Frith and Gypsophilia on receiving *The Coast's* 2015 Best of Halifax Awards Best Jazz Band/Artist Award and express its appreciation for Alex and Gypsophilia's contributions and commitment to art and culture in Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 3101

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas on Friday, October 23rd, the Baron de Hirsch Hebrew Benevolent Society Beth Israel Synagogue began celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the congregation; and

Whereas in 1895 the Charter for the Baron de Hirsch Hebrew Benevolent Society was passed in this Legislature, forming the first Jewish Orthodox Congregation east of Montreal, and in February of that year a synagogue at 19 Starr Street was dedicated; and

Whereas the synagogue was destroyed during the Halifax Explosion but the congregation endured, the community grew and for 125 years the members of Beth Israel have enriched our province with their many contributions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Beth Israel Synagogue on their 125th Anniversary and wish them centuries more of worship and fellowship.

RESOLUTION NO. 3102

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral show in August, 50 red spruce trees were planted on the property of the Fundy Geological Society; and

Whereas the red spruce is the Provincial Tree of Nova Scotia, so it is a fitting tribute to plant 50 trees to recognize the recent 50th Anniversary; and

Whereas the 2015 Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral show grew more than 30 per cent over last year, with nearly 3,000 visitors attending the popular three-day event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Gem and Mineral show on their 50th Anniversary and wish them continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 3103

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas Springhill twin brothers Matt and Nate Stone are Atlantic U15 AAA baseball champions; and

Whereas the 14-year olds are part of the Bantam AAA Dieppe Cardinals who won the title in the championship tournament held in Saint John, New Brunswick, in September; and

Whereas the twins will play for a Nova Scotia midget baseball team next year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matt and Nate Stone on their outstanding achievement and wish them all the best of luck in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 3104

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas the Oxford Fire Department held the official opening of their new state-of-the-art fire hall in October; and

Whereas the Oxford Fire Department has a station and a crew of firefighters second to none and they were all thrilled to ring the bell signifying that these firefighters were finally home; and

Whereas the Oxford Fire Department has 24 volunteer firefighters who serve the town and surrounding areas of the county;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the department, the auxiliary, and the Town of Oxford on all the fundraising and hard work to make this dream a reality.

RESOLUTION NO. 3105

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas Harrison Gillis of Guysborough is the recipient of a Nova Scotia Power Trades Scholarship; this year 10 of these \$1,000 scholarships are available; and

Whereas Harrison is now studying power engineering at NSCC's Strait Area Campus; and

Whereas these particular scholarships were created in the year of 2005 to encourage and support students entering trades related to utility or energy sectors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize Harrison for his endless hard work at NSCC's Strait Area Campus. Keep up the great work.

RESOLUTION NO. 3106

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas a Nova Scotia Power Scholarship for Employees Children has been awarded to Jacob Halloran of Guysborough; and

Whereas Jacob will be attending Dalhousie University this Fall - Jacob is the son of John Halloran, who works at the Nova Scotia Power's Guysborough Depot; and

Whereas Nova Scotia Power offers four \$1,500 awards to children and dependants of regular employees or retirees of the company;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize Jacob Halloran for his tremendous achievements, as well as John Halloran for his continuous hard work at Nova Scotia Power.

RESOLUTION NO. 3107

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Jock Asprey of Sheet Harbour turned 85 on May 18th, and many of his friends, family, and neighbours came out to the St. Peter's Church Hall to celebrate; and

Whereas Jock was warmly known as the Mayor of Sheet Harbour, and had been courteously presented with a cap that was engraved with the title; and

Whereas the title on the front of his cap was thoughtful enough, on one side it was inscribed with 85 which symbolized the milestone of his age, as well as the name Blanche on the opposite side to honour his late wife, with whom he shared his birthdate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize and honour Jock for his outstanding contribution to the community of Sheet Harbour.

RESOLUTION NO. 3108

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Guysborough County has recently had a new business open at the Chedabucto Centre in Guysborough - Kelly Wright, who was born and raised here, has opened a shop for aesthetics, where individuals can come and have all their necessary personal pruning done; and

Whereas Kelly left home to study this profession and build her career in aesthetics more than five years go in Ontario, she decided to move home the month of August with her partner and 15-month-old son; and

Whereas Kelly had her very first job in the spa industry at Cutting Loose, which is owned and operated by Peter Lombardo - with training and years of experience she opened her shop in the same business location as Peter;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the ambition, hard work and enthusiasm Kelly has put into her career, and I would like to send a great thank you to Peter for making this possible - Peter and Kelly already have a thriving partnership and I hope the business continues to blossom.

