



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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

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

### Second Session

**FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Mr. Gordon Wilson

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Yesterday after the democratic election of a Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Rule 6B, the Government House Leader introduced Resolution No. 3128, which named the member for Kings South as Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker. This, despite the fact that the member for Kings South was not one of the two names put forward for the election of Deputy Speaker, held only moments before an election that was governed by Rule 6B.

Mr. Speaker, it is our view that Resolution No. 3128 is a subversion of the Rules and is a puzzling break from the traditions of this House. In addition, the Government House Leader then called Resolution No. 3128 for debate today, an action that is a clear breach of Rule 32(1), which requires 48 hours between introduction and debate of a resolution.

Mr. Speaker, my request to you is twofold. First, I am asking you to rule that Resolution No. 3128 is out of order. The members of this place made their will known when they elected the member for Clare-Digby as Deputy Speaker. It was clear the members did not vote for a package deal; and secondly, if you find that Resolution No. 3128 is in order, would you please disallow it today, as it's a clear breach of Rule 32(1). Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: It has been the tradition in this House that we have had more than one Deputy Speaker in the past, and in fact, in my 18 years I've seen that on multiple occasions. The Rules of our House, as they are currently constituted, only allow for the election of one Deputy Speaker. In consultation with Legislative Counsel, it was advised that it would require a motion afterwards to appoint another Deputy Speaker. I can also advise you, Mr. Speaker, that I made this information aware to the House Leaders for the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party. There was no element of surprise to this. Because of our Rules this left us no option, but in order to have more than one Deputy Speaker, this was the process that had to be followed.

Just so that there is no doubt, having two Deputy Speakers will not have any financial impact, as the monies allotted for Deputy Speaker will be divided evenly between two Deputy Speakers. So there is no financial impact, but based on our Rules as they are, we were left with no choice but to put forward one name for Deputy Speaker, and on the advice of Legislative Counsel, to provide a resolution following that to appoint any additional Deputy Speakers in order to serve this current session of the House.

So I provide that to you, Mr. Speaker, as some background as to what brought us here today, so that you can take that into consideration.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the government's position, you can't cherry-pick conventions of this House. When in the past there have been two Deputy Speakers, it has been the convention of this House that one of them come from the Opposition side. For whatever reason, the government wants to rely on half of the convention of this House: to appoint two Liberal members as Deputy Speakers.

Mr. Speaker, if you find that the resolution is in order, then I think, because of the conventions of the House, you are left with no choice but to also find that all of the conventions of this House, which were built on a foundation of fairness and respect for both sides of the Chamber, must also be recognized in that the second Deputy Speaker be an Opposition member, as this House, in cases in the past, where it has had two Deputy Speakers, has followed.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take the point of order under advisement and report back to the House at my earliest possible convenience.

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**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 151 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act. (Ms. Marian Mancini)**

**Bill No. 152 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Zach Churchill)**

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

The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, before I present my bill, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MACFARLANE: I'm really honoured that, in the west gallery today, we have in attendance here Frank Boudreau and his wife, Jean, all the way from New Brunswick. Frank is the president of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

We also have Second Vice-President Allan Elliott from the lovely constituency of Pictou West, and as well, we have Darcy Henn, who is the regional business manager. I would ask the House to give them a nice warm welcome. (Applause)

**Bill No. 153 - Entitled an Act to Exempt Nova Scotia Residents of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Maritimes) from Paying Vehicle Registration and Driver's Renewal Fees. (Ms. Karla MacFarlane)**



**Bill No. 154 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Zach Churchill)**

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

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3161**

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

Whereas the Canadian Wildlife Federation is commemorating National Wildlife Week this week, under the theme Giving Wings to Wildlife Conservation; and

Whereas National Wildlife Week this year includes a focus on wild, winged creatures of the skies, from birds and bees to bats and butterflies; and

Whereas the year 2016 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Birds Convention between Canada and the United States, which was the first international treaty to conserve wildlife;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize April 10-16, 2016, as National Wildlife Week in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3162**

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

Whereas April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 16<sup>th</sup> is National Telecommunications Week; and

Whereas 911 operators throughout Nova Scotia work in conjunction with their dispatch partners to provide a critical link between people experiencing an emergency and the first responders who can help them; and

Whereas these dedicated and compassionate Nova Scotians assist over 220,000 callers annually and are a key part of our 911 system;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House thank the many 911 operators in our province who take on this challenging and important role each and every day of the year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

Before we move on, I'll remind the government members that both of those notices of motion should have occurred in Government Notices of Motion. We'll make sure we're on top of that for next time.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST - CUMBERLAND PERFORMING ARTS:  
PRODUCTION - CONGRATS.**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I rise today to congratulate the cast and crew of Cumberland Performing Arts on their outstanding production of Disney's Beauty and the

Beast. I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, I was not asked to play either role in this production. (Laughter)

Producer and director Ruth Collins oversaw a hard-working and determined cast of 31 young people who performed four shows at the Capitol Theatre in Oxford. Choreographer Eve MacDonald, staff manager Julie Mitchell, set designer Natalie Ripley, and costume designer Joy Sears added to the success of the performances. Thanks and congratulations also go to all the volunteers who have gathered props, handled microphones, did lighting, and sold tickets, and did so much more, Mr. Speaker.

Congratulations to Ruth and all the cast and crew who brought Beauty and the Beast to life. I look forward to many more performances of this high calibre in the future.

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

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS - CRITICAL SERVICES**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, after two years of neglect by this government and the Minister of Health and Wellness, critical services provided by the Department of Health and Wellness are in need of attention. Wait times are up for home care, long-term care, hip and knee replacement, and mental health. Many Nova Scotians are struggling to find a family doctor. The situation is worsening day by day.

The minister has been seemingly preoccupied with amalgamating the health authorities, for which we have yet to learn the cost savings involved. The minister needs to turn his attention to front-line services not only for the sake of the patients but also for the hard-working health care workers who are continuously being asked to shoulder an ever-increasing workload.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, may I please make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MILLER: I would like to draw the House's attention to the east gallery where we are joined by three residents of Hants East. First of all, I would ask them to stand when their names are called: Braydon Dickson, Katie Hines, and Nicole Lake. They are all members of the Nova Scotia-Canadian Hemophilia Society and have provided us all with these nice, lovely ribbons that we have to wear today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**WORLD HEMOPHILIA DAY (04/17/16) - RECOGNIZE**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, hemophilia is an inherited bleeding disorder that prevents the blood from clotting as it should. It is the best-known of a number of genetic conditions that affect blood coagulation. One in 100 Canadians carry an inherited bleeding disorder gene. Of those, some 30,000 require medical treatment for their symptoms. There are no cures for these conditions, Hemophilia A and B, and Von Willebrand disease just to name a few. The impact on lives is profound affecting one's quality of life, causing disability, and, for some, life-threatening complications.

In 1953, the Canadian Hemophilia Society was created as a support system for parents and families living with bleeding disorders. The society has a proud history of advocacy and care and played an important role in reforming the Canadian blood systems following the tainted blood scandal. Today, this organization continues to champion matters of treatment, research, education, and support.

On Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, we will once again mark World Hemophilia Day. Let us all recognize those who bravely live with these conditions as Braydon does, those who care for them, and those who work tirelessly for a cure.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**NATL. VOL. WK. (04/10 - 04/16/16) - KINGS NORTH VOL. ACTIVITIES**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, this is National Volunteer Week. I am thrilled to report a review on some of the volunteer activities that take place in my riding.

David and Lurenda Arenburg and Basil Davidson have been hosting benefit concerts for over 30 years. They work with fellow musicians and singers Albert Barkhouse, B.J. MacKay, Connie Munroe, Gary Benedict, and John Broome, all of whom are regulars - occasionally, Donna Rand sings with them.

Their family members and friends kick in to help organize the events, book venues, set up auctions, and handle any miscellaneous tasks that may arise.

The funds they raise assist community members in need, local Legion branches, and community halls. Their next big concert will help the family of a 26-year-old man killed recently in a snowmobile accident at Black River Lake.

I tip my hat to all those involved, and I'm proud to give these deserving individuals this recognition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**DAY OF ACTION (04/15/16) - MINIMUM WAGE FIGHT**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, today marks the Day of Action in the fight for a \$15 minimum wage.

Thousands of Nova Scotians from across the province are struggling to make ends meet making minimum wage. This is quite simply unacceptable. According to the Centre for Policy Alternatives, 40 per cent of children living in poverty in Nova Scotia live in a family with at least one full-time, full-year earner. Clearly, something is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, today the NDP caucus joins the fight for a \$15 minimum wage because working should lift people up, not keep them in poverty.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

**GUYSBOROUGH-EASTERN SHORE-TRACADIE - LOBSTER SEASON**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, as Spring has nearly arrived, we see another lobster season about to begin in the eastern part of the province. This wonderful renewable resource is extremely valuable to the constituents of my riding, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

Our brave and hardy local fishers have been busily preparing for the upcoming season. Throughout the riding, hundreds of fishers work diligently to bring this incredible food to the world.

Canadian Atlantic lobster is considered one of the world's premier seafoods and is in high demand. Canada currently supplies more than half of the world's supply of hard-shelled Atlantic lobster.

This industry is keeping our youth at home, employed and providing a living for their families, a pursuit which, in many instances, has been practised for generations. As these hard-working men and women set out, I want to wish them a season of calm waters and a bountiful catch, and that they return at the end of each day safely to their families.

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

**DAFFODIL MO. (04/16): VOLS. - THANK**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the daffodil is a symbol of strength and courage in the fight against cancer. April is Daffodil Month in Nova Scotia, a time for us to gather and raise awareness about the fight against cancer in Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world.

Nearly every Nova Scotian family has been touched by this disease. Volunteers and researchers are working hard every day to rid the world of cancer. The money raised during Daffodil Month helps people living with cancer and their families - donations fund things like life-saving research, information, and support services.

We should take this month to thank these hard-working individuals and to think of all the families and individuals affected by this disease.

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

### **ALTON GAS PROJ. - FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday's first day of the Spring session kicked off with hundreds of protesters, including Chief Bob Gloade and Chief Rufus Copage and their band members, waving signs and drumming in front of Province House in protest against the proposed Alton natural gas storage project near Stewiacke. Our NDP Leader and I were pleased to meet with the protesters as we share their concern about the lack of meaningful consultation with First Nations over the Alton gas development.

Mr. Speaker, one of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is for governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes provisions for consultation and co-operation with indigenous peoples prior to approval of any project affecting their lands, territories, and other resources. The people yesterday said "Show us the deed."

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

### **RICHARD, GAGE MICHAEL - HERITAGE FLAG DAY CONTEST**

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to congratulate a young constituent, Gage Michael Richard, for being one of the students whose illustration in the Heritage Day Flag Contest inspired the final flag design. Nova Scotian school-aged children and youth were invited to submit designs to inspire the creation of a Heritage Day flag, and 240 drawings were received from 23 schools located across the province. The top five student designs were incorporated into the final flag. Gage's illustration stood out for its colourful and creative visual appeal. It was an honour to have participated with him and his family at the flag unveiling event at Province House on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

It is with pleasure that I am able to recognize Gage for his contribution to culture and heritage in Nova Scotia. His creativity has helped inspire a flag that will be part of Nova Scotia's history. I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Gage and wish him continued success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**NATL. VOL. WK. (04/10 - 04/16/16) - VOLS. THANK**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, let us recognize National Volunteer Week and the many volunteers we have right here in Nova Scotia. Across Canada, over 12 million people are willing to give their time to make their communities better places to live, work, and play.

We don't need to look far to see the wonderful things that our volunteers do. Whether it's at the food bank, the hockey rink, or after school, volunteers represent the very best of what this province has to offer. There are many groups and organizations that count on the support of volunteers. Without them, this province would not be the warm and welcoming place in which we live today.

During National Volunteer Week - which is this week, April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 16<sup>th</sup> - let us thank all volunteers who improve the lives of people here in Nova Scotia.

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

**ROSEWAY HOSP. - ER CLOSURES**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, on Monday, November 2, 2015, the Roseway ER closed at 8:00 a.m. It reopened at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> - a total of 24 hours.

On Friday, November 27, 2015, the Roseway ER closed at 6:00 p.m. and reopened at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 28<sup>th</sup>. Then at 6:00 p.m. on the same Saturday, the ER closed and was not reopened until 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. In one week, the ER was closed for 28 hours.

Mr. Speaker, in the first weeks following the Minister of Health and Wellness' plan for the Roseway ER, it was closed for 52 hours, leaving the community without adequate health care. To be continued.

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

**ASSOC. FOR BUS. IN COLE HARBOUR (ABCH): DEDICATION - THANK**

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer acknowledgement to the Association for Business in Cole Harbour (ABCH). This organization is run by a group of volunteers, all local business owners and community leaders, who have taken a vital interest in developing a successful business environment in Cole Harbour-Portland Valley. Their efforts have garnered a steadily-increasing membership and have set the stage for the

development and facilitation of two standout social events in our area: the annual tree-lighting ceremony and the family skate. Both are well-attended and appreciated events that build citizenship and community strength in Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

I want to thank the ABCH for their dedication and tireless work in these endeavours, and would like to commend them on a job well done. Thank you.

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

**MACKEIGAN, DUNCAN & FREDA - ANNIV. (70<sup>th</sup>)**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Duncan MacKeigan, a 92-year-old veteran of World War II. Mr. MacKeigan was shot three times and was the recipient of many medals. His favourite was the National Order of the Legion of Honour from France. On one occasion Duncan escorted 10 German prisoners over half a mile while wounded, and when he turned them over, he found he did not have any shells in his rifle.

It's a true honour to thank Duncan for his service and congratulate him and his wife, Freda, as they celebrate 70 years of marriage this coming year. Thank you.

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

**SIRI, SUE - IRIS BOOTH PHOTO SERV.**

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, something that is always an honour to acknowledge here in the House is local entrepreneurship. I'd like to recognize Sue Siri on her success with a photo booth she has started in Halifax called Iris Booth. Iris Booth is a fully-automated professional photo studio that produces fast and professional head shots. Sue has set up Iris Booth at two locations, one at Scotia Square and the other at the Dalhousie Student Union building. This is an innovative idea that especially taps into our young workers and those looking to strengthen their professional portfolio.

Before this, Sue was a professional photographer for many years, and she is now hoping to expand Iris Booth to other locations, like university campuses.

A professional headshot is always a nice asset to have when entering the workforce. This gives our youth and recent graduates another affordable option to do that. I want to acknowledge Sue's innovative spirit and wish her all the best at her upcoming Dragon's Den appearance. Thank you.

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



**D'ENTREMONT, MARGUERITE - ARGYLE PROV. VOL. OF YR.**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, National Volunteer Week in Nova Scotia takes place from April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 16<sup>th</sup>. The Annual Provincial Volunteer Award Ceremony, of course, was celebrated here Halifax on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

Marguerite d'Entremont of Tusket was chosen as the Provincial Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of Argyle. Marguerite has been involved in many organizations throughout the years including, but of course not limited to: Retired Teachers Organization, Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, preschool at Ste. Anne du Ruisseau, Argyle Historical and Genealogical Society, the Argyle Courthouse and Archives and, of course, Ste. Anne's Parish.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Marguerite for her many years of service and devotion to her community, and wish her continued good health and success in her endeavours.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS: INNOVATION - ACTION**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, our health care system is evolving every day, with front-line health care workers facing new challenges throughout their daily routines. For our health care system to remain strong, government needs to be innovative. I'm proud to have been part of a government that introduced Collaborative Emergency Centres to Nova Scotia, a government that expanded province-wide training for paramedics to help save lives.

Mr. Speaker, this government has not offered any innovative ideas for the Nova Scotia health care system. This is a government that thinks it's okay for emergency rooms to be closed, for wait times to soar, for patients to travel great distances to receive services they need in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, not only is this not okay, it's unacceptable. We want to see action from this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**WESTON BAKERIES (AMHERST): IWK FDN. - FUNDRAISING**

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, this morning I'd like to rise to congratulate Weston Bakeries and the employees of their Amherst location for being recognized by the IWK Foundation for raising \$96,280 in support of the development of the IWK Rehabilitation Centre, at the IWK Health Centre.

Weston Bakeries employees raised the funds through the organization's annual staff fundraising campaign and their money was matched by the company. By supporting the IWK, Weston Bakeries and their employees bring rehabilitation services to thousands of Maritime children and youth with injuries and disabilities, helping them reach their first potential. The IWK Kids Rehabilitation Centre is designed to enhance the therapeutic experience of patients, providing an environment that supports a collaborative approach to care.

To recognize the incredible contribution of Weston Bakeries and their employees, a rehabilitation treatment room in the new space will be named in their honour. I am proud to have the Weston Bakeries team in our community, and would ask that the members of the House commend and congratulate them on their fundraising efforts in support of local charities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

#### **N.S. NO. 2 CONST. BATTALION - ANNIV. (100<sup>th</sup>) CELEBRATION**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, when the First World War broke out in 1914, African Nova Scotians responded very quickly. The majority of the Black community who wanted to serve in the military were told they had to form a segregated battalion. Black men from Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada, the United States and the British West Indies formed the No. 2 Construction Battalion, with the largest contingent coming from Nova Scotia.

In March 1917 they went overseas to support their front lines in the Western front in Europe. They assisted in forestry, dug trenches, built railroads, repaired roads and laid barbed wire. Please come and join everyone this summer in the Town of Pictou for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nova Scotia No. 2 Construction Battalion.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

#### **COM. SERV.: COMMUNITIES - SUPPORT INCREASE**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Community Services is undergoing a massive transformation that is not scheduled to be complete any time soon. The Liberal Government has made it clear that while they undergo this transformative work, no significant preventative work will take place. To date, the Department of Community Services has spent \$8.85 million on its transformation efforts, an incredibly high number. Imagine for a moment, the type of impact almost \$9 million would have if it was invested in poverty prevention programs.

Mr. Speaker, all members in this Chamber agree that our vulnerable communities' members need more support from the Department of Community Services. The question is, why do we have to wait?

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

### ***TITANIC* - ANNIV. (104<sup>th</sup>)**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Today I rise to commemorate the solemn anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Mr. Speaker, 104 years ago today, the RMS *Titanic* hit an iceberg while making its maiden voyage across the Atlantic Ocean from the coast of Southampton to New York City. It sank off the coast of Newfoundland and claimed more than 1,500 lives. Vessels from our province were dispatched to aid in the recovery efforts and 150 of the victims were laid to rest here in Halifax, many within the Fairview Lawn Cemetery in my constituency.

Today the Province of Nova Scotia retains many reminders of the way in which the tragedy of the *Titanic* touched the lives of those who lived here. From the gravestones of victims to memorial monuments, stories passed down through generations, to new insights and discoveries, Nova Scotians have remained respectful keepers of the vessel's memory.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in remembering those who lost their lives in this tragic event.

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

### **SO. COL. ACADEMY - SAMSUNG SOLVE FOR TOMORROW CHALLENGE**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, a project to find ways to prevent the nearby stream from flooding their soccer field has made Grade 7 students at South Colchester Academy finalists for \$50,000 in technology equipment through the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Challenge.

Applying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and with the help of their teachers and local experts, the students learned about erosion and what measures they needed to take to prevent their field from flooding. They created and submitted a video journal of their project for the challenge.

Congratulations and good luck to the students of South Colchester Academy on becoming the only school in Nova Scotia to be a finalist in the contest - may you reap the rewards.

I encourage everyone to go to [solvefortomorrow.ca](http://solvefortomorrow.ca) and vote for South Colchester Academy before April 18<sup>th</sup>.

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

### **FILM INCENTIVE FUND - MIN. DISCUSSIONS**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, has this government written off an entire sector? Their actions over the past year would suggest so. Between yesterday's PricewaterhouseCoopers economic assessment and other activities during the year, including on March 31<sup>st</sup> representatives from Screen Nova Scotia meeting with Minister Furey to discuss the Film Incentive Fund and changes that the film industry felt would make the process more workable, nothing has been done.

This discussion was important both to the industry and government since the fund, which was introduced to replace the Film Tax Credit, has been really underutilized for a reason, Mr. Speaker. Because it's unworkable.

By all accounts, the March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting was productive, and hopes were riding high when the minister alerted the media to expect an announcement the next day. Indeed, the minister indicated to reporters on Thursday that there would be potential changes to this Film Incentive Fund. Not surprisingly, the film industry was optimistic, and their members' patience and flexibility, they felt, had finally paid off.

Regrettably, it all . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for the member's statement has expired - and I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to ministers by their proper name.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **BROKER MO. (04/10): IBANS - CELEBRATION**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, April is Broker Month in Nova Scotia. It serves as an opportunity to raise public awareness about protecting the public and their possessions.

IBANS works to support increased knowledge in the insurance industry and the public at large. IBANS encourages openness and transparency in the insurance industry and is an effective voice for brokers in the province.

This year IBANS donated 75 Bipper blankets to Metro Turning Point, a shelter in Halifax, in an effort to help those less fortunate.

I invite all members to join IBANS in celebrating Broker Month, and we congratulate them for the work they do.

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

### **TIR: NOVA STAR - DEBTS**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, there have been many comments about the government's latest deal on the Yarmouth ferry service.

However, while the focus has shifted to the return of *The Cat*, there are still Nova Scotians who have not been paid for services rendered to the *Nova Star*. The Minister of TIR has expressed his steadfast commitment to the Yarmouth ferry service. I think those who are still owed money from Nova Star would appreciate the minister showing the same commitment to ensuring that Nova Scotians are not left holding the bag as a result of the previous deal with Nova Star.