RESOLUTION NO. 3109

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Suki Kamogawa participated in the Eastern County's Regional Library Summer Learning Challenge, which included many fun activities and learning experiences; and

Whereas the challenge offered five core programs, as well as a selection of books to enjoy at the local branch libraries; and

Whereas the vast amount of excitement that came with this challenge, Suki was honoured to have won the grand prize draw - she directed a self-oriented video that highlighted and described her summer of learning;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the ambition, hard work and excitement Suki has put into creating this video, and I hope she enjoys her brand new iPad she won for creating an exquisite video as her entry.

RESOLUTION NO. 3110

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Michael Wilson's Grade 11 Biology class at Guysborough Academy took part in a national school Malaise Trap Program this Spring; and

Whereas this project explores the biodiversity of the life of insects - it is in the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario (BIO) at the University of Guelph over a two-week period; and

Whereas students spend their time outside gathering specimens of insects and send them in for analyzing to the BIO, and results are then sent to the school and to the International Barcode of Life Project;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the Grade 11 class and their effort to document all extant life forms of the Earth.

RESOLUTION NO. 3111

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Chedabucto Education Centre holds a program called Roots of Empathy, and the Grade 5 class of Cathy Lombardo has completed and graduated from this course; and

Whereas this program has a total of nine sessions in three weeks, this Roots of Empathy program teaches children about feelings, their own feelings and the feelings of others; and

Whereas Leona Purcell, who is a trained ROE instructor, helped situate this group of students to enjoy and experience the joys of watching baby Cruz meet many milestones, and Krista and Chris, parents of baby Cruz, were thrilled to have been part of this experience;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize this Grade 5 class on their huge effort in participating in this program, giving it their all and completing it with flying colours.

RESOLUTION NO. 3112

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Executive Director of the Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre, Vickie Rutledge, has received a cheque presentation from Scotiabank employees Ena Spears and Lynn Cameron, for the centre; and

Whereas the fundraising for the Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre went exceptionally well, and Scotiabank partnered with the centre in presenting a one-woman musical play; and

Whereas the play was written and performed by Kerry Miller of Moser River, and the play, *Kitty's Bound for Broadway*, was held at the Sheet Harbour Lions Centre - with many lovely hors d'oeuvres;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize all those involved and the tremendous amount of effort put forth raising such an outstanding \$1,350 for the centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 3113

By: Hon. Lloyd Hines (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas on Thursday October 29th at Government House, Lieutenant Governor J.J. Grant presented the Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Services Medal to 14 Nova Scotia paramedics during a lovely ceremony; and

Whereas Keith Veinotte was one of the 14 proud paramedics from Liscomb - Keith as well as many others has dedicated his career to offering high-quality emergency health care to individuals; and

Whereas this medal was created in 1994 to recognize people in high-risk jobs which improve Canada's public safety;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Keith for his continuous hard work in his paramedic career, and give a warm thank you for all his dedication.

RESOLUTION NO. 3114

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas LaHave Forests Inc., producers of Haskapa products and a multi-award-winning business, has piqued the attention of many juice and berry aficionados; and

Whereas LaHave Forests Inc.'s Haskapa products is a fresh, new innovative business in the area; and

Whereas LaHave Forests Inc. recently opened its flagship store in the Town of Mahone Bay, where it will sell its products directly to the public;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the owners and staff of LaHave Forests Inc. for their innovations and for enhancing Nova Scotia's reputation as a place to do business.

RESOLUTION NO. 3115

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the original ships *Bluenose* and *Columbia* each have long and illustrious and rival careers; and

Whereas their replica namesakes, *Bluenose II* and *Columbia*, were each in Lunenburg this summer; the *Bluenose II* celebrating its relaunch and the *Columbia* for repairs; and

Whereas the two ships, one from Lunenburg and the other from Gloucester, Massachusetts, are tied together in history as rivals, but now are recognized as friends;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the visit of the famed fishing schooner *Columbia* to the historic Town of Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 3116

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Margaret Meister was born in Yarmouth in 1915; and

Whereas she spent her working life as an educator primarily in the Annapolis Valley, prior to moving to the New Ross area; and

Whereas she recently moved to Rose Bay where she celebrated her 100th birthday with her friends and family;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Margaret Meister on celebrating her 100th birthday.

RESOLUTION NO. 3117

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Mahone Bay's acting deputy mayor, Penny Carver, recently discovered at the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities conference that the Town of Mahone Bay does not have a municipally recognized flag; and

Whereas Council has passed a motion to create a flag with the new town logo; and

Whereas the flag will be flown at the town hall and another flag given to the UNSM to fly;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the Town of Mahone Bay for working to create its own town flag.