The Minister of TIR has been able to secure tens of millions of dollars for the *Nova Star* and now *The Cat*. I ask the minister, is there no money left to pay the piper?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

### **BLUENOSE-ABILITY FILM FEST. - PARTICIPANTS**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell you a bit about the first-ever Bluenose-Ability Film Festival, or BAFF, which was held last December in Halifax. BAFF aims to be the Canadian leader in disability-focused arts and culture. They showcase both professional films and youth films over three days.

Among the award winners was Bedford's Laura Osborne, who was featured in Meagan Brown's film, *Laura's Dream*. The film chronicles Laura's battle with the rare genetic disease metachromatic leukodystrophy and her community's efforts to raise funds to help find a cure. Laura won the Lion of Courage award which is presented to a person who exemplifies the courage of a lion while dealing with daily obstacles.

Meagan is a Grade 12 student at Charles P. Allen High School and her film was a finalist for the regional short film youth category. I'd also note that Meagan is a frequent Skills Nova Scotia competitor and winner. I'd like to congratulate reachAbility on a successful event and Laura Osborne and Meagan Brown on a thought-provoking film.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PICTOU CO. WOMEN'S RESOURCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT CTR.  
- ANNIV. (40<sup>th</sup>)**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise and congratulate the Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre for celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in January. For four decades the centre has continued to carry out its two mandates: direct service and social change.

The centre addresses issues central to women, including sexual violence and offers job-readiness programs, self-esteem programs and girl-power camps. The PCWRSAC was responsible for establishing the Tearmann House, which has been a safe place for abused women and their children since 1984.

Congratulations to the PCWRSAC on the significant milestone and thank you to the centre's dedicated staff for working to make Pictou County a better and safer place for women. Thank you.

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

**BOUDREAU, DONNA - PROV. VOL. AWARD (2016)**

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely honoured today to have the opportunity to recognize Donna Boudreau on receiving the 2016 Provincial Volunteer Award on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Donna has been an active and busy volunteer for more than 25 years.

She has held various positions over the past 14 years, with St. Francis de Sales Parish CWL, in Lower River. Donna was president for four years, served as secretary for a couple of terms and remains a member of the parish choir and head of the organizing committee. Donna has been just as active for the past 15 years with the Riverdale Community Services Society. She has been and continues to be an involved board member and treasurer. She is willing and able to take on any number of positions to ensure that the society events run smoothly. Donna gets things done.

What began as a calling to give back to her community has led to two and a half decades of dedicated service. Without people like Donna, our communities would not be what they are.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in recognizing Donna Boudreau as a Richmond County Volunteer of the Year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**MORE, ROBERT: PARRSBORO CREATIVE - EX. DIR. APPT.**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and congratulate Robert More on his new position as Executive Director of Parrsboro Creative. Rob was chosen after a Canada-wide search. Parrsboro Creative aims to build a diverse cultural community to stabilize and grow the economy and population of Parrsboro.

Robert More is a cultural manager, director, playwright, actor, and academic instructor. He has a Bachelor and Master of Arts Degree in English Literature from the University of Western Ontario, where he is also an instructor. His professional interests include marketing, event management and fundraising, as well as community-building.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Robert More on his new position and I wish him the best of success as he takes on his exciting new challenges. Thank you.

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

**N.S. PROV. BANTAM GIRLS LACROSSE TEAM (2016)  
- TEAM OF YR. NOMINATION**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the 2015 Nova Scotia Provincial Bantam Girls Lacrosse Team for being nominated for Team of the Year by Lacrosse Nova Scotia. Lacrosse Nova Scotia recognized their team play during nationals in Calgary. Bantam level is the first time females play at the national level.

Lately only B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia have been participating in the female nationals. Nova Scotia has only approximately 95 female players at that age level in the province, only 24 players tried out for the provincial team and they competed with the other big provinces who have 400 to 900 female players in tryouts for their provincial teams and are by invitation only.

At nationals the 2015 Bantam Team had the best showing yet, with less goals against them than any previous Nova Scotia Bantam team. I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the players and coaches on a tremendous effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**MCMULLIN, CRAIG - DRIVE TO END MS CAMPAIGN**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Craig McMullin is an active community member from Centreville. Active is a good word to describe Craig because of his involvement in many supportive groups in my constituency, but his participation in one group has helped raise more than \$160,000 for the Drive to End MS Campaign.

Craig is a volunteer race driver with Team Hume in the Targa Newfoundland Ultimate Race Rally, which has been shown on TSN's Extreme Sports. There's no cash prize for this rally, but the winner receives a plate that comes with bragging rights. Craig has been involved in the race for seven years and will again participate in September 2016, driving car number 1333, his favourite Mini GP.

Craig has celebrated wins as both driver and co-driver in this race. Well done, Craig. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**GORMAN, ROBYNE - DART. NORTH PROJ.**

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues in the House are aware, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In conjunction with important events taking place earlier this week, such as Raise Awareness 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Memorial Walk, and my honourable colleague, the Minister of Health and Wellness's announcement of expansion of the Sexual Assault Examiners Services throughout the province, I wanted to recognize an individual doing crucial work in Dartmouth North.

For the past year, in conjunction with the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, Robyne Gorman has been coordinating an initiative to address sexual violence through investigating needs and gaps in services, and bringing together community stakeholders to address those issues. This work of Robyne's, called simply, the Dartmouth North Project, culminated in an evening of poetry, sharing and discussion around this year's Sexual Assault Month theme of Prevention is Possible, at the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning this past Monday.

So, on behalf of Dartmouth North community, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contribution of Robyne Gorman and the Dartmouth North Project. Thank you.

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

**THOMAS, RYAN: VOL. EFFORTS - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to honour Ryan Thomas of Bridgeport for the many volunteer hours he gives to the community of Port Morien and the Branch 55 Royal Canadian Legion.

Ryan Thomas is a Grade 11 student at Glace Bay High and among his many volunteer activities, Ryan is in charge of the stair lift that gives people with mobility issues the opportunity to go up and down stairs at the Legion. Ryan is eager to help and volunteer wherever he is needed.



I ask members to join me in congratulating Ryan Thomas for the many acts of kindness that he shows to everyone at Branch 55 Legion, and wherever he is lending a helping hand. Thank you.

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

### **QUINN, SHANNON: LYDIAN SCH. OF MUSIC - OPENING**

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely honoured to recognize a very talented Nova Scotia musician, Shannon Quinn. Shannon grew up in the riding of Clayton Park West and has recently opened the Lydian School of Music on Ochterloney Street in Dartmouth.

Shannon is passionate about Celtic music and began to study Irish dance, fiddle and violin as a young girl. While attending Humber College in Toronto, she toured with Scottish groups such as the Paul McKenna Band. She has also released two albums, which is a tremendous accomplishment for a young woman.

The Lydian School of Music offers piano, voice, fiddle and violin lessons. Shannon's father Tony Quinn, well-known musician and performer, has joined her in the venture as a guitar teacher at the school. When Shannon is not touring and busy in the studio, she finds time to teach herself at the school.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Shannon Quinn for her entrepreneurial spirit in launching her new business and for sharing her love of Celtic music with her students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **FILM IND. - PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS REPT.**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday PricewaterhouseCoopers confirmed what many of us already knew: the film industry adds value to the province, not just culturally but financially as well. PricewaterhouseCoopers says that not only did the government get its money back, its investment actually generated a 7 to 1 return – 7 to 1, and now the Premier, not to be dissuaded by simple facts that get in the way of his narrative, said he hasn't read it and it doesn't matter.

Mr. Speaker, when a government can get a 7 to 1 return it matters and we'll all have to watch and see if the \$100 million ferry situation could possibly produce a 7 to 1 return. Let's just wait and see what happens here.

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

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A 7 to 1 return. I'm sure the government is just hoping and praying that they get that. On this side, we don't deal in hoping and praying, we deal with facts. So, let's wait and see what happens - to be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where we are joined today by the Grade 8 class from Armbrae Academy, and I'd like to give them the warm reception of the House. (Applause)

Today, Grade 8 Armbrae Academy class is here with their teachers, Jamie Langille and Cynthia Perry. I'd like to welcome them to the House as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**FLOYD, MARLENE/FORTIN, ANDRÉ: DAUGHTER - BIRTH CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, my good friend, an Antigonish native, Marlene Floyd, and her husband, André Fortin, an MNA for the Québec Assembly, have welcomed their second daughter, Èlodie Fleur Fortin, to the world yesterday. I invite the members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating our Québec colleague, André, and my good friend, Marlene, on their expanded family. Thank you.

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

**1917 VIMY RIDGE/602 MCCURDY AIR CADETS  
- BATTLE COMMEMORATION**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the officers and cadets of the 1917 Vimy Ridge Air Cadets and the 602 McCurdy Air Cadets who spent a day commemorating the First World War Battle of Vimy Ridge. Both groups of cadets will travel to France in April, 2017, for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this battle. Cadets listened to various speakers and presenters about Vimy and also re-enacted a night in the trenches as they stayed all night in a local Legion. It's a true honour to have this opportunity to thank all those involved in helping these young cadets appreciate the sacrifice our veterans made for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**LAWRENCE, KERRY, ET AL - RRFB POSTER CONTEST**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, each year, RRFB Nova Scotia holds the Nova Scotia Recycles Contest in schools across Nova Scotia involving

students from Primary to Grade 12 participating in different activities ranging from colouring contests to short videos, in order to promote participation in waste reduction.

In 2015-16, winners representing Region 7 from Primary to Grade 1, runner-up, Kerry Lawrence, from Drumlin Heights Consolidated School, in Argyle Head. Grades 2 to 3 first-place winner was Alyssa LeBlanc from École Pubnico-Ouest; and Grades 10 to 12 runner-up was Marc LeBlanc from École secondaire de Par-en-Bas. Congratulations to all these students on a job well done and to all the participants and recipients of Nova Scotia Recycles Contest for 2015-16.

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

### **BURKE, JEROME - MIN. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMENDATION**

MR. DAVID WILTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Jerome Burke who is recognized with the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation for his dedication to Canada's veterans. Mr. Burke has been a member of the Unit 217 Army, Navy, and Air Force in New Waterford since 2002 and has held the offices of Vice-President of the Unit 217 and Vice-President of Nova Scotia Command. Jerome is currently serving as Vice-President of Dominion Command and is Service Officer for this unit. Mr. Burke is also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 15 where he dedicates his time working for a poppy campaign.

Jerome served as master of ceremonies for the annual Remembrance Services and Veterans Appreciation Day celebrations for New Waterford Unit. He is also a dedicated member of the honour guard and attends funeral services for all veterans in the area. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to have Jerome Burke as a member of our community and would like to sincerely thank him for his dedication to our local veterans. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **LANGILLE, KEN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise today to pay tribute to one of Yarmouth's most entertaining and engaged citizens, Mr. Ken Langille, who passed away unexpectedly on March 28, 2016. Ken was a teacher at the Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School for many years. He left an undeniable mark on his colleagues and students. His enthusiasm in the classroom was infectious and unforgettable, and that same enthusiasm was present in every project he tackled since his retirement from teaching.

Ken was a passionate councillor for the Town of Yarmouth. He devoted his time and energy to several boards and committees. He regaled attendees on walking tours in Yarmouth with his vast and impressive knowledge of its history. He taught and mentored inmates at the Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, and he loved his family.

Ken will be missed by Yarmouth, a town he so dearly loved, and Yarmouth will be a little less exciting without him. My condolences go out to the family and friends of Ken Langille.

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

#### **MOOSE RIVER GOLD MINES: CAVE-IN - ANNIV. (80<sup>th</sup>)**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, April 12, 1936, a cave-in at Moose River Gold Mines trapped three men 43 metres below the surface. Rescue efforts took place for 11 days straight, with miners from this and the Caribou Gold Mines frantically trying to dig the men out. Nurses from the Victoria General Hospital set up a triage station for treating minor injuries. Women from the community prepared meals for the rescuers, and the nation was glued to the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission's live report. Two of the miners were rescued; one, unfortunately, was not.

Mr. Speaker, along with Sunday's ceremonies hosted by the Moose River Gold Mines Museum Society, I just want to take a moment to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Moose River Gold Mines cave-in.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

#### **BLAIR, MERCEDES - PHOTOGRAPHY ACHIEVEMENTS**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mercedes Blair, 26, who lives in North River, Colchester North, is becoming recognized as one of Nova Scotia's creative photographers. She specializes in nature in all its forms and all its seasons. On her outings she is accompanied by Jazzy, her beloved dog, who she considers her best buddy as well as a great model for her photographs.

She began by setting up her own online photography page. She has since had pictures published in several mediums, including *Reader's Digest*. Through her contributions to a website called "Abandoned Houses," she was discovered by Land and Sea producers. Both Blair and Jazzy will be featured in a Land and Sea episode on CBC Television in a segment airing on abandoned homes, a subject which is also one of her photography passions.

Mercedes hopes her hobby will develop into a full-time job, and we wish her well with her passion.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

**BAKER, DUSTIN - DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and congratulate Dustin Baker on attaining the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, which creates opportunities for young people to develop skills, get physically active, give service, and experience adventure. The award can play a critical role in their development outside the classroom.

Dustin Baker of Porter's Lake achieved the distinction of receiving the Gold Award for those 16 years old. This award gives Dustin international accreditation for his experiences and allows his achievement to be recognized worldwide.

I applaud and commend Dustin Baker on his tremendous achievements and wish him every success in the future. Thank you.

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

**CARTY, BREAGH - COMMUN. FUNDRAISING**

MR. GORDON WILSON: One of the best parts of living in rural Nova Scotia is how often, without hesitation, neighbour will help neighbour. Recently Breagh Carty, a 19-year-old girl from Digby, received some devastating news: she had a malignant tumour on her kidney and was looking at some surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

Quickly the community rallied behind the Carty family, wanting to do something. A group of family members and friends chose to help by organizing a benefit for Breagh Carty. Hoping for the best, they organized a day where people would buy raffle and 50/50 tickets, bid at the Chinese auction and the open auction, buy baked goods and food, and listen to music, as we so often see at fundraisers.

All the expectations of the organizers were surpassed when, on November 29<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of people came to the benefit and a total of \$31,050 was raised. I want to congratulate the organizers on such a successful day. I also want to recognize the little and big things that people do every day to help others. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to thank all the members for those fantastic members' statements this morning. As we get ready for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers, we'll look forward to the opening question from the Leader of the Official Opposition, who can stand up now.

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

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

**PREM.: SENIORS' PHARMACARE - CONSULTATIONS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, despite repeated expensive apologies from the Premier, seniors across this province remain very concerned about the future of their Pharmacare Program. They know the government already tried to jack up their premiums, in many cases by as much as 200 per cent. Who knows what will eventually happen when the next wave of changes come?

The Premier has promised that seniors will be consulted before more changes come, that they'll be consulted "from one end of the province to the other" - I will table that. It has been two months since he made that commitment, and I'd like to ask the Premier, when will the consultations with seniors start?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): They're beginning the process now through the Department of Health and Wellness.

I again want to thank those seniors across the province who responded to the Pharmacare changes with a very thoughtful and respectful approach, and pointed out an issue that had come up. We had actually solved a problem for a group of seniors, but we had created another problem in the program. I thank them for pointing that out, and like I believe everyone should expect their Premier to do when he's wrong, to apologize for that, and will work towards a better solution for all Nova Scotians.

MR. BAILLIE: The issue is that the government continues to make announcements about the Pharmacare Program without consulting with seniors.

Just yesterday the Minister of Health and Wellness said there would be no new additions to the formulary, the list of medicines that seniors can have access to. That statement was made without consulting seniors. It was almost like a threat that, until this is changed, they'll get nothing new, Mr. Speaker. Many seniors across the province have told us that they don't mind paying a little more as long as they get access to the medicines that they need.

It has been two months since the Premier committed to public consultation with seniors. They're still thinking about when that might start. I'd like to ask the Premier, will he produce a schedule of the consultations, including where and when they will be held, so that seniors can get ready to tell the government what they think of the Pharmacare changes?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to inform him that any changes to Pharmacare take place on April 1<sup>st</sup>. As he knows, we're past that date. It will be next year.

We're in the process now of working through the Department of Health and Wellness dealing with seniors across this province. I want to assure the honourable member that I will take out an ad and make sure every senior knows when those meetings are going to be.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, seniors are going to have to pay yet again - they had to pay the first time around by as much as 200 per cent; they had to pay for their apology; and now they have to pay to find out when the consultations are going to be.

No wonder they've lost trust in the government, because we can only wonder what would have happened if they had just told seniors what they were thinking of doing by consulting them in the first place. But this is a government that acts first and consults later. We have no greater example of that than the film industry who were promised after-the-fact consultations, and yet they're still waiting for help as their industry sinks and sinks.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to ask the Premier, how can seniors trust his government this time when it has such an awful history of consulting after the fact?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he knows, there was consultation leading up to the changes. When we had talked to seniors' groups across the province, we had identified an issue that there was a group of low-income seniors who were having to make a very difficult choice between medication and food. We think that's inappropriate.

In fixing that problem, we shifted it unintentionally, and when it was pointed out to us we corrected that. We made sure that low-income seniors have been protected under this program and they will not be having to make the choice that they were making under former governments in deciding whether to buy medication or food. We believe that's a good thing. We've also committed to seniors across this province to further engage them on what the Pharmacare Program looks like going forward.

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

### **PREM.: REGISTRIES - DECISION**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: My question is for the Premier. Many Nova Scotians are concerned that this government is about to pursue short-term revenue gain by privatizing the registries. Yesterday in an article published by *allNovaScotia*, the Minister

of Service Nova Scotia said he needs to bring the issue back before his fellow ministers for a final decision - and I will table that.

The minister cannot have it both ways. If an issue of this magnitude is going to be in the budget, certainly the decision has already been made. My question to the Premier is, which is it? Will we see a decision on the registries in the budget, or does the decision still need to go back to Cabinet?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, every decision that government makes doesn't have to be in the budget, I want to tell the honourable member. This is an important question. One of the challenges of governing is that every time you have an opportunity to look at the way a service is delivered, or a program, the Opposition end up creating a whole bunch of fear among employees and among citizen groups, when in actual fact we believe it's healthy to look at these programs to see if they are achieving the outcomes or the service delivery that Nova Scotians expect.

We have been working along with our employees in Service Nova Scotia. I want to thank them for the dedication and commitment they've continued to make to Nova Scotians, as we've walked through this process with them and, Mr. Speaker, before I stand in the House and communicate it to the honourable member, I think it would be appropriate for us to have a conversation with our employees.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, the NDP caucus has spoken with many stakeholders who use the registry, and those stakeholders have spoken to their counterparts in other provinces where registry privatization has taken place. Everyone we met told us that the experience in other provinces has been one of increased cost and a degradation of service.

So my question for the Premier is - surely his government has also met with the stakeholders, and what are these stakeholders telling the government?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Of course we've met with stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. We've met with our employees, we've had an ongoing conversation. We've looked at an analysis of what the service delivery model looks like, what's in the best interest of our employees and of all Nova Scotians. That information is being gathered and we will communicate that to our employees.

Again, I want to thank the men and women who work across this province in Service Nova Scotia, delivering services to citizens in one community, in every community across this province in such a thoughtful, professional way, and we continue to look forward to working with them.

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have paid \$800,000 for consultants to give advice to the government about the registries. Taxpayers are no doubt wondering: what kind of advice do you get for such a high cost? So my question for the Premier is,



when will his government make public the report prepared by these consultants concerning the registries?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I said to the honourable member in my first question, all the information is being gathered to be put together, Mr. Speaker. We will communicate a decision to our employees before we communicate it to members of this House.

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

### **PREM.: SENIORS' PHARMACARE - EFFECTS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, one of the great sadnesses of the Pharmacare debacle of the government is that they were perfectly okay with letting 8,000 to 15,000 seniors drop out of the program and go without the medicines that they need. The government's own report, the Seniors' Pharmacare Program remodel, shows that they expected somewhere between 8,000 and 15,000 seniors would leave the program because of the premium hike - and I'll table that.

I want to know from the Premier, why was it okay with him that so many thousands of seniors would go without the medicines that they need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the honourable member is reading that information inappropriately. What he is referring to is potentially, if there were a change in premium at any time in our history, there are seniors who would make the determination whether or not they would stay within the program, or whether or not they would go buy private services. They would not go without medication. I think it is inappropriate of the honourable member to suggest otherwise. The fact is that changes are making sure the seniors wouldn't go without medication. It is low-income seniors that we were trying to protect, who couldn't afford to go buy private insurance. That, I believe, is the responsibility of government: to look after our most vulnerable citizens. This government is going to continue to do so.

MR. BAILLIE: No, Mr. Speaker, we are not reading it inappropriately. The government produced the report itself. Its officials said clearly the day it was presented that they expected somewhere between 8,000 and 15,000 seniors would go without. Hopefully some of them would find another option, but clearly many would not because they can't afford it, that is the point. So if 8,000 is not acceptable, how many thousands of seniors was the Premier prepared to see go without the medicines they need, if that's not the number?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Again, he is reading the information wrong. The fact of the matter is, if a senior was going to leave the program, it was because they were going to buy private insurance.

The changes we were making were to ensure that vulnerable citizens of this province were being looked after. We are going to continue to make sure that vulnerable citizens of this province get the medication they need, get the education they require, and make sure they get the housing they look after. We're going to continue to provide good government, making sure that every citizen of this province is treated appropriately.

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

### **LAE - MINIMUM WAGE: INCREASE - STANCE**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. A movement is growing across Canada and the U.S. to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Today marks the international day of action for the Fight for \$15.

Low-wage income earners struggle to make ends meet and must make difficult decisions between feeding their children and heating their homes. Most affected by these low wages are women, Mr. Speaker. As a result of that, children are left vulnerable. In Nova Scotia, we know that 40 per cent of children in poverty live in a family with at least one full-time, full-year earner.