RESOLUTION NO. 3118

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Kingsburg resident Alex Duckworth has worked very hard to reach the pinnacle of her sport in Canada; and

Whereas the snowboarder was named to the Canadian Winter Olympic Team and competed in Sochi, Russia, in 2014 and also won a Canadian National halfpipe title; and

Whereas Ms. Duckworth, after years of dedication to her province, country, and sport, has officially retired from competition;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Ms. Duckworth for her accomplishments and wish her continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 3119

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Lunenburg and District Fire Department proudly protects over 5,600 citizens of the UNESCO World Heritage Town of Lunenburg and its surrounding areas; and

Whereas the 48-member department recently added a new E-One Quint ladder truck to its fleet; and

Whereas the new state-of-the-art truck will aid the department in its fight and efforts to keep the residents it protects safe;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the Lunenburg and District Fire Department.

RESOLUTION NO. 3120

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas Centre scolaire de la Rive-Sud recently won the 2015 Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Western Region Tier 2 Junior High champions;

Whereas this was the school's first ever NSSAF banner; and

Whereas Reece Smith, Jena-Luc Gaudet, Kai Tanaka, Vincent d'Entremont, Mathieu Godbold-Smith, Eric Lindsay, Keegan Smith, Hunter Petrie, Alec Bush, David Boudreau, Seth Fraser (manager), Chris Rafuse (manager), and Luc Doucet (coach) were all members of the team;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize Centre scolaire de la Rive-Sud for winning its first ever NSSAF banner.

RESOLUTION NO. 3121

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Veterans Unit at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital in Lunenburg initially opened in 1985; and

Whereas veterans from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Merchant Navy have been residents served by the unit; and

Whereas the unit will continue to serve the veterans who fought the battles and preserved the peace so the rest of us could live free;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the 30 years the Veterans Unit has been in operation at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital in Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 3122

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the New Germany Senior Girls Soccer Team recently won the 2015 Division 3 Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Provincial Championship; and

Whereas this was the team's fourth provincial championship in six years; and

Whereas players Jenna Nauss, Victoria Burgoyne, Delaney Frank, Leah Snyder, Mckenzie Kelly, Whitney Minick, Emily Porter, Rachel Beck, Rikke Jorgensen, Alysha Allen, Ally Seamone, Emma Joudrey, Jacklyn Daniels, Samm Sarty, Emma Delong, Jennie Eagles, Janelle Hebb, and coaches Darren Penney and Christine Delong were all members of the team;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the New Germany Senior Girls Division 3 Soccer Team as provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 3123

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians, encouraging personal growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility, and service to the community; and

Whereas more than 8 million young people from 143 countries have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, including 44,000 Canadian youth since 1963; and

Whereas Savannah George, through her exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project has been awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., D.D., Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ms. George on her exceptional achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3124

By: Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Lunenburg)

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians, encouraging personal growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility, and service to the community; and

Whereas more than 8 million young people from 143 countries have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, including 44,000 Canadian youth since 1963; and

Whereas Hannah Ernst, through her exceptional efforts in the areas of service, skills, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and a residential project has been awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., D.D., Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Ernst on her exceptional achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3125

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas 14-year-old Caden Flynn of Enfield, NS, was born with cerebral palsy, a condition that affects his muscles and legs; and

Whereas Caden does not let his condition define or limit him and believes that it has opened many doors for him, has strengthened him mentally and has helped him gain problem solving skills; and

Whereas on Saturday, October 17, 2015, Caden was surprised and honoured to be named the IWKs Ambassador for the 2016 Children's Miracle Network Champions;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Caden on being chosen to represent all children and youth who have been helped by the IWK by sharing his story at events throughout the Maritime region and North America.

RESOLUTION NO. 3126

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas in 2009, Rebecca Feindel-Sherry's Nana, Diane Feindel passed away and she wanted to honour her memory; and

Whereas Rebecca decided to help Pajamarama, which is an organization that collects pajamas and donates them to children who need them; and

Whereas this Christmas she will donate 148 pairs of pajamas to Caring and Sharing and in total over the last seven years she has donated 1,150 pairs of pajamas;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rebecca on the fantastic job of helping to keep the children of East Hants warm.

RESOLUTION NO. 3127

By: Hon. Diana Whalen (Justice)

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

Whereas Mary Arab is a respected business professional who oversees more than 400 employees in 26 branches in her role as district vice-president for Scotiabank in Halifax; and

Whereas at the 2015 Cedar and Maple Gala, Mary was named Outstanding Professional of the Year by the Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and

Whereas this well-deserved honour recognizes not only Mary's professionalism, but also her tremendous dedication to our community through her volunteerism at Grosvenor Wentworth School, the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, the Coady International Institute, and other organizations;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mary Arab on receiving this prestigious award and thank her for all her contributions to our community.