My question to the minister is, given these troubling statistics, does the minister think that raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour is worth examination?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The minimum wage rate impacts the lives of many Nova Scotians and businesses, both directly and indirectly. I would encourage employers to pay more than the minimum wage if they can do that, but we know that not all businesses can do that. It is important to balance the needs of the community as well as the business community.

A significant increase in the minimum wage can actually end up hurting employees, because businesses don't hire. In fact, the last time we saw large increases in the minimum wage, I heard from a lot of businesses that had difficulty with that.

I want to assure the honourable member that this government will be taking steps in the coming budget to make life more affordable for Nova Scotians.

MR. DAVID WILSON: We all understand that there will always be exceptions to the \$15 minimum wage, and that in some circumstances is unrealistic, but that shouldn't deter the minister from taking action where appropriate. Nova Scotia currently has the second-lowest wages overall in Canada, and it is hurting our economy.

A report issued by the CCPA found that stagnation of overall wages has contributed to holding back Canada's economy. We hear that economic stimulus should take priority right now.

I'd like to ask the minister, does the minister agree that raising the wages of Nova Scotians is a way to boost our provincial economy?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for his question once again, and I would like to point out to him that Nova Scotia has the highest minimum wage in the Atlantic Provinces.

I'd also like to remind the honourable member that when the minimum wage was last reviewed - or the formula was last reviewed, I should say - was in 2011, under his government. They came up with a formula for increasing the minimum wage, so he would know that every year the minimum wage is reviewed in this province. It is reviewed by a committee that is made up of equal members from Labour and Advanced Education and employers, and we will be taking our advice from them.

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

**PREM.: BAY FERRIES - MGT. FEE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The Premier likes to talk about how he wants Nova Scotia to be the most open and transparent government in Canada. Whatever happened to that idea? He signed a deal with Bay Ferries that contains a secret guaranteed profit. The management fee of the company, even though it is funded by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia, remains a secret.

Will the Premier now actually do something open and transparent and tell the taxpayers of Nova Scotia how much that management fee that they are paying for is?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member. I want to thank all those members of the Public Service who have helped government move to an open data process. We are moving and putting data out there so that businesses across this province can access that information - one of the few in the country to do so.

We're looking forward to continuing to see the innovation that businesses are going to derive from that information and create economic opportunities to drive job growth, to ensure that this place continues to lead Atlantic Canada. I would dare say that after next Tuesday the rest of the country will be looking to get the good fiscal management of this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's too bad that job growth doesn't include a few jobs on the ferry itself, even though the taxpayers of Nova Scotia are contributing \$100 million over 10 years to pay for it.

But the Premier had lots of things to say when he was running for the office of Premier. He once said we all saw what happened when the previous government - that would be the NDP - continued to write cheque after cheque after cheque with no job guarantee to the people of Nova Scotia. We're going to write 10 years of cheques adding up to at least \$100 million to a private company without any job guarantees; in fact, there will be no jobs as a result of that. (Interruptions)

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

MR. BAILLIE: Pretty simple question, why is the Premier now writing cheque after cheque after cheque to a private company with no job guarantees when he promised not to when he was running for the job?

THE PREMIER: I think if I was in Opposition and said "previous government," it might have been a Progressive Conservative Government I had been talking about, Mr. Speaker.

But the reality of it is, as the honourable member knows, the vessel that is being used in that run is an American vessel that has an American flag on it. He also knows that that requires an American crew to be on that vessel.

But it doesn't mean there will not be any Nova Scotians working on that vessel. It doesn't mean that all of the jobs created in Yarmouth will not be there for Nova Scotians. It also means that the tourism operators across not only southwestern Nova Scotia but indeed across this province who have been encouraged by this operation will be hiring Nova Scotians.

What we're seeing is a positive impact on the economy of Nova Scotia, and we are investing in our international link with our largest trading partner.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **TIR - YAR. FERRY: NEGOTIATIONS - DETAILS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The minister wanted a cruise ferry on this route, he didn't get it. Presumably, he wanted Nova Scotians crewing on the vessel, and he didn't get that. And commercial trucks will not be permitted on this taxpayer-funded ferry - not because the

boat can't accommodate them but because the nine-member Portland city council will not allow it. All this on a ferry that will cost taxpayers probably \$100 million.

So my question for the minister is, how did the minister allow Nova Scotia to get backed into a corner where Portland is dictating the conditions of the ferry service without contributing any money or taking any risk?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I did yoga last night, so I'm feeling good. I'm feeling very calm. I'm going to be relaxed, and I'm not going to freak out. (Laughter)

Look, the reality is that the Official Opposition, the PCs, are trying to frame this as a bad decision. They're trying to frame this as we are terrible negotiators. That's their play, Mr. Speaker; that's all they have. They're using a fictitious number forecasting it out 10 years, which is ridiculous. They know that after the first two years of this agreement, we go back to negotiating.

This is a good deal because the region of Yarmouth and all Nova Scotia require this link with our largest trading partner. This is good for our entire economy. It's good for the people.

They're going to keep beating on it, Mr. Speaker, but then they'll go down to Yarmouth and pretend that they support it. It's got to be one or the other.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, remarkably, the minister is selling tickets on a route (Interruptions)

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

MR. HOUSTON: Remarkably, the minister is selling tickets on a route despite not having permission to dock in Portland. I can't even imagine how that happened.

We know what has been signed. The cheque has been signed, but I'm curious about what else is left to be signed. I'd like to ask the minister if he could tell Nova Scotians whether all transportation permits for this route have been received or not.

MR. MACLELLAN: The process whereby the approvals have to take place through the City of Portland are very academic. This is what happens in government processes.

All the negotiations that have taken place since Mark MacDonald and Bay Ferries have been on board, they have been done so appropriately - they've worked through the schedule, they've worked on the permitting, and they've worked on the docking. All of those components that are part of this model, part of this plan, they are all in order because of Mark MacDonald, who is a reputable person, who is a leader in this industry.

That very Party had a relationship with him seven years ago. They believed in him then, Mr. Speaker. Now, when they're looking for political points, they turn their guns on Mark MacDonald. We're not backing down with Mark MacDonald, and we're not backing down on Yarmouth, and we're not backing down on the people of Nova Scotia.

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

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - WAIT TIMES**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Wait times for community-based mental health services are on the rise. At the same time, the Minister of Health and Wellness is trying to direct more people to such care. The minister's own data shows that the average wait time for 90 per cent of adults for the period from July to September 2013 was 75 days. The number increased to 105 days for the same period in 2015. Under this minister and the Liberal Government, community-based mental health services wait times have increased by 25 per cent. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why, under his watch, community-based mental health services have increased wait times by 25 per cent?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place and address this issue. The former Minister of Health and Wellness knows that we are in the very early stages of a different model of care to create community capacity across Nova Scotia. That work now is under the direction of Dr. Linda Courey and the NSHA. In some parts of the province we've actually reduced the wait times for mental health services.

What the member does know, of course, is that we do have a 24/7 mobile crisis line. We have our ERs where there are also psychiatrists who can provide care within 24 hours.

MR. DAVID WILSON: The minister has some nice talking points about mental health and community-based mental health services, but the data is undeniable. Nova Scotians are waiting. We know that the amalgamation of the District Health Authority has had a negative effect on providing health care services to Nova Scotians. On average, an extra month under this minister for wait times have increased, and this is needed in the community - these services are needed. They've made cuts in Pictou County that are not meeting demands for services.

Yesterday the minister stated on the floor of this House that mental health services are stronger today than they were a year ago. My question to the minister is, how can he stand behind that statement when wait times have increased by 25 per cent?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that one area in particular, when the former government was in office, they had a number of around 900 who needed youth

mental health assessments at the IWK. We are now down to, at any one point in time, well less than 100 who need that service.

What I can tell the member about Pictou County is that today the mental health services are much stronger than a year ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **CNS: CIVIL SERVANTS - ONLINE ACTIVITIES**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: My question is for the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia. On January 28<sup>th</sup>, his deputy minister sent a missive to civil servants advising them about their online activities. Unlike the emails sent by the minister of the day over a year earlier, this one talks about personal use of social media, even outside of work time.

The email says, and I'll quote just a small portion of it, "Some types of personal use can result in discipline, up to and including dismissal, if they are damaging to the Government's reputation . . ." I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, why is the government telling Nova Scotia civil servants that they cannot speak out or have a view on public policy issues, even when the issues aren't in their own department?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: That's not the case at all. We entrust our deputy ministers to manage their staff appropriately. The deputy minister in this case did that when she, I believe, identified information that was circulating online that was not appropriate for a public servant to be posting.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Osborne vs. Canada*, has ruled that civil servants can participate in the political process and voice their opinions and that, in fact, it is protected by the Charter. The minister is wrong that he's not saying that.

I will table a letter from the Premier's staff to the Department of Environment where the staff person says about a civil servant, "She hasn't demonstrated particularly good judgment with this post?!" It's a post about tuition hikes. It has nothing to do with the Department of Environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question, why is the Premier's Office - and in fact, this is written by the Premier's now Chief of Staff, so why is the Premier's new Chief of Staff now the Facebook cop for civil servants?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, one thing I don't think any of us will do in this House is take recommendations on judgment from that member, without question. We

believe our deputy minister acts appropriately, we trust our staff, we support our Public Service, and that's why we have such a good working relationship with them.

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

### **CNS: SENIORS' PHARMACARE - APOLOGY ADS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's taxpayers were shocked to hear that they paid \$17,000 for a Liberal newspaper ad that apologized for their botched Seniors' Pharmacare tax grab. I'm sure they would be equally shocked to hear that the minister, whose department had created and paid for the ad, had only one word to say about it, and that was "beautiful."

My question to the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia is, will the minister share with the House exactly what was "beautiful" about using taxpayers' dollars on an attempt to fix a Liberal boondoggle?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation as government to communicate policy decisions to the public. Earlier in this Question Period, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked, when are you going to tell seniors when you're going to be consulting with them? Now, we have questions on when we advertise.

You know what? The fact that we took it upon ourselves to communicate to a large group of Nova Scotians who had been impacted by a policy - I think that is beautiful, Mr. Speaker.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Oh, but, Mr. Speaker, that was only \$17,000 to apologize for a "woopsie." What about the bigger "woopsie," which was the \$117,000 letter campaign that was sent around to seniors - the fact sheets - apologizing once again? To this expenditure that would have funded the highest Pharmacare premiums for 95 seniors for a year, the minister said "looks good to me if the PO is good."

So, for \$117,000 the Minister of CNS - for a mail out that they didn't have to do, because one was going to come out a few weeks later when they talked about the premiums anyway, this government went and spent \$117,000 when they didn't need to. How can seniors trust this government with their hard-earned tax dollars if the minister responsible so casually spends public dollars trying to fix what was obviously a political problem?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, well, I didn't expect the member for Argyle-Barrington to step up and actually ask a question on the ferry, so I do appreciate this question.

We are actually very proud of the fact that we took it upon ourselves to communicate with the public on a very critical (Interruptions)



MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable Minister of Communications Nova Scotia has the floor.

MR. CHURCHILL: We're very proud of the fact that we took it upon ourselves to communicate a very significant policy decision to the public and communicate with every single individual who could be impacted by it. This government took it upon ourselves to support the most vulnerable citizens in our province who are having a difficult time accessing their Pharmacare. There are too many people, Mr. Speaker, who are choosing between food and their meds.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand behind the Premier and address that very significant problem in our society.

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

### **SENIORS: BUDGET FUNDING - RETAIN**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Seniors. Nova Scotia has an increasing number of seniors, obviously. The ratio of seniors to taxpayers is increasing at an alarming rate and, of course, hospitals and support workers are overrun with the needs of the aging population. Will the Minister of Seniors commit to maintaining funding for seniors in the budget?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite knows that indeed our commitment to seniors is strong, to get our new seniors - 1,000 a month now at 65 who are joining those ranks - we are working to get them engaged in Nova Scotia in many different ways.

We just held in Pictou, a very, very successful economic seniors summit and that's where we will drive and support seniors to be able to manage our programs in the future, and I think the member opposite will be pleased whenever our budget information comes forward.

MR. HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, one concern is the last Liberal Budget saw a cut to the Department of Seniors by \$366,000. Will the minister send a signal that this cut will not take place this year?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence that our Minister of Finance and Treasury Board will deliver a strong budget on Tuesday and, hopefully, the member opposite can wait until Tuesday of next week.

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

**PREM.: TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMM. - CALLS TO ACTION**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, last year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released their calls to action, a series of recommendations to be undertaken in order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. Of the 94 recommendations, 24 specifically call on provincial governments to take action.

In December 2015 I attended the event where the Premier made a commitment to some education calls to action, which is a positive first step. But, Mr. Speaker, my question is, First Nations people are hoping for more commitments from the Premier so, what specific calls to action will be prioritized under this Premier?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's a serious issue, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of the fact the national government has made a tremendous effort to reach across to First Nations communities across our country. We as a province have been leading the country with our tripartite arrangement working with our Mi'kmaq community to insure that the First Peoples of this province, Mi'kmaq territories we stand in are treated properly. I have made the commitment to our chiefs that we'll continue to develop the relationship that we have with them.

I'm very proud of the fact that we are bringing treaty education to our public school education system, the first in the country, Mr. Speaker. I am very encouraged by that. As I said that day, we are all treaty people. We just need to understand who made decisions on behalf of the Crown, what our roles and responsibilities are, and we are going to continue to make sure that the healing continues that has started through the truth and reconciliation process.

MS. ZANN: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to uncover the truth about the residential school system, to inform all Canadians, and to identify actions that need to be taken. Issues within indigenous communities are happening at this movement in Nova Scotia for instance. Mi'kmaq represent 21.5 per cent of children in care while persons of indigenous ancestry represent just 2.7 per cent of the total population. Just yesterday there was a protest outside about non-consultation. So, Mr. Speaker, my question is, will the Premier commit today to implementing all of the provincial calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank the Mi'kmaq communities across this province who have been very thoughtful and work extremely hard with our government to ensure that we continue to deal with the challenges facing them. The Minister of Community Services introduced a bill in the last session of the House talking about children and family services that specifically began to address the very issue that the member was talking about, the alarming rate of Mi'kmaq children in care.

It goes back to insuring that we develop a relationship with the community to ensure that those Mi'kmaq children remain in the community and the community continues to provide a cultural and social experience in an environment that will allow those children to thrive. We're going to continue to work with our partners to continue with challenge after challenge. It can't go without saying how fortunate we are to have the leadership from the Mi'kmaq community in this province who continue to work with successive governments of all political stripe to do right by their community and to deal with the long-term challenges.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**TIR: INVERNESS CO. ROADS - RESIDENTS MEET**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: On April 21<sup>st</sup> last year I tabled a petition here in the Legislature on behalf of people travelling the Deepdale Road in Inverness containing 212 signatures and the residents cited safety risks because of the lack of maintenance. We know one of the reasons why our secondary roads are in such poor shape is because of the cut to the RIM rural road maintenance budget of 25 per cent in each of the last seven years.

Mr. Speaker, some of our roads in Inverness County are in such poor condition from lack of maintenance that the postal service has discontinued service. Garbage trucks are not using those roads. Last night I spoke with a school bus driver who said there's 50,000 kilometres on the bus, but there's hardly anything left to the life of that bus.

Residents have arranged a protest. My question to the minister is, will he join me in a meeting with local residents on April 24<sup>th</sup> in Inverness?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thanks to the member opposite for that question. Certainly I will if that's an opportunity. I don't know what day of the week that is, but if we're not in the Legislature . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Sunday.

MR. MACLELLAN: It's a Sunday? Okay, sure, I'll take a drive up. I'll be there.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't actually expecting that answer, but I'm very pleased that the minister is interested in attending.

I think a lot of people feel that if we're not providing enough funding in maintenance to the roads each year, we're going to have an accumulation of neglect on those roads. They're not just going to require a few thousand dollars of maintenance; they're going to require actual reconstruction. I believe that's the case with the Deepdale Road. The problem with that is that the way the policy is currently set up, a lot of these roads can't make the capital planning list because they won't meet the \$500,000 threshold.

We have a budget coming up next week. What has the minister done to prepare for that budget to ensure that these roads can make the capital planning list for reconstruction?

MR. MACLELLAN: I'm not sure about the \$500,000 threshold; I'll have to get back to the member on that. I'm not aware that that's a threshold that's in play.

Mr. Speaker, I said this yesterday in jest in response to a question, but I say it seriously: every member has serious issues with some roads in their community - there's no doubt about that - from the gravel roads to those roads that are low volume that haven't had a new strip of paving in a long time. It's a challenge, and the reality is that we are doing our very best. There is an infrastructure deficit that we're trying to address, and really it is case-by-case. We work with the local members and local stakeholders to get those needs addressed to the extent possible.

But we are looking at a capitalized plan to do some of that work, as opposed to having it in operations where the budget is stretched every year and maxed out early on in the fiscal season. Capitalizing some of those things may give us more opportunity to fix those. So it is a good point, and in the department, we are working on that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

#### **JUSTICE: LAW REFORM COMMN. - FUNDING**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: The Law Reform Commission of Nova Scotia has been instrumental in maintaining and strengthening our province's laws and legal system. It's an organization that members of the government certainly have valued in the past.

I call to mind a comment from the member for Cape Breton-Richmond, who said, "I would take this opportunity to remind the Minister of Justice that as the budgetary process will inevitably begin in the upcoming Spring that I would hope the Minister of Justice will be a strong advocate for the Law Reform Commission, to make sure they have the adequate financing and possibly new financing to help them in some of the work they do."

Mr. Speaker, we now unfortunately know that the government plans to cut that funding in next week's budget. How does the Minister of Energy, the member for Cape Breton-Richmond, reconcile what he has said in this Chamber in the past with this proposed elimination of funding?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: It's a Justice question.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Many of you have received letters as well from all of the big law firms in the province asking for us to reconsider this.

But I want to make several points. Number one, a full year was given to discussions with the Law Reform Commission asking them to find alternate sources of funding to ensure they keep their doors open. We do value their work, and we felt it was important to give them time to make changes and to think about it.

We've also agreed to continue to have them located in the Department of Justice, so we're providing in-kind services, an office and the technology support around that. They have our support. We've asked them to find other sources of funding as well.

MR. MACMASTER: I think this government should value their work. They should also support them.

We can look right now at the Powers of Attorney Act reform ideas that the commission has put forward. That represents a value of about \$300,000 in pro bono work by lawyers who are contributing freely to that process. That would easily pay for the traditional one-third provincial commitment to the organization of \$184,000. So, Mr. Speaker, the government should value their work and they should support the Law Reform Commission. No one in the legal community has suggested cutting funding to the Law Reform Commission. We look at their work in the past with enforcement...

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. MACMASTER: My question, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Richmond being such a strong advocate in the past, why did the Minister of Justice decide to eliminate the funding to this organization?

MS. WHALEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again just to reiterate for the member opposite, we've offered them in-kind support, which they currently have, but at present we're not going to provide them with other funding. They needed to find other funding from other sources and we offered - you know it was actually a proposal originally that we could cut it that very year. A year ago we said no, that's not right, let's give them a year to make some changes and to find other sources of funding. And you know, we would welcome it if they are able to do so, but we are not able to increase or continue the level of funding they've had in the past.

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

**JUSTICE: LAW REFORM COMMN. - CUTS EXPLAIN**

MS. MARIAN MANCINI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow with the line of questioning of my friend in relation to the Law Reform Commission. So, my question is to the Minister of Justice. The commission, as we know, works to improve and modernize laws. In my meetings with many of the supporters from the legal community and from the commissioners themselves, they've determined that in excess of \$300,000 in volunteered time is given to the commission to assist us in modernizing our antiquated legislation.

Eliminating the funding to this democratic institution is unprecedented in our province's history. It provides us with an arm's length...

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. MANCINI: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice explain how the Law Reform Commission was no longer a meaningful investment for Nova Scotians?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for raising the question again. As I said earlier, it is not a question of valuing the work that they do. This is a nice thing to have, it has been useful. There are some good reports that we've received over the years to every government, all of us. However, it's important to know that very few provinces have a Law Reform Commission, very few, and the federal government does not. With that in mind we felt that this is something that could be funded by other sources and we will continue our commitment to provide space and in-kind supports.

MS. MANCINI: The Canada Law Reform Commission was cut, that's correct, by the Harper Government, and our new federal government is currently looking at revisiting that.

The Law Reform Commission of Nova Scotia is the perfect body for the rewriting of the cyberbullying law, a bill that all the members in this House, I believe, supported at one time, which was recently struck down. The commission has the potential to draft the new cyberbullying law and it can stand the test of time.

So, I ask the minister, does she agree that the commission would be the perfect candidate to conduct a review and rewrite of the cyberbullying law?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, what I do believe is that we will be consulting with the legal community. We've already reached out to a number of people who have positions on the cyberbullying bill. We know that we will be talking to the Canadian Bar and other legal entities, and asking for their help in re-drafting this, but we have a time frame as well.

We want to be able to bring that in by the Fall and so it will be targeted consultation. Thank you.

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

**LAE: SCOTSBURN PLANT CLOSURE - JOBS RETENTION**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question through you will be to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Recently, word was received about the closure of the Scotsburn Plant in Sydney, a modern, efficient, well-run plant, with 80 to 100 jobs that are very well-paying for the Cape Breton community.

Could the minister share with this House and the workers, what steps are they taking to save these very important jobs in Cape Breton, an area which already has chronic unemployment?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I know this is a very difficult and stressful time for those employees. This is one of three plants that Saputo is closing across the country and my thoughts go out to those families.

Immediately upon getting the word that Saputo had planned this closure, Employment Nova Scotia staff reached out to the company and began working with the employees to assist them in whatever they need to find new positions in Cape Breton.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you for the answer, minister. It's my understanding that the drivers who worked at Scotsburn previously were let go and they had to become jobbers, independent jobbers working there. When they were let go they were given two weeks' severance for every year they worked. The current employees who are in production are only being offered one week's severance for each week they were working. I am also told that when a combined income of the family is taken into consideration they don't qualify for any type of help from the Province of Nova Scotia when it comes to retraining.

One of the employees, the night before he went in for this important meeting, he found out he was going to be a father, and the next day he was laid off - then he finds out that there's no help from the province to get retraining.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. MACLEOD: I sure do. The question is, what can this government tell that individual and the employees from that company what they can do to make sure that they have a job and are able to stay in Cape Breton, work in Cape Breton, and raise a family in Cape Breton?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I do appreciate the concern that those workers must be feeling right now. Under the Skills Development Agreement there is a variety of criteria, and I would encourage anyone who has been displaced in this particular action to actually fill out an application.

We have not received any applications yet. There are a number of programs under the skills development, there are criteria that include income, but there are other programs that we offer as well - Start, Apprenticeship Start, Self-Employment, Job Creation Partnership, and there's counselling and support available at our Careers Nova Scotia Centre.

There have been four sessions with the workers so far; we understand they are going well. There may be some concerns, but I urge them that if there are applications for any programs that they, in fact, file them - and I am happy to sit down with the member if there are any cases where he feels people are not getting appropriate support.

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

**PREM.: PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS REPORT  
- ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers produced an independent report on the economic benefits of the film industry which showed, among other things, that it returned \$7 to the province for every \$1 it cost the government in the tax credit.

I'd like to ask the Premier, did he or anyone in his staff, or any government officials, have prior knowledge of the contents of that report before it was released officially yesterday?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. No, I did not see that report. I believe there was a conversation with a deputy minister, it was not a full briefing of the report. It's my understanding there are pieces of that report that were provided. It's also my understanding it is not something that PricewaterhouseCoopers is actually considering in saying they are standing behind. Is it an audited report - it's the information they've gathered from the industry and did a survey, but I haven't seen it.

What I can tell you is that we have a \$10 million fund. I encourage those in the film sector to apply for that fund and, using the multiplier that they are using, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to that opportunity continuing to grow the sector and to be able to use the revenue to invest in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a report from an independent, respected accounting firm that shows that the film industry employs 3,200 people - or it



used to employ 3,200 people - and generates \$180 million in economic activity. I sure hope the Premier isn't suggesting that the accounting firm is walking away from the report, which was released yesterday, because this is a very important industry, it is an economic driver. The government actually makes money from the economic contribution of the film industry.

It's very important now that the report is in the public domain that the Premier take a look at it. He said yesterday that he hasn't read it, but it wouldn't change his mind anyway.

I'll just finish up today by asking him, will he now read the report and take a look at the benefits that the film industry brings to the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear to all Nova Scotians - there is a fund for the Film Tax Credit, and we are not going back to the old system.

MR. SPEAKER: That concludes the time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 149.

#### **Bill No. 149 - Mineral Resources Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 149, the Mineral Resources Act, be now read for a second time. As the members will know, mining holds a long tradition in Nova Scotia. We've been exploring for and mining coal, gypsum, gold, and salt for more than 150 years, but even our well-established industries need modern, effective legislation which provides effective processes for industry and for government.

Yesterday I had the honour of introducing a new Mineral Resources Act to the Legislature. The Mineral Resources Act is the legislation that establishes the rights and

obligations around the responsible development of Nova Scotia's mineral resources. The Act has not been substantially reviewed since 1990 and it needed to be modernized. Updating the Mineral Resources Act fulfills a commitment of the provincial Natural Resources Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, our proposed legislation strikes the right balance between stimulating the economy, particularly in rural Nova Scotia, and managing our natural resources. The new bill is the product of several years of work and follows extensive consultations with Nova Scotians, particularly industry, professional associations, the Mi'kmaq, and environmental non-government organizations.

With the introduction of the new Mineral Resources Act, government is demonstrating that it is working to unlock the value of our natural resources and encouraging economic development in rural Nova Scotia. Remember that term, Mr. Speaker: unlock the value. A new Mineral Resources Act will do more to encourage mineral exploration and development in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, we are proposing changes that will cut red tape by making it easier and less expensive for the industry to manage exploration licences. It will require less frequent industry reporting so that industry spends more time and money investing in exploration and less on administration of licences. It will allow for more time to complete work on exploration licences and it will adopt consistent processes to provide better and timelier exploration access to most minerals. It will streamline the process for resolving private land access disputes.

The new Act will establish good practices for industry to engage with communities, to guide them as they create their own social licence, and build public confidence in exploration and in mining projects, Mr. Speaker. The Act will also contribute to the public confidence discussion by requiring regular reviews of mine reclamation plans and ensuring that mine sites have adequate reclamation security throughout the mining cycle - very important for the public good of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of effective legislation to reducing barriers to industry and to economic growth in Nova Scotia. This was pointed out in *Now or Never*, the One Nova Scotia report as an exemplary initiative that will assist the sector to improve productivity and competitiveness. A modern Act will improve Nova Scotia's competitive position and further support an open-for-business environment for mining in the province and effective community engagement.

Public and stakeholder feedback was an important element in the creation of this Act. DNR met with various stakeholders on numerous occasions to discuss the Act and receive input. As well, we created a public consultation document which gave Nova Scotians the opportunity to provide their thoughts and ideas with regard to the new Act.

Mr. Speaker, I'll share with the House the response from the Mining Association of Nova Scotia, a major stakeholder in our legislation. The association's news release from yesterday afternoon states that the Mining Association has worked with the government on the review for several years and we are pleased that the government accepted many of our recommendations for improving the Act. The Act has not been fully reviewed in a quarter of a century, so many of the changes are common-sense improvements that cut red tape and bring the Act in line with equivalent Acts in other provinces. The changes will make the Act more modern and efficient, and encourage more investment and job creation in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, our province is endowed with a diversity of mineral resources and has the potential for new mine projects that will help to grow and sustain our economy and provide employment opportunities for rural and economic development. The new Mineral Resources Act helps to facilitate the discovery and development of these resources.

We can look to the exciting projects at Donkin, and Moose River Gold Mines in the precincts of Sheet Harbour, as significant new developments having a lot of promise for the province. The Donkin project could be producing coal this summer and construction at Moose River Gold Mine should commence in the next several months - equipment has been moved into that site. These projects are providing high-paying jobs for Nova Scotians and will generate new wealth for our province. Bringing these projects into production will also signal to a global mining community that Nova Scotia is open for business.

The New Mineral Resources Act provides a framework for new projects to come into production. Our future will also include continued mining for salt and gypsum. Production of these commodities will continue to provide long term, high-paying jobs which will support families and communities. The new Mineral Resources Act and regulations will ensure the royalties we receive on all mined commodities are fair to both producers and the province.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years there has been a renewed interest in exploring for potash in Nova Scotia, and a new Mineral Resources Act would facilitate a more open, competitive, and timely process for companies to acquire and maintain exploration licences when they're interested in exploring for potash.

In southwestern Nova Scotia we continue to follow with interest the exploration for tin and rare earth minerals at the former East Kemptville mine site. The new Mineral Resources Act will make certain that the reclamation plan for this site is up to date and that there's adequate security in place.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to sincerely acknowledge the excellent work of the Department of Natural Resources staff for drafting, developing, and delivering this bill and putting up with my naivety as the new minister just in the middle of this. The Geosciences and Mines Branch and our policy group led the Mineral Resources Act and review and did

it in an extremely professional manner. Civil servants in these branches lived and breathed the Mineral Resources Act for the past two years, and they deserve our thanks for working in the best interest of communities in this sector of government.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to the people of Nova Scotia and this government that we have an up-to-date Mineral Resources Act that helps us manage our mineral resources. It's one of the mandates of my portfolio and my duty as the minister to enhance the regulatory framework for mineral exploration through the Mineral Resources Act. Today is a major step forward in achieving that goal. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and speak to this important bill, Bill No. 149, it has been a long time coming. Responsible resource development is critically important for moving our province forward. Mining is an industry that will play a huge role in the future of this province. We have a proud tradition, as mentioned by the minister, of mining across this province - from Cumberland, Pictou County, and Cape Breton.

The role of government is extremely important in setting the conditions for a competitive mining sector here in Nova Scotia. Modernization of the Mineral Resources Act has been greatly needed. We know that the mining industry has been held back in Nova Scotia in recent years. Year after year we can see that our province has ranked poorly in investment attractiveness for mining, according to the Fraser Institute. First, and foremost, it is important that as a province we are able to catch up to other provinces in modern legislation and regulations.

It is my sincere hope that the government is not content to stop with this Act. The mining industry has been asking government to deliver a fuel tax rebate similar to those that have been extended to other resource sectors. This government has indicated that they would bring this forward, but we have not seen it yet. A rebate like this would benefit job-creating companies and signal that Nova Scotia is open for business. We would also like to see the government engage in a serious conversation about competitive fees.

We look forward to hearing presentations at Law Amendments Committee on this very important bill.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: It is a pleasure to rise today to have a few words on this piece of legislation designed to update the Mineral Resources Act, Bill No. 149.

But first, I want to welcome the minister back to this Chamber. I know the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie has dealt with some personal medical issues, and

I congratulate him on being back here. I just want to reassure the members of the House that the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie and I go back to another life, when we were at a municipal level for decades, so there is a bond there.

AN HON. MEMBER: You guys are old.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Well, I didn't want to go down that path.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been part of the NDP Government that released a 10-year Natural Resources Strategy in August 2011. The strategy called for a review of the existing Mineral Resources Act, so I'm glad to see the recommendations have led to action. I respect the attempt to strike a balance between efficient administration and the responsibility of resource management. However, whether or not this balance is struck will be largely determined by the operations of this legislation rather than the words on the page. I believe there's 57 pages; it's a fairly lengthy bill. I want to recognize the depth of this.

Access to information is becoming increasingly recognized as an essential part of citizens' engagement in public policy. The NDP caucus is planning to introduce an environmental bill of rights that seeks to provide increased access to information for just this purpose. Therefore, I am wondering about Clause 18, where it says that one must pay a prescribed fee to inspect records relating to mineral rights. If this information is not privileged, why not make it accessible to all? Why is there a need to pay a fee to have access to this information?

This bill seeks to increase the powers of conservation officers. If this is to be a positive step, then I think it is paramount that these officers receive the training necessary to perform their duties. As with all departments, I think we need to be evaluating whether there are enough conservation officers to be sure that the laws are being followed.

In my earlier reviews of this particular bill - and I repeat, it is some 57 pages, so it's a very in-depth bill. In this bill, to my recollection, there are no special licences like before, such as coal or uranium. I suggest that while there appears to be no special licence, I hope that each mineral would be given proper assessment based on the individual consideration each mineral would require.

Already, Mr. Speaker, our caucus has heard from the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, who are concerned that this bill negatively impacts land conservation across our beautiful Province of Nova Scotia. It is my understanding that the Nature Trust has proposed amendments based on their concerns. Therefore, I look forward to hearing from them and other members of the public and the industry at Law Amendments Committee, as these concerns will be brought forward.

As the previous speaker noted, and I want to note, the mining industry is well aware of the election campaign promise of a fuel tax rebate to the mining industry. I know that this was raised in this Chamber during this government's mandate, and it will continue to be raised. It will continue to be closely monitored during the budget in the next few days here.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the minister back to his portfolio. I look forward to this bill proceeding to Law Amendments Committee and hearing from the most important voice, and that is the voice of industry and Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today and am pleased that this is our minister's new first bill and that he is back here joining us as a caucus, a great way to start this sitting. I'd like to thank the member for Pictou Centre and the member for Queens-Shelburne for their pieces today on this legislation. I'm glad to see that in general they are pleased with the bill that hopefully will be going forward.

Yesterday my caucus colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, introduced this piece of legislation to replace the Mineral Resources Act of 1990. So why does this Act of 1990 need to be replaced? Well, Mr. Speaker, the Mineral Resources Act has not had an overall review since 1990; that is 26 years. It's time for the Act to be modernized and reorganized and made user-friendly for both the industry and for government. The Act needs to be effective in cutting red tape, a goal of this government, and needs to encourage economic development and also promote competitiveness within the industry.

Reviewing the Act also fulfills commitments outlined in the Natural Resources Strategy. The Auditor General Report of May 2014 also highlighted the need to address mineral management issues. This new Act, aligned with the goals for growth and renewal in the One Nova Scotia report, is to help the mining sector improve productivity and competitiveness.

It has taken several years of work to pull this bill together, which included public consultation. The new bill was drafted following extensive consultation with industry associations, professional associations, environmental groups, government organizations, the Mi'kmaq, and with input from a web-based survey with the public.

Mr. Speaker, for more than 150 years the exploration and mining of coal, gypsum, gold, and salt have been a well-established industry in Nova Scotia. I know many of my colleagues here in the House from rural Nova Scotia, like myself, have old, abandoned mines in their constituencies. Some have active mining operations while others have prospective mining interests.

The mining industry already employs 5,500 Nova Scotians. This government believes that this number will grow as the government implements policies that make this province a more attractive place to invest, and as it cuts red tape for industry and government, it will make it easier and less expensive for industry to manage exploration licences.

The new Mineral Resources Bill strives to ensure a balance between economic development and having the tools to protect the land. Yesterday and this morning we heard our Natural Resources Minister say that the new legislation strikes the right balance between stimulating the economy, particularly in rural Nova Scotia, and managing our natural resources.

This bill will promote economic development by changing a one-year to a two-year exploration licence. This gives industry more time to plan, fund, carry out, and promote exploration projects. The change requires reporting to government every two years, as opposed to annually. Having yearly exploration licences will also reduce administrative burden and red tape for government.

This bill provides processes for industry to gain access to private Crown land and to carry out exploration and mining, as well as resolving access disputes between industry and landowners. The Act establishes the requirement for industry to have community engagement and a plan during mineral exploration. This feature of the new Act will focus industry and help them to build public confidence in their projects, to communicate with neighbouring communities, and to be more transparent. This should help mitigate disputes before they occur. This new bill also builds public confidence by strengthening the ability of government to enforce the Act, to carry out investigations, and to require regular reviews of reclamation plans.

This bill reduces barriers to industries. The fee and royalty structures and some of the other details - for example, a list of expenditures allowed to be claimed to keep a licence in good standing - will be contained in the regulations that will be attached to this Act, establishing good practices for industry to engage with communities, to guide them as they create their own social licence, and to build public confidence in these products.

This bill will contribute to the public confidence discussion by requiring regular reviews of mine reclamation plans and ensuring that mine sites have adequate reclamation security throughout the mining cycle.

Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that the minister still has authority to issue a stop-work order when someone is in contravention of the Act. Again, I want to reaffirm the key points of this new legislation. It provides a two-year exploration licence instead of the current one-year licence, so that licence holders have more time to work on their claims. It requires companies to develop and implement engagement plans, which is a first in Canada, and separate from the engagement required is part of the environmental assessment process. It

increases the deadline for beginning mining production from two years to five years once a lease has been issued. It requires written permission from landowners for all work that causes a disturbance, like drilling and trenching. It requires companies to complete reclamation plans based on the highest level or peak disturbance of their project.

Sean Kirby, executive director of the Mining Association of Nova Scotia, applauds this government's overhaul of the Mineral Resources Act. These changes will make the Act more modern and efficient and encourage more investment and job creation in Nova Scotia.

The consultation and drafting of regulations will be completed in the next few months. This bill will create a modern, competitive framework for the mining sector here in Nova Scotia. It will improve Nova Scotia's competitive position and encourage mineral exploration and development.

This new Mineral Resources Act replaces legislation that hasn't been substantially changed in 26 years. This new bill is better and more logically organized, and contains modern, easier, and understandable language. This new bill also meets one of the department's good-governance goals in the Natural Resources Strategy.

This bill will be good for rural Nova Scotia, and what's good for rural Nova Scotia is good for me. As the minister said, we want to improve Nova Scotia's competitive position, promote an open-for-business environment for mining, and ensure effective community engagement in our province. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the members opposite for their thoughtful input, and I thank my colleague about our past relationship and welcome back to the House. Thank you very much for that.

I'm very pleased to bring in this new legislation. The matters that were raised in the process, I certainly undertake to flesh out and get information on the Section 18. They are great comments on the special licences and the involvement of the Nature Trust, who were extensively consulted in the process.

Government is aware of the fuel tax rebate issue. We are monitoring that and I would observe, Mr. Speaker, that in a recent review of the change in fuel prices in Nova Scotia, as a result of the collapse in the price of the barrel, that the industry looks like it's reduced its fuel cost by 42 per cent. Now, while we're not taking responsibility for the collapse of oil prices in the world, we are pleased that is offering some relief in that area to this very important sector.



So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we close debate on second reading of this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 149. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded Nay

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, again in light of the fact that we have completed Bill No. 149 and time remains, I know that many members still have members' statements they would like to read on the record. So, I'm wondering if you could ask for unanimous consent to refer back to the daily routine, Statements by Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, with that spirit of co-operation from the Opposition that does conclude the government's business for today. We will meet again on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, whereas already indicated by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, he will be tabling his budget. Following the daily routine and Question Period we will be debating second reading of Government Bill Nos. 152 and 154, and Mr. Speaker, I can advise that the House will be sitting from the Hours of 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 11:17 a.m.]

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**NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**(RESPONSES)**

Given on December 14, 2015

(Pursuant to Rule 30)

**QUESTION NO. 7**

By: Ms. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

To: Hon. Labi Kousoulis (Minister of Internal Services)

What is the average time it takes to fill a vacant position in the Public Service? From the job being posted to an individual starting employment?

**RESPONSE:** Based on a recent sampling of data from all government competitions, it takes an average of 63 calendar days from posting the opportunity on CareerBeacon to the stage where an offer/acceptance of employment is completed.

**QUESTION NO. 8**

What is the expected time for the Public Service Commission to fill the jobs announced under the Experience Through Opportunity program?

**RESPONSE:** We expect to have the majority of the competitions finalized by the end of February.

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**NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS****(RESPONSES)**

Given on December 18, 2015

(Pursuant to Rule 30)

**QUESTION NO. 10**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

To: Hon. Keith Colwell (Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture)

- 1) Nova Scotia exports \$400 million of lobster a year across the world.
- 2) New research is raising concern about the potential transfer of diseases from the green crab to lobster in Nova Scotia waters.
- 3) A bacteria that is lethal to lobsters has been found in green crab along the province's Northumberland Strait.
- 4) What is the minister doing to protect Nova Scotia lobster and to protect the brand that is so valuable around the world?

**QUESTION NO. 11**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

To: Hon. Keith Colwell (Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture)

- (1) Researchers say more study is needed to determine the effect of green lobster parasites to Nova Scotia lobsters.
- (2) The funding for the study has run out.
- (3) The industry is concerned.
- 4) Will the minister commit to funding research into green crab parasites in order to protect the export market and maintain our worldwide reputation for high-quality lobsters?

**RESPONSE:**

February 9, 2016

Honourable Chris d'Entremont, MLA  
Fisheries Critic  
Progressive Conservative Caucus Office  
Centennial Building, Suite 1001  
1660 Hollis Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 1V7

Dear Chris,

In response to your questions raised in the House of Assembly, tabled on December 18, 2015, I would like to provide you an update on the green crab harvesting situation in Nova Scotia.

My understanding is that green crab is not widely used as lobster bait throughout all of Nova Scotia. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has implemented a three year pilot study to issue green crab licenses in exchange for specific eel licenses in the Gulf and Scotia-Fundy regions. Other commercial green crab licenses outside this pilot program are not available at this time.

While evidence is preliminary regarding parasitic transmission from green crab to lobster, and affects the parasite has on lobster, I also share your concern for any threats to our industry. As you know scientific research related to the management of the fishery is the mandate of DFO.

I am encouraged Minister Tootoo has indicated he will be restoring science funding and capacity within DFO and expect that will provide the capacity needed to address the types of questions and concerns you have risen.

Yours sincerely,

Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.

c. Office of the Clerk, NS House of Assembly

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 3163**

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 Cole Harbour Cavaliers girls basketball team won the 2015-2016 Capital Region Division 1 Championship; and

Whereas this win caused a major upset in local high school basketball; and

Whereas they defeated their rivals Auburn High School;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Cole Harbour Cavaliers girls basketball team on their win at the championships.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3164**

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 Brooklyn Craig of Cole Harbour has completed the bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; and

Whereas her talent of playing the saxophone earned her the skill requirement and her love of yoga and jogging earned the physical component; and

Whereas she completed a hiking expedition through Kejimikujik National Park for her adventurous journey;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Brooklyn Craig on the completion of the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3165**

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 24<sup>th</sup> annual Moose Run took place on March 20<sup>th</sup> and was a huge success; and

Whereas Steve MacNeil of Eastern Passage has put countless volunteer hours into organizing this event every year; and

Whereas the 25k run is a great fundraiser for the community and the perfect training run for Spring marathons;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Steve MacNeil on the success of the Moose Run and its 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3166**

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 24<sup>th</sup> annual Moose Run took place on March 20<sup>th</sup> and was a huge success; and

Whereas Tom Harmes of Eastern Passage has put countless volunteer hours into organizing this event every year; and

Whereas the 25k run is a great fundraiser for the community and the perfect training run for Spring marathons;

Therefore be it resolved that Members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Tom Harmes on the success of the Moose Run and its 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.